

# ISAIAH

## Chapter 3

### *Judgment on Jerusalem and Judah*

**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 the 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 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.**

**3:1–3** Leaders would be taken away by either death or deportation (see 2Ki 24:14; 25:18–21). (CSB)

Consequences of Israel’s defiance and its inevitable results. God is ready to enact the covenant curses described in Lv 26:14–46 and Dt 28:15–68. (TLSB)

That’s what happened to the people of Judah. The Lord removed His protecting hand. And the consequences of the nation’s sins began to sweep through society. Imagine a row of dominoes a

mile long. Imagine someone's index finger clicking the first domino over. Imagine the dominoes begin to fall one after the other. That, essence, is what was about to happen in Judah. Isaiah, the mighty seer, saw it. He painted the most graphic pictures he could paint in an effort to warn the people. Still, most weren't ready to hear. (LL)

**3:1** *is taking away from* – God takes away each and every prop that has been responsible to the people's survival, all the basic elements that sustain life. Thus, the props of bread and water. Bread and water are the most necessary of props, the most essential elements for sustaining life. God strips His people of bread and water. He sends poor harvests, famine. The general run of things, that man cultivates the ground, harvests the produce of the earth, that man labors and by his labor earns his daily bread, is interrupted. There is a lack of work, wages, means of gaining a livelihood. (Stoekhardt)

*support and supply.* Everything basic for life and civility, from food and water to government. (TLSB)

**3:2–3** *diviner ... charms.* Occult practitioners and snake charmers (see Dt 18:10; Jer 8:17), whose activities were condemned. Both legitimate and illegitimate kinds of assistance would be removed or deported (see 2Ki 24:14–16; Hos 3:4). (CSB)

**3:2** *mighty man and the soldier* – Together these make up the defensive and offensive strength of the nation. (Leupold)

Those protecting with military service. (TLSB)

*judge* – The judge is usually a person who can effectively serve as ruler rather than in a merely judicial capacity. (Leupold)

*prophet* – What a serious problem this creates! No one remained who could point out the way of God. Jerusalem inherited a famine of the Word of God that was more devastating than the scarcity of food and water. (PBC)

*diviner* – What may strike us as surprising is that Isaiah included soothsayers and enchanters in this list. Their presence among the people violated the clear Word of God. Yet it seems that God's people at this time chose to dabble in the occult. Isaiah reminded his readers that God will take away everything, the good and the bad. Nothing that made life as it was at that time would remain; even the fortune-tellers and the magicians would disappear. (PBC)

Interpreter of omens. Sorcery and soothsaying were strictly forbidden (Dt 18:10–12). (TLSB)

*elder* – This is a man who, because of his maturity, occupies a position of leadership in many of the affairs of the community. (Leupold)

**3:3** *captain of fifty.* A company of 50 was a common military unit (see 2Ki 1:9). It was also used for civil groupings (Ex 18:25). (CSB)

Along with governmental authority military and police authority declines and crumbles, authority that ought to protect the people against external and internal adversaries. (Stoekhardt)

The headman of a guild. He, too, must aid the judge and is the judge's other hand, as it were. (Luther)

*man of rank* – Men holding high office, the powerful, the aristocrats, who can coerce the madding crowd and settle quarrels, men who have the most authority. (Luther)

*the counselor* – Now follow the ediles, who look after public buildings, supervise roads and bridges, and have charge of the arsenal. These men must be shrewd. (Luther)

King's closest adviser. (TLSB)

*skillful magician* – Skillful men who design buildings. (Luther)

Or, skilled craftsman. This either continues the theme of illicit occult behaviors (ch 2) or indicates an overreliance on human abilities. Either way, the people's trust is not in God. (TLSB)

*expert in charms* – Hence this means to buzz about. A chancellor who is observant and industrious. This man is discreet and one who would be suitable for legations. He is a syndic or secretary, an orator, and one who could deliberate perspicaciously in difficult situations. He says that He will take away all these aforementioned things from the ungodly, and from this it follows that all these things come from God and are gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as military matters, etc. (Luther)

**3:4** *boys...infants shall rule over them* – God not only takes something from the degenerate people but also gives them something, replaces what He took from them. But what a replacement! Instead of rulers who govern them in the right way, He gives them inexperienced boys. “Ta aluliyim,” childishness, childish whims, childish devilry governs where justice and righteousness ought to reign. The scoundrels on the throne, on the judgment-seats, practice knavish tricks. (Stoecckhardt)

