

**CALVARY PANDAN
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 3

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

CHAPTER 3

**Theme: “Sin and Her
Consequences!”**

THEME VERSE

Isaiah 3:8 (KJV) “For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings *are* against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.”

INTRODUCTION

Ecclesiastes 8:11 (KJV)

“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” This verse from Ecclesiastes describes the state of Judah and the heart of man very aptly. Men, including those who call themselves Christians, continue in sin because the LORD does not judge sins immediately! This chapter describes the spiritual state of Israel as a nation far away from the LORD and deep in her own sins! Every man, woman, and child was not spared in the LORD’s indictment against the people of Judah.

The list of sins committed by Judah was long. The judgement of

God begins at home. He will not let His own people who bear His Name fall into sin and get away with it. There is no respecter of persons with God. If God were to judge His own people when they sin against Him, how much more when Gentiles sin? Trifling with sin has become a game to many today. It is as if sinful man is trying to out-sin one another.

The sins committed today are getting worse and worse. The sinners are getting younger and younger. It is a fearful thing to read in the internet or newspapers of teenagers who are thirteen and fourteen years old robbing and killing. Our society has gone the way of Sodom and Gomorrah, or even worse. This moral decay will only get from bad to worse. There is no stopping of this global depravity that will spread like an uncontrollable wild fire destroying every family that stands in its path!

The local churches today are not far behind the world in its moral decay! Pastors who commit adultery while in office are allowed to remain in office. Many of the church leaders cover up one another’s sins under the guise of “no one is perfect” argument. The basis for dealing with sin and sinners is not perfection but holiness, God’s holiness that is according to Holy Scriptures. The local churches today have taken over the role of OT Israel, from national to ecclesiastical witness. Just as Israel had sinned, the churches today have also sinned. God has a word of warning to His churches!

This chapter of Isaiah deals with the sin of God’s people. It is the

reaction of the most High and Holy God towards sin, especially towards the sins of His people!

OUTLINE

1. Protection and Provision Removed (vv.1-8);
2. Righteous and Wicked Rewarded (vv. 9-11);
3. Leaders Led Many into Sin (vv. 12-15);
4. Haughtiness Rewarded (vv. 16-26);

COMMENTARY

Protection and Provision Removed

— 3:1-8

The LORD promised Judah that He would be her Protector from all harm and danger should she come under attack. However, when Judah sins, this protection would be taken away. Continuing from where he left off, Isaiah argues that the Lord i.e. the LORD of hosts will take away from Jerusalem and Judah the stay and the staff. First thing to note is that the LORD introduced Himself to His own people as “ado nay-the word Lord” i.e. master. He is in charge of Judah and Jerusalem. This is the emphasis. Jerusalem and Judah have to answer to Him. They are not masters of their own destiny, to do whatever they like or to be like the other nations! Judah bears the name of God and must conduct herself accordingly.

If Judah were to ask why, the next phrase would answer the query! The

Lord is also the LORD of hosts. He is the covenant LORD whom Judah had made a covenant with. It is an unbreakable covenant that the ancestors of Israel had made with the LORD. Judah must abide by this covenant. Jerusalem is not a political or economic but a spiritual city. If she is in spiritual decay, political stability and economic prosperity cannot be an acceptable substitute before God. Judah will be punished for her spiritual decay! Jerusalem symbolises the heart and souls of Judah’s existence, being the spiritual capital of the nation of Judah.

Owing to her many unrepented sins, the LORD will take away the stay and staff that have been Judah’s protection and provision. The stay represents something that Judah leans upon to stand upright and not fall. The staff is that which supports Judah as she exists on this earth. The LORD will take Judah’s stay of bread and water away. This means that the LORD will take away Judah’s source of livelihood. The LORD will take away Judah’s very existence.

The list of what constitutes the stay and staff of Judah is described in verses 2 and 3. These include, “The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, **3** The captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.” Judah’s fighting men will be taken. Judah will not be able to defend herself from the weakest of nations. When the judge and the prophet are

taken, lawlessness will prevail. Justice will disappear from Judah and every man will do what is right in his own eyes. Might is right! When the prudent and the ancient are taken, Judah will be void of wisdom. She will make foolish decisions. She will destroy herself by her own bad decisions. The removal of the 'captain of fifty', means that her army will be destroyed. These were the first-rank leaders to keep the armies in check. If they are gone, it is as good as saying the army is gone because these leaders are the backbone of Judah's army.

