

Sent: Wednesday, October 5, 2022 12:57 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Isaiah 3-4

"Tell the righteous that it will be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds. Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for what his hands have dealt out shall be done to him!" (Isaiah 3:10-11)

Remember last week's lesson (on Isaiah 2) where Isaiah shared the vision he received from God, telling him that "In the last days" the nation of Israel, in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, would be a blessing to all the nations of the world, with people from all over the world (one day!) streaming to Mt. Zion, to the house of the God of Jacob, to learn His ways! While not specifically stated in the text, it seems a clear picture of the time of the Second Coming of Christ, when He will come from heaven, in the clouds, at the trumpet sound, as the Conquering King of Kings, to judge the world and set up His millennial kingdom, with its headquarters in Jerusalem (and His temple on Mt. Zion)!

But meanwhile (getting back to the real world), in total contrast to what it will be like on that glorious day, Isaiah noted that the "house of Jacob," in his day, was far from God--"filled with influences from the east," living like the Philistines, caught up with materialism ("silver and gold, and horses and chariots"), practicing covetousness and idolatry, and "worshipping the work of their hands"! And because of this, facing a "day of reckoning," when "the LORD of hosts" would bring judgment "against every lofty thing"! And so, Isaiah pleaded with them to change their ways and to "come, house of Jacob, and walk in the light of the LORD"! And, finally (as his closing admonition in chapter 2), he urged them to "stop regarding man, whose breath of life in his nostrils" (the Amplified Version adds, "is for so short a time)!

And that sets the stage for our lesson last night on Isaiah 3-4, where Isaiah continues to draw a big contrast between how the people were living in that day (and would continue to live in the days to come) and how God had called and destined, them to live (one day!) And makes it clear why the house of Jacob needed to (but wouldn't!) trust in God alone, and not in man! (And that would apply to us as well!)

And why? "For behold, the Lord God of hosts is going to remove from Jerusalem and Judah..." (basically take away from them) everything they were trusting in, including food and water, and the basic necessities of life--as well as the leaders and the mighty warriors, and judges and elders, and even "the honorable men and expert artisans," and others! And Isaiah notes that, in a male-dominated society, would-be leaders would not be willing, or available, to serve and so it would be left for women and children, including those totally unqualified, to hold office and lead the nation!

And so, the "house of Jacob" would experience a great crisis in leadership and the consequent collapse of society! And, worse, "abandonment" (or so it seemed!) and judgment from the LORD God of hosts"!

Interesting that the name "Lord of hosts" appears 261 times in the Old Testament! Beginning in I Samuel where David invoked this name in his pre-fight verbal sparring with Goliath! I Samuel

17:45-47 says, "Then David said to the Philistine, 'You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted! This day the LORD (Yahweh) will deliver you up into my hands...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD's and He will give you into my hands!' Wow! And, in Psalm 24:10, David would later write (under inspiration from God!): "Who is the King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory!" And (can't leave this out!), in Revelation 19, we learn that the "King of glory" is none other than Jesus Christ who commands all the armies in heaven and will (one day!) be "coming in the clouds, at the trumpet call...!"

Well, back to Isaiah 3, where in verse 8, Isaiah would write, "For Jerusalem has stumbled and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their actions are against the LORD (the Lord of hosts!)" And then notes that they even have the audacity to "rebel against His glorious presence...and display their sin like Sodom," without trying to conceal it! (Wow! Again, the comparison with Sodom!) And so, as Isaiah notes, "they have brought evil on themselves...! Woe to the wicked! It will go badly for them!" And we see Isaiah lamenting over them! "O my people! Those who guide you lead you astray and confuse the direction of your paths!"

And Isaiah prophesies more (in the verses which follow) about how God will judge His people!