Leaders with no experience or wisdom, thus easily manipulated. (TLSB)

Not only would the young ruler, but no responsible person would want a position of leadership. The people would be so impoverished that no leader among them would be capable of changing the situation. As people vainly searched for leadership, they would turn to those who were not qualified and those who did not wish to “take charge of this heap of ruins.” (PBC)

**3:5** *people will oppress one another* – The citizens, the inhabitants of the nation, harry, oppress one another. All respect for position and age has disappeared. Children break with their elders, with their own parents. The rabble revolts against higher authority. There is general anarchy. And there no longer exists there a ruler and a judge who heads off excesses, no prophet who rebukes licentiousness. (Stoecckhardt)

Anarchy would result. The rule of law would give way to the rule of the jungle. No one would respect any authority except the authority of brute force. (LL)

Proverbs 29:18, “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.”

Vision in KJV is really revelation of divine truth. The faithful dispensation of divine truth is the only hope of a nation. Where this is wanting the people will sink into ignorance and corruption, till their destruction becomes inevitable. (CB)

When Moses went up on Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, the Israelites built the golden calf and then “sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry ... the people were running wild” (Exodus 32:6, 25). That’s the kind of thing that happens where God’s revelation is absent. People will get out of control and lose themselves in self-indulgence. (PBC)

The KJV uses *perish* instead of *restraint*. The Hebrew may be rendered, *made dissolute*. (CB)

There will be no lack of elders, and they will be without authority, for the young men will suppress them, and then the statement that secret envy and immature counsel destroyed Troy and Rome will come true. When good men are lost, the law is removed, since there is no one to administer it. Then might makes right. (Luther)

*despised to the honorable* – Everybody wants to be wise. Boastfully they say: “I am just as good as you are.” (Luther)

**3:6** Normally it was unnecessary to force anyone to be a leader. In 4:1 the same social upheaval is seen as seven women “take hold of” one man. (CSB)

*in the house*. Leaders will be selected secretly, in private places. (TLSB)

*You have a cloak*. Perhaps the one brother was not as poor as the others. (CSB)

Frivolous qualifications for leadership; possessing a cloak does not make one wise to lead. The chosen leader rejects this offer for equally ludicrous reasons when he denies that he has a cloak or bread (v 7). (TLSB)

As long as one of their number might seem to have at least a decent coat to wear that would give him more qualification for the office than others have, so utterly destitute shall they all be. (Leupold)

When the Assyrians and the Babylonians invaded Palestine, the prophecy began to reach fulfillment. Their conquering armies customarily first took the cream of society away as captives, leaving the rest of the population to search for new leaders. It happened just as God predicted. (PBC)

It was in such desolate circumstances, as painted here, that the kingdom of Judah found itself under King Ahaz. (Stoekhardt)

The leader is chosen not according to prudence, worth, and justice but according to power, whether he is wise or foolish. Only power is considered, while everything honorable is despised. (Luther)

*heap of ruins*. Probably Jerusalem (v. 8). (CSB)

His job is to see if he is able to raise up this fallen structure, this ruin, for a little while yet. (Stoekhardt)

When these men single out a brother of theirs as having at least this one qualification and shall endeavor to put the whole sorry mess (this catastrophe) under his hand, that is to say, put him in charge, then this brother will loudly protest, indicating how desperate and even beyond recovery the whole situation is. (Leupold)

This is figurative language. “I am far too unimportant for this.” It means that he wants to avoid authority. Prudent men do this when the mob rages. When it is out of its mind, nothing but death restrains it, as we saw in the case of the rebellious peasants. For they are without a government when they constantly substitute one for another. (Luther)

**3:7, 18** *in that day*. The day of the Lord extends over the whole earth. A similar situation prevails before the judgment of the world and the end of the world as described here. These are signs of the time which we are viewing and which point to the approaching end: all divine precepts in church are in state disintegrate. In governmental positions sit godless judges and rulers who are guilty of all sorts of devilties. Officiating within the church are false prophets, yes, soothsayers, servants of the devil, idolaters, blasphemers. In business life everything is in disorder. Honest labor is no longer properly rewarded. Each oppresses and ruins the next person. In short, the world is falling apart at the seams. (Stoekhardt)

**3:7** *I will not be a healer*. He cannot heal Israel’s “wounds” (1:6). No one will want the job of leader in so desperate a situation. (TLSB)