The honourable man and counsellor were the men Judah would go to, for trusted and dependable advice. When they are taken, Judah will have no one to turn to for help and for direction of where to go and for the best decisions for Judah. The cunning artificer is the maker of all modern amenities. When they are taken, Judah will not be able to enjoy any semblance of the comforts of life. Finally, when the LORD takes away the eloquent orator, Judah will not be able to talk her way out of her sins! These charmers charmed the Jews into committing many sins and felt good about it.

The LORD will further humiliate Judah by taking away her leaders. Babes and children will rule over Judah instead of her princes. This has to be understood figuratively as it cannot be a reference to age but to intelligence. The LORD will remove the present princes and put in place, leaders who will be like children and babes. They will be incompetent in running the

nation. They will blunder their way through and lose their spiritual witness. "Wrestling not against flesh and blood but against principalities in high places" is a principle applicable across both the Old and New Testaments. If a king is void of godly wisdom, he will be completely impotent in ruling Judah which is a spiritual nation. Judah will be spiritually bankrupt if babes and children were to run Judah.

These incompetent leaders will oppress the people of Judah. They will run Judah into the ground and until it is destroyed by implosion. They will tyrannise one another. Threats of harm and death will be common in Judah. Neighbour who were supposed to help one another will now oppress one another. They would wait for their neighbours to be vulnerable before attacking them, hence taking advantage of their weak state. Honouring their fathers or elders will be outdated. It will be replaced with the child behaving himself arrogantly against the elders. The base or vile person will behave proudly against the honourable. When someone behaves proudly against another, it means they act insolently. They will shout and abuse those older and more honourable than them.

No man will be his brother's keeper. A man will intreat his blood brother for help when he is in want and while his brother has money. The phrase, "thou hast clothing" is a term for wealth because a wealthy person is one who has many changes of garments. He is asked by his brother to be his ruler so that his desperate

needs (described here as “ruin”) will be taken care of. However, the wealthy brother will reject the offer and not take up the responsibility of helping his brother. He swears that he will not be a healer i.e. one who wraps a piece of cloth around someone to heal. He declares that he has no bread or clothing. He denies that he can help when he does not want to help. He demands that he not be made their ruler. He wants nothing to do with his brother’s poverty or down-trodden state.

As a result, when the LORD lifts His sovereign protection over His people, they will be ruined. Jerusalem is ruined and Judah is fallen. The reason for their ruin is that their tongue and their doings are against the LORD. Both their words and actions are against the LORD as they provoke “the eyes of his glory.” The phrase “eyes of his glory” means “his glorious eyes.” Judah committed their sins of words and deeds in front of the LORD’s glorious eyes. They deserved the judgement of the LORD as described above. The LORD “deserted” them and handed them over to their lusts and sins.

Righteous and Wicked Rewarded — 2:9-11

The LORD’s judgement is always fair. He never over or under punishes anyone. Neither will He judge anyone incorrectly. He makes no mistakes. The faces of these wicked people will be a witness against them. They were not afraid or ashamed to let the world see on their faces their contempt for God and His Word. They

were definitely not repentant. They gloat in their sins arrogantly. Like the men of Sodom who displayed their sins publicly, Judah did the same. When God’s people sinned with not the slightest qualm of shame, there will be no repentance. Judicial hardening will soon set in and these wicked men will be beyond salvation. The indictment from the LORD against them is “Woe unto their soul!” These wicked men have rewarded evil unto themselves. This means that they have no one to blame but themselves. They deserved all that they experienced for their sins were the cause of their own destruction.

However, the LORD has a word of encouragement for the righteous. They must not stop doing what is just and righteous in the midst of great sin and wickedness in Judah. The LORD always has His remnant. They shall be well in the sight of the LORD as long as they continue to do good. The ellipsis is deliberate to strengthen the point that the righteous will end up well. The LORD knows what He is doing. He will not punish the righteous with the wicked. They shall eat the fruit of their doings. This means that they will be rewarded by the LORD in His time. He remembers their good works that were done for the glory of the LORD.