And after denouncing the men in leadership positions (or not!), Isaiah zeroes in on the "daughters of Zion," who have stepped in to fill the void! Only it's not a pretty picture either! "They walk with heads held high (in a bad sense) and seductive eyes--and go along with mincing steps and tinkle the bangles on their feet; therefore, the Lord will afflict their scalp with scabs...and make their foreheads bald!" Wow! But there's more! And Isaiah has quite a way with the words to express it, as he describes 21 things that the Lord will "take away from them! All the things that women love and (many!) live for! (You have to read the list of things, in verses 18-21, to get a full appreciation of what Isaiah is saying here!)

The bottom line is that the daughters of Zion will be left with little or nothing (at some point, in the days to come), having lost their husbands as well, and now seen "sitting alone on the ground" at the gates of the city, weeping and mourning, seeking the basic necessities of life and relief from their "reproach"!

But, typically in his literary style, Isaiah blends the good with the bad! Back in verse 10 he writes that there are some "righteous" among the people (and this would surely include some of the daughters of Zion!) --and he says to "say to them that it will go well for them, for they will eat the fruit of their actions"! Encouraging the faithful! (Interesting that Proverbs would provide such encouragement, and especially for faithful women! Proverbs 31:10 says, "An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels..." and verse 30, "Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised!")

And speaking of the good, the tone of Isaiah's prophecy totally changes again, in Isaiah 4:2, as Isaiah looks ahead and sees that "in that day, the Branch of the Lord will (come and) be beautiful and glorious and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of

Israel...when the Lord (among other things) will purge the bloodshed of Jerusalem...and create over the whole area of Mount Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy...a shelter to give shade from the heat of the day and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain!"

Wow! What's Isaiah talking about? And when will all this occur?

Isaiah 11:1-2 says, "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots and will bear fruit! The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD!"

Jeremiah 23:5 says, "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land...!"

Constable notes that all this will happen "on that day" when God will judge His people for trusting in "man" rather than in Him--and that many of the judgments prophesied in this text will take place during the Assyrian captivity of the northern kingdom and, later, during the Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom! But "that day" looks to a further, and even more important, future as well--to the 7-year Tribulation period and, after that, to the millennial reign of Christ on the earth!

Remember how Jesus spoke (in Matthew 24:21) about how "a great tribulation was coming, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world..." and (in verses 29--31) how that "immediately after the tribulation of those days...they would see the Son of Man coming on the clouds...at the trumpet sound..."! (It all fits!)

And so, will God abandon Israel forever? No way! Our text, in Isaiah 4:2-6, states clearly that the Branch of the LORD (Jesus Christ) will lead the nation of Israel in the future just like He did in the days of the wilderness wanderings (in Exodus 12)! MacArthur notes that the future inhabitants of Jerusalem will enjoy the Lord's protective covering with the "shekinah glory" that once did, and will again, fill the temple on Mount Zion (this time with a actual presence of Christ)! Providing a "shelter in the time of storm"! And so much more!

And so, that's how our lesson on Isaiah 3-4 ends!

I'm sure you couldn't help but notice the likeness of the sin and wickedness of Jerusalem and Judah to the ways and wantonness of our world and culture today--with the sure judgment that has and will be coming home to us! And this should surely affect the way we view the events happening in our world and live our lives! And raise in our thinking the message of redemption and hope we need to share with our families, friends and neighbors--and others who carry this message to the ends of the world! And the question was raised as to whether, and if so how, we should confront the wickedness abounding in our culture! Kevin Clark declared that we must confront it! But the question is, how? (Interesting that John MacArthur recently did it by sending a public letter to the governor of California calling him out for "the diabolical effects"

his policies are having on crime, homelessness, sexual perversions, and other malignant expressions of human misery that stem directly from corrupt public policy"! And he actually urged him "to turn from his wicked ways"! Wow! Sounds like the prophet Isaiah!)

Meanwhile, as for us! We as men of the Bible need to "walk in the light of the Lord, and of His Word, trust only in Him, and try to figure out how best, on a daily basis, to deal with "man," and the world around us!

On to Isaiah 5!

May God be with you and "may it all be well with you"!

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