His remonstrance covers, first of all, the idea that he is not competent to heal what is wrong. In Hebrew he says “I will not be the binder-up,” sometimes translated “healer” or physician.” (Leupold)

*in my house there is neither bread nor cloak* – I do not have so much protection. Thus in the very time of war, even if there are only three in one city, they will disagree; and the rich are most hostile among themselves. The result is that the people remain rebellious and cannot avoid being devastated. There is enough trouble when there is peace, when the subjects obey; but what will happen when there is a rebellion? What are they? All the princes are exceedingly wretched and in a position that is constantly exposed to dangers. But the indolent mob has no regard for their hardships, but sees only the purple and a long array of horses, and I do not think there is another cause for the exploitation of the people than that they do not pray for their princes. (Luther)

**3:8** *Jerusalem has stumbled* – He returns to the guilt which he has shown in the second chapter when speaking about the crucifixion of Christ. They are constantly rushing headlong, and the greater the remedy it [Jerusalem] has applied to its civil affairs, the worse off they are. For rebellion is a desperate sickness. (Luther)

*Judah has fallen*. Consummated almost 150 years later. (CSB)

An especially strong form of statement is used to indicate that Judah and Jerusalem are as good as down on the ground, the so-called prophetic perfect. (Leupold)

*speech and their deeds are against the Lord* – Their tongues and their deeds are directed against God with hostile intent. Sin has burgeoned to the extreme. With their foul language, for instance, their blasphemies, with their evil deed and foul crimes, they make a go directly against God. (Stoekhardt)

Sin manifests itself in words and actions. (TLSB)

This is the ardent endeavor directed against Christ, who was denied and rejected. The speech is the teaching of the Pharisees, the endeavors are hypocrisy and the sin of stubbornness—the sin of refusing to believe the miracles that were performed in such great number. Instead, they persisted

in stiff-necked opposition to the Holy Spirit, as they heard from Stephen (Acts 7:51). Thus the speech is a teaching against the Lord. The endeavors are their good works, with which, in opposition to faith, they kept boasting of their holiness, as is the case today too. (Luther)

*defying his glorious presence* – Even God’s manifest glory did not restrain them from sin. (TLSB)

The glory of God is the exalted, glorious appearance of His holy essence. Sinners defy the great exalted, glorious God, the glorious eyes that reflect His holiness. Almost deliberately they hold their misdeeds up for God to see and thus call forth upon themselves God’s wrath and judgment. To defy God, to sin right before His very eyes, this is the height of sin and transgression. Such defiance on the part of sinners and apostates is a mark of the Last Times. Also in our day we see this sign of the judgment. (Stoeckhardt)

He mentions the battle fought out of wickedness against the Holy Spirit, for they saw the works of God and yet did not believe. This is called defying His presence. This is now the sin in Germany too. They condemn as evil what they nevertheless say is Scripture and cannot in good conscience deny. Such is celibacy; such is Communion under one kind and several other matters. They do not deny that Christ suffered for us, but by stressing their own deeds of satisfaction they do deny what follows from this fact. In the case of this sin there is and can be no repentance, for they are sinning against the Lord and scoffing at acknowledged truth. (Luther)

**3:9** *the look on their faces bears witness against them* – As with children, facial expressions reveal their guilt. (TLSB)

This means: to view sharply, to fix eyes upon sharply. The look on their faces is as much as their appearance. Meant is what we call physiognomy. Their facial expression testifies against them. Their sins and vices are written all over their faces. When sin rules in them to the point that is visible in their appearance, in the expressions and lines on their faces, then it is that sinners have gone to the extreme. So one can look at Judah, so one can look at mankind of the Last Times, and read on its face that it is a mankind that is drunken, pleasure-seeking, sensual, lascivious, vindictive generation hostile to God. (Stoeckhardt)

It is as if he were saying that their sin is manifest and that one cannot say that they are going astray and sinning against Christ out of ignorance. (Luther)

*they proclaim their sin* – They have lost all shame. (TLSB)

However, this is not simply mute exhibitionism. In their words they also reveal their sins, speak about them, boast of their shameful deed, and make no secret about them. All their fear and shame are gone. It is the final stage of the history and development of sin on earth that men seek no more to cover up their sins and shame, but leave them in the open, flaunt and brag about their shame. (Stoeckhardt)