However, the wicked will be dealt with as well. They will definitely not escape. “Woe” is used again (vv. 9 and 11) to describe their plight in the sight of the LORD. The sound of woe is onomatopoeic. For the LORD to describe His own people in this light

reveals the depths of their sins and His great displeasure. What a waste, for their lives could have been such a blessings to the Gentiles with all that the LORD had blessed Judah with. The Jews threw all these away and indulged in their sins repeatedly until the LORD has to pronounced “woe” over them.

Also for emphasis and contrast with verse 10 is the use of the ellipsis to describe their state of sin, as judged by the LORD. In this case, it was “evil”. The word for “ill” has the idea of “evil,” (see same word used in v 9, translated as evil) whereas the word “good” was used to describe the righteous. The LORD will punish the wicked. They will certainly not escape His wrath. The LORD will reward them according to what they have sinned with their hands. They will reap what they have sown! They have sown evil they will reap evil! The just retribution of the LORD applied to all alike, without discrimination.

Leaders Led Many into Sin — 2:12-15

Verse 12 points us back to verse four where these replacement rulers behaved like children as they ruled Judah. They were void of understanding as to what is right and wrong! Their action is one of oppression similar to what the LORD said in verse five. The women who ruled over them, does not literally mean the women who ruled over Judah but these “children” leaders probably had many concubines or wives who controlled them. These Jewish kings were hen-pecked by their

wives and concubines and did whatever they demanded. The result was that these leaders caused Judah to err i.e. to go astray. They destroyed the way of their paths. They ruined the lives of the Jews. Kings had absolute powers. They made laws at will. These laws undermined the spiritual well being of the Jews. The Jews had no recourse. The righteous who remained in the path of truth and holiness were probably punished whereas those who compromised were led into sin. The duties of these leaders (kings and priests) were to protect, nurture and care for the Jews. Instead, they became the enemies of the Jews by leading them into sin!

The LORD stands up to plead with His people to repent of their evils and sins. The act of standing is seldom used to describe the LORD’s posture in dealing with His people. When someone stands, it means that the matter is urgent. He is about to act if there is no change in the situation before Him. For the LORD to plead, it means that he is about to do something to Judah that He does not delight in but He has to, because of Judah’s many sins. The word “plead” is a word based upon an established prior covenantal relationship. If there were no repentance, the LORD who remains standing would then be left with no choice but to judge!

The judgement of the LORD will come upon these leaders. They were called “ancients” and “princes.” These ancients would include the priests and the elders or lay leaders of the people of Judah. Their sins include, “for ye

have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor *is* in your houses. **15** What mean ye *that* ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts (verses 14-15).” To eat up their vineyard means to consume them by force. The fruits of the labour of the Jews were forcibly taken away (use of the word ‘spoil’) after they have been harvested. They were robbed clean because the verb for “eat up” literally means “to burn.” These ancients and princes would have no reason to literally burn the vineyard of the Jews for they would gain nothing out of it. However, they could take everything away like one who has burned up the vineyard. These spoils of the poor (a term used to describe the spoils of war) were hidden in the houses of these evil men. The word “spoil” has the idea of taking something away with force and violence.

Using a rhetorical question, the LORD charged these leaders of Judah to give an account for what they had committed against the poor in Judah. The LORD deliberately called them “HIS” people. They belong to Him and not these princes and ancients. They have to answer to Him for abusing His people. The verbs used to describe their violent acts are “to beat” i.e. “to bruise or crumble” and “grind” i.e. “to crush like one who grinds a meal.” The leaders were merciless in their abuse of the poor in Judah. They probably felt that they could get away with anything, even murder, as they were the most powerful men in Judah. There was no one above them to whom they would need to answer. They did whatever

their hearts desired and as dictated by their many wives and concubines. However, the LORD now stands before them and demands accountability!

Haughtiness Rewarded — 2:16-26

The source of Judah’s problems was the daughters of Judah. How strong the influence of women in lives of men is, are seen by the list of sins committed by these women.

First on the list was that they were haughty. It is an attitude of loftiness. They looked down on all. They trampled on anyone at will. They cared for no one but themselves. They believed that they were untouchable as they probably had the ancients and princes in their pocket, doing things according to all their whims and fancies.

