

“Earning the Face You Wear” Isaiah 3:1- 26

Context: Isaiah, as a prophet of God, served as God’s prosecuting attorney, declaring His indictment against Judah and Jerusalem during the reigns of Kings Uzziah through Hezekiah. In chapters 2-5, Isaiah revealed God’s judgment on Jerusalem for (1) self-indulgent values, (2) irresponsible leadership, and (3) the self-absorption of their women. Interspersed in these indictments are calls for repentance and the revelation of the remnant’s salvation. Today’s account puts a face on the principles of (1) God’s judgment for individual and community sin and (2) His promised redemption of the repentant remnant (cf. Isaiah 3:8-11).

1. Facing societal corruption – Isaiah 3:1-15

Isaiah used bread and water as symbols of societal infra-structures that Israel leaned upon in order to function. He prophesied that those structures would be removed and that tyrannical juveniles would replace them. A heart lifted up against God by habit of speech and action, right before His very eyes, was the cause of Jerusalem’s disintegration. The habit of sin had formed itself on their facial appearance only to bring upon them the fullness of judgment that their countenance had already earned in part.

2. Facing female corruption – Isaiah 3:16-26

A terrible judgment befell the women of Jerusalem. They bore brands of slavery upon their foreheads, scalps balding from infestation of vermin, skin reeking from the stench of infections, while clothed in rags, with no men left for deliverance. It came true at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. Why the judgment? The women lifted themselves up by developing a beauty culture of luxury and vanity for the purpose of seduction and personal power. The vanity and sensuality used to gain power bred a vain and sensuous nation. Virtues of God’s righteousness did not flourish in a milieu of self-exaltation. God alone will be exalted, necessitating the humbling judgment of all who endeavor to exalt themselves in His place.

Study questions:

- Study of historical allusions and references deepens the meaning of the words used in the text. As a **Bible study method**, look up the “removal” of those in Judah by the Syrians in 2 Chronicles 28:5ff and by the Babylonians in 2 Kings 24:14. How was the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled? Now look up the display of Sodom’s sin in Genesis 19:4ff. How were Judah’s sins similar? Is there any similarity of personal sin, community sin, or national sin today? If so, what does Scripture say should be done?
- Isaiah 3:9 states that the “people’s faces bear witness against them” and that “they have brought evil on themselves.” How are the two statements connected? The principle, “you reap what you sow,” is taught throughout Scripture (cf. Proverbs 6:6-11; Matthew 25:29ff; Galatians 6:8-9; Revelation 20:12ff). How did Uzziah, Ahaz, and Hezekiah reap what they sowed (cf. 2 Chronicles 26:16ff; 2 Chronicles 28:16ff)? Whose face at GracePoint readily testifies of one who has sown to the spirit? Ask someone close to you if your face does so.
- Isaiah 3:10 alludes to a positive reward for some. Look up footnotes 5 through 11 (‘**On Last Things**’ in our **doctrinal statement** under **what we believe** at www.gracepointfellowship.org). When do the “righteous eat the fruit of their actions” and what does it have to do with salvation in Jesus Christ (cf. 1John 4:13ff)?

Transformation exercise:

Meditate on Isaiah 3:9 and memorize 3:10-11. Look at your face in the mirror before going to bed tonight. Do you have the appearance of one who has sown to the flesh or to the spirit? Pray Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19 that the face you wear may have the appearance of His presence.