They show no evidence of conscience, signifying as advanced stage of spiritual corruption. The human conscience responds to the laws of God inscribed in the heart, but these people had ceased listening to God’s recorded voice in Scripture. (PBC)

*Sodom*. When the condition has gone that far, wrath will soon break out. That’s the way it was at Sodom. The people there practiced fornication in broad daylight, on the streets, in the marketplaces, and spoke frankly and freely about these shameful thing. (Stoeckhardt)

It is if they commanded the people to do things in this way. They defend their sins as the Sodomites did, saying (Gen. 19:9): “This fellow came to sojourn, and he would play the judge!” They themselves wanted to be judges, just as today they command and command again out of pure malice. Therefore we can conclude from this, too, that all the bishops will perish; for they sin openly, and during the former rebellion some saw how they would perish. (Luther)

*they do not hide it* – Like the Jews in Acts (5:28): “We strictly charged you not to teach in this name.” No disgrace is greater than this. Therefore he compares this wickedness with that of Sodom, a passion for sinning. I think the sin of our countrymen is greater than the sin of Sodom was. Who has ever heard more horrible blasphemies, etc? (Luther)

*woe to them! They have brought evil on themselves* – Sin is its own punishment because it debases them and its consequences affect them (v 11b) (TLSB)

There is force in the word “evil.” For left in rebellion, they are in a ruinous life. They do not know by what kind of death they will perish. (Luther)

**3:10** The judgments in vv 9, 11 do not apply to the faithful, whom God will protect (2Pt 2:9). (TLSB)

*tell the righteous* – Now the prophet, reiterating what he has already said in 1:19, reduces the outcome of the present situation to basic principles. The nation could have repented, for it had many prophetic messengers, and could so have been counted righteous in the Lord’s sight and so it might have been well with them; they would have enjoyed the fruit of their doings. For the Lord loves to reward those who walk in His ways and give obvious tokens of His good pleasure. (Leupold)

For the sake of the few righteous God still upholds the world, just as He would have spared Sodom and Gomorrah had He been able to find ten righteous within them. (Stoeckhardt)

But in the midst of this judgment, the prophet spoke words of comfort to the righteous. God’s judgment is not indiscriminate; He knows how to deliver His own. The righteous are those whose once scarlet sins are bleached white as snow. God had declared them holy and right with Him. Through faith in God’s declaration, they were different from, the ungodly society condemned in this chapter. Their faith showed itself by different attitudes and different actions. (PBC)

Thus it is stated in the Psalms that it shall be well with them (cf. Ps. 112:5). For when the ungodly have been frightened, the Holy Spirit cannot fail to provide comfort. Abraham says in Gen. 18:23: “Wilt Thou indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked?” The Lord answered: “No.” For the Lord knows how to deliver His own “when His wrath is quickly kindled” (Ps. 2:11). He was able to deliver Lot from the midst of Sodom, just as He delivered the apostles from Jerusalem. In this manner Josiah was set free (2 Kings 23). The righteous man will prosper wherever God promises help to those who are righteous and gladdens<sup>8</sup> them with the promise of a reward. For Paul says (1 Cor. 15:58): “Knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” Thus in another place (cf. Is. 40:10): “Say to Judah: ‘Your reward has not been taken away.’ ” Thus here: “Say to the righteous: ‘It will go well with him’ or ‘His work is good.’ ” Only let him remain certain that he does not sin and that he pleases God. Let the Jews, Pilate, and Herod be afraid. And the angel says (Luke 2:10): “Fear not!” Thus the fainthearted must be buoyed up, for they are terrified and think that they are the first to bring on this disaster. Therefore Scripture says to them: “I will

deliver you.” But the ungodly are smug; they are not afraid, and they do not believe this prophecy. For this reason He says: “Speak, preach!” (Luther)

*fruit of their deeds.* Their faithfulness has beneficial consequences in life. (TLSB)

**3:11** *woe to the wicked* – As long as the earth endures, the righteous will always reside among the ungodly. In preparation for the final judgment, God will continue to judge the ungodly. As believers live in societies much like the corrupt one Isaiah described, they can take heart in all the promises of God. At some point God will judge all unbelievers and take His believers to the new Jerusalem. In the meantime, believers should not doubt the judgment awaiting the wicked. They will be repaid. Even if sin seems to advance daily and evil replaces good, turning the world upside down, God’s judgment will come. (PBC)

He will be in a bad way. This can be applied to the punishment and to the guilt. (Luther)