Secondly, the Bible described their manner as women who, “walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet.” These women walked with their necks held high, casting their eyes downward on all they passed. Their “wanton eyes” refers to “eyes that blink coquettishly,” i.e. they fluttered their eyelids as they walked by to seduce men like some of these Hollywood and Bollywood movie stars. Their demeanour is made worse by the way they walked. They also take little short and quick steps coquettishly to enhance their eyes. In case they did not get enough attention, they wore trinkets around their ankles making tinkling sound with their feet. They were dressed to kill the unsuspecting

simpleton! However, they had to be wealthy and rich simpletons!

The LORD will judge them. He will smite them with a scab on the crown of their heads of these seductive daughters of Zion i.e. Jerusalem. The LORD with one simple stroke of His almighty hand rewards these haughty women with a disease that will make them bald. Their hair will fall off. Since the glory of a woman is her hair the LORD simply removes their glory. It is impossible to be haughty with a baldhead caused by a skin disease. The LORD will expose their nakedness. If it is a skin disease, it is possible that it does not only affect the head but also other parts of their bodies.

In that day of public shame and humiliation, the LORD will take away the “bravery of *their* tinkling ornaments *about their feet*, and *their* cauls, and *their* round tires like the moon, **19** The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, **20** The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, **21** The rings, and nose jewels, **22** The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the cringing pins, **23** The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils (vv. 18b-23).” All these ornaments that these haughty women loved to wear to draw attention to their carnal self is an act of bravery because they are so confident of their beauty. However, the LORD will quickly take away their “bravery” when they become bald and naked due to a

skin disease. They would not want any attention.

Their tinkling ornaments about their feet would be removed. Their cauls i.e. netting for their hair would also be removed since they were getting bald. They would not want to wear their moon-shape pendant around their neck to draw attention to their diseased condition. They would not put on any more expensive jewellery such as

- * chains i.e. pearl or pendant like jewels around their neck or on their ear like earrings;

- * bracelets and mufflers i.e. spangled ornaments;

- * bonnets i.e. expensive head coverings;

- * ornaments of the legs;

- * headbands;

- * the tablets i.e. boxes of perfumes;

- * the earrings;

- * the rings on their fingers and noses;

- * changeable suits of apparel to show-off their wealth;

- * the mantles i.e. cloaks;

- * wimples i.e. a wide cloak worn around the face to frame it to draw attention;

- * the cringing pins i.e. a cut out by implication that means a pocket or a bag;

- * the glasses i.e. mirrors that they do not want to have near them now that they looked so unsightly;

* the fine linen i.e. expensive garments to be discarded for what is the point when the body is diseased;

* the hoods i.e. diadems; and

* the veils.

Please note the use of the conjunction “and”, found in this long list of items. They are items these haughty women used to desire and put on to show off their beauty and are now taken away by the LORD. The items that they cherished greatly when they had their “beauty” become items that they despised because the LORD took their beauty away. The LORD used a scab to reduce these women to nothing!

Isaiah 3:24 (KJV) concludes their ignoble end, “And it shall come to pass, *that* instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; *and* burning instead of beauty.” A stomacher is something they wore around their waist to emphasize their wealth and beauty; it was replaced by a girding of sackcloth. The word for burning is a scar and it will replace their outward beauty! They stink instead of being sweet smelling. The LORD reduced them to creatures of shame and smell from top to toe. Not only was their beauty taken away from them by force but they were reduced to a heinous creature void of all physical beauty!

The men who allowed these women to seduce them and reduce them to puppets shall fall by the sword in battle. Poignantly, the LORD

described the sad state that Jerusalem will be reduced to. Her gate shall lament i.e. groan and mourn loudly for the pitiful state that her inhabitants had become because of her many sins. She is desolate and sit on the ground like a defeated and unwanted wretched soul! What glory it was she once possessed in the days of David. Now it is all gone. Jerusalem could have been such a great light to the world in darkness. However, her lights have been justly switched off by the LORD!

PRACTICAL VALUE

The sovereignty of God -- The LORD can do what he wants and whenever he wants to all men without exception. Judah, the people of God, was soundly punished by the LORD for her sins. He took away His protection and provision from her and Judah was reduced to nothing! Sinful men must humble themselves instead of thinking that they are the centre of the universe. Sinful men are nothing in the sight of God. Their power is weakness to God and their strength and might are vanity.

