

Isaiah 3:1-4:1 – Leadership Crisis

Isaiah 1:2-5:30

1:2-31 – Problematic Zion

- Judgment on Israel
- Call to repentance

2:1-5 – Future Glorious Zion

- The mountain of the LORD exalted
- Nations streaming to learn God's ways
- Peace and instruction from Jerusalem

2:6-22 – Day of Yahweh

- Judgment on human pride and idolatry
- All that is high will be brought low

3:1-4:1 – Leadership Crisis

- Judgment on Judah
- Inversion of power structures

4:2-6 – Future Glory

- The Branch of the LORD will be beautiful
- Survivors will be holy and cleansed
- Divine protection over Mount Zion

5:1-30 – Song of the Vineyard

- Judgment on Judah
- Inversion of power structures

Isaiah 3:1-4:1 — Overview

Verses 1-7: God Taking Away (Men)

- All supports and leaders removed from Jerusalem and Judah
- Boys and infants will rule, causing social chaos
- Leadership crisis and refusal to lead

Verses 8-15: Why God is Taking Away (Men)

- Jerusalem stumbled because they defy God's glorious presence
- Leaders have oppressed the poor and devoured the vineyard
- Divine judgment pronounced against injustice

Verses 16-17: Why God is Taking Away (Women)

- Daughters of Zion are haughty and vain
- Their pride will be brought low through humiliation

Verses 18-4:1: God Taking Away (Women)

- Removal of all finery and luxury items
- Beauty replaced with shame and loss
- Desperation leads to reversing social norms

Isaiah 3:1-7

All Supports Removed (1-3)

- 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.

Children Will Rule (4-5)

- 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.

Leadership Crisis (6-7)

- 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."

Leader -> Healer

In verses 6-7 we see a clear comparison between being the leader of Israel and being a "healer"
– חָבַשׁ (cha.vash) – literally meaning someone who binds up. It's the same usage in 1:6 about there being sores abounding in Israel with no one to do this healing work.

It's not until 61:1 that the full picture of this healing leader that's needed comes in to view in the passage Jesus read from when kicking off his ministry.

*"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;"*

— Isaiah 61:1

Isaiah 3:8-15

Jerusalem's Defiance (8-9a)

⁸ For Jerusalem has stumbled,
and Judah has fallen,
because their speech and their deeds are against the LORD,
defying his glorious presence.

^{9a} For the look on their faces bears witness against them;
they proclaim their sin like Sodom;
they do not hide it.

Righteous vs Wicked (9b-12)

^{9b} 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 them,
for what their hands have dealt out shall be done to them.

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.

Divine Judgment Against Leaders (13-15)

¹³ The LORD has taken his place to contend;
he stands to judge peoples.

¹⁴ The LORD will enter into judgment
with the elders of his people and its princes:
"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.

Echoes of Chapter 1

This passage strongly echoes themes from Isaiah 1, often using specific words that only show up in either chapter 1 or this chapter. This shows the continuing pattern of God's judgment on Jerusalem and Judah.

Isaiah 1	Isaiah 3	Notes
<p>⁶ From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds; they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil.</p>	<p>⁷ In that day he will speak out, saying: "I will not be a healer";</p>	Need for Healing
<p>⁹ we should have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah. ¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom!</p>	<p>⁹ they proclaim their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it.</p>	Sodom Comparison
<p>¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; ²⁰ but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword</p>	<p>^{9b} 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 them</p>	Good vs Evil Outcomes
<p>¹⁷ learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.</p>	<p>¹⁴⁻¹⁵ "It is you who have devoured the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?"</p>	Injustice Against the Poor
<p>³ The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.</p>	<p>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.</p>	"My People" - Failed Understanding
<p>²⁰ but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.</p>	<p>²⁵ Your men shall fall by the sword and your mighty men in battle.</p>	Death by the Sword

Sin of Sodom

What is the "sin like Sodom" in this passage that's being fleshed out? How does Isaiah see what Israel's sin is like and why would he compare it to Sodom?

Most of the prophets when referring to the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah see something more than just sexual immorality – it was a neglect and care for the outsider.

*"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom,
pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters,
neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.
And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me:
therefore I took them away as I saw good."*

— Ezekiel 16:49-50

Isaiah 3:16-17

Haughty Daughters of Zion

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.

Isaiah 3:18-4:1

Removal of 21 Items (18-23)

- 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.

Beauty Replaced with Shame (24-26)

- ²⁴ Instead of perfume there will be rotteness;
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.

Desperation and Role Reversal (4:1)

- 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."

Taking Away Reproach

Again we have hope in men which the end of chapter 2 specifically told us not to do!

Where else can Israel find hope for this? This, again, leads the reader to keep going when they reared in chapter 25:8 that there is some ultimate hope when it's Yahweh Himself who will be the one to take away reproach, not men.

*"He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken."*

— Isaiah 25:8