**3:12** *infants are their oppressors* – Inexperienced leaders (v 4) exploit the people. Poor leadership is a recurring theme in chs 1–39. (TLSB)

He describes a subtle and showy sin, the kind the pope and his saints excuse and defend in their own case. Now there is mention of the manifest sins with which they sinned against the laws of the state. The “oppressors” pick off and peel off; they skin and scrape. (Luther)

*women rule over them* – As infants are controlled by their mothers, inexperienced leaders are not really in control; they are being manipulated. (TLSB)

They call them oppressors and tyrants, not princes. Now he calls them women because they are not active in administration, give themselves up to pleasures, and have their minds on dancing, just as women do. (Luther)

In the Near East, neither the rule of the young nor that of women was looked on with favor.

*Your guides mislead you* – The very ones whose business it is to guide the nation are the ones that mislead them. Instead of clearly marking and pointing out, the road to be followed they have themselves “obliterated” (literally: swallowed the way of your paths”) the course that should be followed. (Leupold)

This is spoken against the false teachers of whom Jeremiah says (cf. Jer. 8:6 ff.) that they revealed visions to themselves and did not teach repentance. Thus in Micah (2:6) we read: “Evils shall not drop.” All the prophets had trouble with this argument: “We are Abraham’s children.” Likewise Christ in John 8:39. Thus the preachers said to them: “You are God’s people,” which, of course, is true. But the Lord has not on this account bound Himself to the ungodly, so that He puts up with their wickedness. Therefore the ungodly must be threatened, but the poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3) must have words of comfort proclaimed to them. (Luther)

*swallowed up the course of your paths* – They bring it about that all your efforts are for nothing. They bring you into wretchedness and trouble, even though you are good to them; for they separate you from My Word. But you have not been excused, for I am warning you. I am frightening you because you belong to the ungodly. But if I saw people who are terrified, I would buoy them up. The majority are always hardened. Few are they who tremble at the judgment of God, and yet on their account the promises of God must be proclaimed. (Luther)



**3:13** *has taken his place to contend* – The court scene (1:18) returns with the Lord bringing charges against Israel. (TLSB)

From anew the Last Judgment come to the attention of the prophet. By their insolent, evil ways, as pictured in V. 8-12, sinners of the Last Times draw upon themselves God's judgment. And the Last Judgment appears here again as the judgment which befalls the nations, all nation of earth. Everywhere among the nations awareness of the symptom of decay named in V. 1-12 will be in evidence. The Lord, who has remained silent for so long and has had so much patience, will when the time of patience has passed, come forward into order to inspire the earth with fear and show Himself visibly and stand there before the eyes of all the inhabitants of the earth. He will remonstrate earth's sinners, He will convict them of their evil doing. And this remonstrating then includes the judicial process, the sentence and the execution of the sentence. (Stoeckhardt)

*stands to judge peoples* – This is directed against those who make people happy by saying: "There is still a great deal of time." These things are said since this is also why sudden destruction will come to you. "They say: 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). But I am not predicting for times far in the future; but the judgment has been determined now, and the resolution has been concluded. He stands to execute judgment like an executioner brandishing a sword in his hand to cut off a criminal's head forthwith, as the psalm says: "He has stretched His bow" (Ps. 7:12). Three times he uses the word judgment, urgently indicating that the time is not far off. (Luther)

**3:14** *the Lord will enter into judgment* – Their indictment does not excuse the equally corrupt people. (TLSB)

That is, the apostles. They carried out the judgment when they left the Jews. Whether you understand this of the first coming or the second coming makes no difference. For it is true in both cases. (Luther)

*vineyard*. Represents Israel (see 5:1). (CSB)

**3:15** The leaders were grinding the poor, as men grind grain between two millstones. (CSB)

Apparently the figure is that of a man fallen prostrate, face in the dust, having his face pushed cruelly into the earth again and again. See Micah 3:1-3. Apparently the enormity of the transgression corresponds to the enormity of the judgment just pictured as descending on the guilty nation and especially the guilty leaders. (Leupold)

The distressed are the as the righteous mentioned in V. 10. The poor and the righteous are often synonymous in the psalms. The rulers regents of the people have fed themselves on the Lord's vineyard. They have plundered God's people. The poor had to see themselves robbed of their goods. The tyrants did not spare the life and limb of the poor. They have crushed the distressed. They ground down their faces, that is their person. They ground their flesh, their bones, as with a grinder. They have oppressed, maltreated them until they were left breathless, or they killed them by the sword and shed the blood of innocents. (Stoeckhardt)