All who call themselves believers, and do not repent of their sins like Judah will incur the chastisement of the LORD. There is no escape. When the LORD leaves believers to their own devices, they will be reduced to helplessness. They cannot fight temptations or Satan with the arm of the flesh! The enemies will abound and easily defeat God’s people. The reason for the fall is

unrepented sin and not the power or might of the enemies.

Judgement of the LORD is always fair – In the midst of the LORD's judgement against Judah, He will ensure that the righteous are cared for. This does not mean that they need not endure the judgement of a nation as a whole. They still will because of the covenantal relationship the LORD has with Judah. He deals with Judah as a nation. For example, Daniel and his three friends were captured and sent to Babylonian because of the sins of Judah. However, the LORD blessed them for their obedience and faith while they were in Judah as the book of Daniel reveals.

The distinction between personal salvation and protection, and covenantal judicial chastisement must be clearly understood. The LORD will punish the wicked and protect the righteous. The righteous must not be so discouraged as to stop living righteously because of a lack of understanding of God's truth. This is also true in the last days when all men will stand before the LORD to give an account of what they have done in this life!

Husband and wife, man and woman – The influence of women over the lives and conduct of men cannot be underestimated. It is a true saying that behind every great man there is a great woman perhaps, even a greater woman. The wives and women in the church can do so much for the LORD as their function in a godly manner at home, caring for the children, and

supporting the husbands in the things of the LORD.

The women in this chapter ruined the ancients and princes who were the rulers of Judah. These foolish men then brought down a nation by their poor judgements and sinful decisions. They listened to their wives instead of listening to the LORD and His holy Word. They have no excuse. The wives might be the instigator but the men allow themselves to be instigated. The women were not the greater culprits in this chapter but the foolish men were. There can be no excuse for the abdication of their headship in the homes and in the church.

Beauty of women must be internal – External beauty fades like the dew that appears in the morning on the beautiful flowers of plains of the Sea of Galilee. They sparkle in the morning sun but by noon it is gone. The LORD easily destroyed these women by simply take away their beauty which was only skin deep. They could do nothing to prevent or retard the disease that caused baldness and skin problem.

However, the inner beauty of the Christian women never fades. It grows more beautiful with time. The aging of the body can never touch the inner beauty of the believer. This inner beauty is given only to believers. It is enhanced through a study of the Word of God, unceasing prayers and a life of holiness and obedience to God's Word. This means that every genuine Christian woman can possess this inner beauty. If only, they would make

the effort and set it as their priority. Christian husbands have a duty and godly responsibility to ensure that their wives develop this inner beauty. To do so they must encourage them to attend Bible Studies, serve the LORD and pray. AMEN.

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Isaiah 3:1-11;

TUESDAY: Isaiah 3:12-26;

WEDNESDAY: Isaiah 3:1-26;

THURSDAY: Isaiah 3:1-26;

FRIDAY: Isaiah 3:1-26.

3. If the LORD takes away His protection and provision from a local church, what would happen to that church? Please explain your answer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What makes godly leaders in the church? What makes a godly father or husband in the home?

2. Are you a godly woman or wife who is able to see or discern godliness in your husband or the man whom you might seek for as your husband? Please share.

4. Who should be blamed if the church falls by the wayside the way Judah fell in this chapter? What is the basis for your evaluation?

5. Are you adversely affected by leaders who do not attend prayer meetings or SGBF? Do you use them as an excuse not to attend yourself? Will you stop living righteously if others around you are carnal?

6. How influential is the wife over the spiritual matters at home? Is it a healthy or unhealthy influence? If you are married, do you control your husband or rather is your husband afraid of you?

8. What do you do when leaders cause the members to sin by their bad behaviour? What would you do when leaders cover up the sins of fellow leaders? Would you expose them if all else fails?

7. For the single women, would you marry someone who is afraid of you? Do you prefer a husband who is rich in material things or spiritual things or both?

9. If you know that the pastor of another BP church has committed the sin of adultery because you saw him with another woman in a compromising situation, would you expose him or mind your own business? Would you reason to yourself and say to let God judge?

10. If a woman comes to church and dresses in a manner that is not very decent, what steps would you take to resolve the situation? If it is a man, what would you do? If it is your own daughter what would you do?

11. Should Christian women put on make-up? Should they wear jewelry? Should they buy expensive ornaments like watches, rings, earrings, etc.?

12. What lessons can you learn from this chapter about God and about yourself?
