

# Isaiah 3-4

Good morning, everybody! We're going to be continuing in the book of Isaiah today, and today we'll be reading through Isaiah 3 and 4. That's right, both Isaiah 3 and 4.

*1 For behold, the Lord God of hosts is taking away from Jerusalem and from Judah support and supply, all support of bread, and all support of water; 2 the mighty man and the soldier, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder, 3 the captain of fifty and the man of rank, the counselor and the skillful magician and the expert in charms. 4 And I will make boys their princes, and infants shall rule over them. 5 And the people will oppress one another, every one his fellow and every one his neighbor; the youth will be insolent to the elder, and the despised to the honorable.*

*6 For a man will take hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying: "You have a cloak; you shall be our leader, and this heap of ruins shall be under your rule"; 7 in that day he will speak out, saying: "I will not be a healer; in my house there is neither bread nor cloak; you shall not make me leader of the people." 8 For Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their deeds are against the Lord, defying his glorious presence.*

*9 For the look on their faces bears witness against them; they proclaim their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil on themselves. 10 Tell the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds. 11 Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for what his hands have dealt out shall be done to him. 12 My people—infants are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, your guides mislead you and they have swallowed up the course of your paths.*

*13 The Lord has taken his place to contend; he stands to judge peoples. 14 The Lord will enter into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: "It is you who have devoured the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your*

houses. 15 What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?" declares the Lord God of hosts.

16 The Lord said: Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks, glancing wantonly with their eyes, mincing along as they go, tinkling with their feet, 17 therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the heads of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will lay bare their secret parts.

18 In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents; 19 the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarves; 20 the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; 21 the signet rings and nose rings; 22 the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; 23 the mirrors, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils.

24 Instead of perfume there will be rottenness; and instead of a belt, a rope; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a rich robe, a skirt of sackcloth; and branding instead of beauty. 25 Your men shall fall by the sword and your mighty men in battle. 26 And her gates shall lament and mourn; empty, she shall sit on the ground.

1 And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach." 2 In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. 3 And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, 4 when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. 5 Then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy. 6 There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.

Alright, so Isaiah paints a really harrowing picture in today's passage as he prophesies of the bleak future that awaits Judah and Jerusalem.

He points to a few big things to illustrate how far they've fallen away from God. One, he describes a weak and wisdomless Israel, one that is both ruled by infants and oppressed by infants. Their guides mislead them, their mighty men fall in battle, and Israel is left not knowing what to do. Two, he points out Israel's vanity and luxury despite their inner ugliness. He criticizes them for their haughtiness and obsession over image, and how their anklets and rich robes and bracelets and perfumes will be taken away and replaced with baldness and sackcloths and rottenness. And three, he laments the fact that they sin without shame. He likens them to Sodom due to how they proclaim their sin openly and without conviction, and how evil is all around them in the open.

But perhaps what's most damning about this picture of Israel is desperation for a savior, for a king who can help them out of their despair, and how they go looking in all the wrong places. In chapter 3 verse 6, Isaiah describes a man who takes hold of his brother and says, "you have a cloak, you shall be a leader and this heap of ruins shall be under your rule!". In chapter 4 verse 1, he describes seven women taking hold of one man and imploring him to marry them so that they can take on his name, even going so far as to saying that they "will eat their own bread and wear their own clothes". It's a pitiful, sorry picture that shows the hopelessness and delusion of God's people at this stage. They are so caught up in their sin and in chasing after worthless things, that even as the world around them falls into disarray and everything's going wrong, they keep looking to worthless things to try to save them.

I think we see this a lot even today. If we take a look at the world around us, it's so full of people who are so clearly unsatisfied with life, so clearly lacking in joy and purpose and hope, and yet they try to find meaning in all the wrong people and all the wrong things and all the wrong places. But Isaiah points them to the Savior they're looking for. He says in chapter 4, "In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious." The

“branch of the Lord” that Isaiah is referring to is a symbol of Jesus, of the fruit-bearing, life-filled King that is at the Lord’s right hand.

He says that the Lord will create over Zion a cloud by day and a fire by night, saying that the presence of God, just like it did in the wilderness for Israel, will be with them once more. There will be a day, where Israel will find the Savior they’re looking for, and they’ll finally find refuge and shelter in Him.

That’s the kind of God our God is. That even when we tear ourselves apart chasing after other things and deepening this pit that we find ourselves in, He is the Savior we need. His presence is available to us, so that we don’t have to search through all these other worthless things. He’s a refuge and shelter for us, even when we’re undeserving. Let’s take some time this morning to be reminded of the grace of our God.