Persecution of the righteous, bloody persecution, had begun already under the reign of such godless kings as Ahaz and then peaked during the final period of Judah's history at the time believing Israel became the church of Jesus Christ. Israel's elders, the scribes, and the high priests were the originators of the Christian persecutions. The oppression and persecution of God's church is on the whole a mark of the Last Times. And on Judgment Day the Lord of

Hosts, the Almighty, will litigate and remonstrate with the rulers of His people, generally with the tyrants of the earth concerning the evil they have done to His righteous children on earth. (Stoekhardt)

**3:16–24** For a NT warning against overemphasis on outward adornment see 1Pe 3:3–4. (CSB)

**3:16–23** Zion’s women are singled out as one example of the nation’s pride. Prophecy often addresses a whole category by depicting one aspect of it, rather than by making abstract statements about the whole category. (TLSB)

**3:16** *daughters of Zion are haughty* – Women of Jerusalem, representing the entire nation. Members of Judah and Levi, the royal and priestly tribes, would have populated Zion. (TLSB)

The daughters of Zion, who ought to be holy women, whose pride and adornment ought to be godliness, humility, modesty, good manners, have become insolent just like the daughter of men. (Stoekhardt)

So far the prophet has spoken of the men. Now he also speaks of the women, who, since they shared in the guilt, will also share in the punishment. He denounces in particular the impenitence and the smugness with which they boasted that they were descendants of Abraham. (Luther)

*with outstretched necks* – Proudly flaunting their beauty. (TLSB)

The most expressive gesture of pride is the proudly thrown-back neck, carrying the head high. We say today” stuck up. (Stoekhardt)

They contort the mouth in mockery. For by nature they have a face created for modesty. But alas, it says the opposite. (Luther)

*glancing wantonly with their eyes.*– Luther: “He is speaking of the misuse of the eyes, because they certainly would not use the face itself for modesty, but for lust. Therefore he calls them liars” (AE 16:47). (TLSB)

They go about with wanton eyes, throwing about uppity, amorous glances in feigned innocence. (Stoekhardt)

I think that this is said about those who use artificial coloring on their faces, which is a sign of lust and is alluring. He is speaking of the misuse of the eyes, because they certainly would not use the face itself for modesty, but for lust. Therefore he calls them liars. (Luther)

*mincing along as they go.* In the Near East the way one walked communicated specific attitudes. Ornaments on ankles made short steps necessary. (CSB)

Taking small steps, perhaps due to the anklets they wore, to attract attention. We might call this “strutting.” (TLSB)

*tinkling with their feet* – Sounds made by excessive jewelry. St. Bernard of Clairvaux: “If the daughters of Belial reproach you ... decked out and adorned like the Temple, answer them: My kingdom is not of this world (S. John xviii. 36)” (SLSB, p 218). (TLSB)

Fastened to the anklet-rings are lengths of chain, equipped with little bells. Oriental women today still flatter themselves with such coquettish jingling. (Stoeckhardt)

**3:17** *scab*. Scalp disease, producing baldness. *lay bare*. Their beautiful hair would fall out, and their coverings would be removed, bringing shame. (TLSB)

A repulsive scab shall cover their head instead of the beauty they sought. Where they seek to advertise their charm and attractiveness, the Lord will make the most repulsive to be seen, when perhaps half naked, they are led away captives and are unable to cover their shame. Similar sharp words were spoken by other prophets in their day (see Amos 4:1-3; Jer 44:15-30; Is. 32:9-13); but none quite so colorful and scathing as this passage. Isaiah may have known the Amos passage. (Leupold)

First he will uncover their shame. There is a beautiful figure of speech in the statement “He will make bald,” that is, He will uncover the disgrace of your unfaithfulness and ungodliness and will take the kingdom and the priesthood away from you. According to history, the other things were done by the Romans, as the psalm (68:1) says: “Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered, etc.” The crown of hair is the kingdom. (Luther)

**3:18-23** Eight types of fashionable clothing and 13 accessories make up the most complete list of finery in the Bible. It apparently did not concern them that these expensive articles were acquired by exploiting the poor (v 15). (TLSB)

Isaiah mentioned more than 20 articles of clothing and fashion used by the women of Jerusalem. AS the prophet focused his attention on the elaborate dress of these women, we must remember that the prophet was not concerned about dress and fashion. His condemnation was aimed at the heart of the women, not on their outward dress. (PBC)

The prophet castigates here the excessive love of finery and the unrestrained luxury of vain women. In the listing of the individual toilette items lies a bitter irony. This opalescent haberdashery is the pride of women. Their mind is wholly occupied by it. They have set their hearts on it. This is their life’s occupation. Their aim in life is to fabricate these pieces of finery or have them fabricated for them; to collect all these fancy goods and see to it that they are not lacking a single one of these vital items; to take good care of these treasures and to acquire them piece by piece and inspect them from all angles and arrange them one by one on their body. When they are then so beautifully decked out and wander out into the streets or into social gathering and draw male glances to themselves and lure admirer, then is fulfilled the fondest wish of their life. (Stoeckhardt)

It would hardly be proper to assume that every one of the daughters of Zion had all these articles of vanity here mentioned in her possession. But the beauty-culture in its cheaper aspects was certainly overdeveloped already in the prophet’s day. (Leupold)

**3:18** *Lord will take away* – Here again the grammar is difficult and the matter is unknown. I do not know whether we shall express the same idea. (Luther)

*headbands* – They were not merely hairnets but braided head-bands of gold and silver wire. (Stoeckhardt)

*crescent...pendants*. Probably moon-shaped; they implied veneration of the popular moon-god. (CSB)

Strung in a series, fastened about the neck and hung down to the breast. (Stoekhardt)

**3:19 pendants** – Elegant ear pendants. (Stoekhardt)

*bracelets* – Chains and bracelets worn around the arm or hand. (Stoekhardt)

*scarves* – These were fluttering veils. (Stoekhardt)

These were a species of veil consisting of two parts, the one thrown back over the head, the other hanging down in from front, with a space between the eyes. (CB)

**3:20 headdresses.** Perhaps a kind of turban (see Eze 24:17, 23). (TLSB)

These were headbands, diadems, otherwise head coverings for men, for instance, for priests or bridegrooms. (Stoekhardt)

*armlets* – Step-chains that connect the anklets. (Stoekhardt)

*sashes* – From qashar, cingere, beautiful girdles. (Stoekhardt)

*perfume boxes* – They were little capsules filled with musk. (Stoekhardt)

*amulets* – Lehashym from lahash, to whisper, charm, charm-accessories, amulets, small gold and silver plates which were inscribed with magic saying, which at the time served also as ornaments. These were worn in the ear or around the neck. (Stoekhardt)

**3:21 signet rings.** Contained a seal and were a mark of authority. (CSB)

They were worn on the finger. (Stoekhardt)

*nose rings.* Sometimes made of gold and worn by brides. (CSB)

Such rings, the size of a dollar, made of metal or ivory, were suspended from the pierced septum of the nose and hung down over the mouth. This was not exactly a beautiful sight. Vanity and love of finery cause women to become foolish and absurd. (Stoekhardt)

**3:22 festal robes** – to take off, actually removable clothing, expensive clothes which a person wears only on festive occasions and, when he come home, takes them off immediately to preserve their appearance. (Stoekhardt)

*mantles* – From this Semitic root halats or hala comes today's gala. Therefore: party clothes, evening dress. Maataphoth, from ataph, to cover oneself, to cloth oneself, roomy tunics, which were worn over the under tunics, coast with sleeves. (Stoekhardt)

*cloaks* – to spread out, large shawls. (Stoekhardt)

*handbags* – Delicately gaudy boxes that served as pockets, pocketbooks. These the women carried, just as they do today, when they went out, in the hand or on the girdle so that nothing of their treasures remained hidden. (Stoekhardt)

**3:23 mirrors** – Small metal plates which served as mirrors. Such little mirrors the women carried around with them as ornaments. En route on their walks they had the opportunity to inspect themselves, in order not to forget how beautiful they looked. (Stoeckhardt)

*linen garments* – Light-weight jackets of the finest Indian linen or vests. (Stoeckhardt)

*turbans* – Turbans made out of gay colored fabrics. (Stoeckhardt)

*veils* – To spread out, muffler-like shawls thrown about the shoulders and body. (Stoeckhardt)

**3:24 perfume...rotteness** – Instead of fragrance balsam, mold will be dispersed about them, they will have to smell decay. (Stoeckhardt)

There was an amazing use of perfumes among these people. They filled their houses with perfumes. “The scent,” He says, “will be rotteness.” (Luther)

*rope ... branding.* Captives were treated like cattle. They were led away by ropes and sometimes branded. (CSB)

Mark of slavery replaces articles of beauty. (TLSB)

Their garment will flutter. (Luther)

*hair...baldness* – Instead of their elegant coiffure, there will be baldness. (Stoeckhardt)

It is also remarkable that they used a curling iron. (Luther)

*skirt of sackcloth* – Instead of a luxurious mantle they will wear a loin-cloth of sacking, a hairy garment. (Stoeckhardt)

*branding instead of beauty* – A brand, such as was burned on the forehead by the conqueror on the conquered, will replace their beauty. (Stoeckhardt)

**3:25 men shall fall by the sword...mighty men in battle** – Just prior to this the prophet has again pointed to final destiny and final judgment. Again he brings us a scene out of the chaotic, dissolute condition that precedes final judgment and prepares the way for it. (Stoeckhardt)

**3:26 gates.** The gates are personified, as in Ps 24:7, 9. They will lament because the crowds that used to assemble there are gone. (CSB)

Key location of battle in a city, here littered with fallen warriors. The change from a “rich robe” to “sackcloth” (v 24) will come when Jerusalem is ravaged by war. (TLSB)

At other times the men gathered together and deliberated as to what was best for the city. Now the gates have been deserted. The daughter of Zion sits there with her head bowed to the ground. She is despondent, forlorn because she has been deprived of her men and warriors. (Stoeckhardt)

During the reign of Emperor Vespasian (A.D. 70-79), the ancient Romans struck a coin that pictures Jerusalem as a dejected woman sitting under a palm tree with a soldier standing before her. She looks down to the ground, apparently mourning the loss of her warriors and dejected

because of her defeat by the Romans. During Holy Week, Jesus predicted this judgment. He said, “When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that the desolation is near. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people ... Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles” (Luke 21:20, 23, 24). (PBC)

This judgment was brutal. All God’s judgments are brutal. He destroys those who are against Him. In the course of time, God has inflicted judgment upon individuals and nations. At times He uses world powers to inflict His punishment. For example, in 722 B.C., the Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel and carried her citizens off into captivity. Over a century later, the Babylonians sacked Jerusalem and led Judah away as a prisoner of war. Forty years after Jesus foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, the Roman legions fulfilled the threat of Jesus and did not leave one stone upon another. All these brutal judgments are reminders of God’s opposition to sin. They are all preliminary to the final judgment, when God will consign all unbelievers to hell. That is brutal too, but God is serious about sin, rebellion, and the defiance of His love and Word. Not only is God’s judgment brutal and harsh, it is also inescapable and inflexible. God is resolute and will not be influenced by mercy over the plight of those judged. The time for mercy is now; when God comes in judgment, the time for mercy is past. (PBC)

The description of this judgment continues into the first verse of the next chapter before we hear the beautiful promises God makes to His faithful people. (PBC)

Everywhere there will be many an image of death,<sup>12</sup> and with these words the haughtiness of the women has been described—the haughtiness which the Lord also threatens through the prophet. There is nothing that God wants less than that we be haughty in connection with these gifts, whether physical or spiritual, which He gives us; but He wants us to humble ourselves in His sight. He does not permit us to claim knowledge for ourselves, but He wants all praise to be given Him. Since He Himself is the Most High, He looks only at the things that are deepest. He does not want us (in case He gives us much, as He did to the Jews of old) to be puffed up against others; but He wants us to be humbler, knowing that the more numerous the gifts, the greater the reckoning will be. For “everyone to whom much is given, of him will much be required” (Luke 12:48). Therefore if the Lord bestows much, we must fear rather than be haughty. And there is no other sin that the Lord hates so much as He hates haughtiness, about which the prophet has said many things here. He also uses words of this kind to describe and discredit the smugness which characterized these people, just as it characterizes our braggarts in the church. They say: “We are the church, etc.” (Luther)

**3:1–4:1** The Lord prophesies that Judah will suffer due to a lack of sound leadership, despite its current prosperity. No matter how great the wealth you amass, the risk of loss is unavoidable. Invest in the true source of security and contentment: the Lord. His name, applied to you in Holy Baptism, covers your reproach. • Jesus, cover me in the robe of Your righteousness. Grant me honest shame and true repentance. Amen. (TLSB)