

## **ISAIAH: Chapters 2 and 3**

### **Wicked Behavior Will Be Punished**

This past week we have watched on television the absolute destruction of a good portion of a major city. We have seen the anguish of individuals who were going without food and water and standing for hours or days in the hot sun waiting to be transported to a shelter. We have heard the children cry. We have watched the water rescues of people from their roofs. We have seen miles and miles of rubble where homes used to be. And we have heard some reporters use the term to describe the devastation as being of “*biblical proportions*.” Such a comment indicates that at least some individuals are aware of the parts of Scripture that talk about the coming judgment and what it will do to the earth as we know it. If one really knows the Scripture, devastating and horrible as what we’ve seen this week in Louisiana and Mississippi is, it is still nowhere near what is yet to come. Yet it is good that at least some individuals are thinking about God in all of this aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The governors of both states have requested prayer and prayer meetings are being held around the country. Truly, our nation needs to be reminded of 2 Chronicles 7:14 and pray with all our hearts. But along with that prayer there needs to be a whole-hearted repentance and turning to God.

It is very timely that we are looking at the book of Isaiah right now because it has something to say to us regarding such things. Let’s read chapter 2, which begins a collection of prophecies of judgment that will continue through chapter 12 regarding Judah and Jerusalem.

Isaiah 2:1-22 (NLT):

*1 This is another vision that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:*

*2 In the last days, the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem will become the most important place on earth. People from all over the world will go there to worship.*

*3 Many nations will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the Temple of the God of Israel. There he will teach us his ways, so that we may obey him.” For in those days the Lord’s teaching and his word will go out from Jerusalem.*

*4 The Lord will settle international disputes. All the nations will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. All wars will stop, and military training will come to an end.*

*5 Come, people of Israel, let us walk in the light of the Lord!*

*6 The Lord has rejected the people of Israel because they have made alliances with foreigners from the East who practice magic and divination, just like the Philistines.*

*7 Israel has vast treasures of silver and gold and many horses and chariots.*

8 *The land is filled with idols. The people bow down and worship these things they have made.*

9 *So now everyone will be humbled and brought low. The Lord cannot simply ignore their sins!*

10 *Crawl into caves in the rocks. Hide from the terror of the Lord and the glory of his majesty.*

11 *The day is coming when your pride will be brought low and the Lord alone will be exalted.*

12 *In that day the Lord Almighty will punish the proud, bringing them down to the dust.*

13 *He will cut down the tall cedars of Lebanon and the mighty oaks of Bashan.*

14 *He will level the high mountains and hills.*

15 *He will break down every high tower and wall.*

16 *He will destroy the great trading ships and all the small boats in the harbor.*

17 *The arrogance of all people will be brought low. Their pride will lie in the dust. The Lord alone will be exalted!*

18 *Idols will be utterly abolished and destroyed.*

19 *When the Lord rises to shake the earth, his enemies will crawl with fear into holes in the ground. They will hide in caves in the rocks from the terror of the Lord and the glory of his majesty.*

20 *They will abandon their gold and silver idols to the moles and bats.*

21 *They will crawl into caverns and hide among the jagged rocks at the tops of cliffs. In this way, they will try to escape the terror of the Lord and the glory of his majesty as he rises to shake the earth.*

22 *Stop putting your trust in mere humans. They are as frail as breath. How can they be of help to anyone?*

Isaiah 2:1:

1 *The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.*

How does a prophet “see” the Word of the Lord? Similar expressions introduce the prophecies of Micah and Habakkuk. We might better understand the verse as translated in contemporary English: “*The divine truth that was revealed to the prophet.*” Just how the process worked we can never know. Although chapter 6 will give us a clue.

These expressions are telling us that the prophets’ words are based on an actual **visual experience**, and that therefore what they have to say is divinely inspired **and accurate as no other teaching from the pen of a man or a woman could be** (Jeremiah 8:8-10, 18:18).

You've heard people say, "*The Bible is only a book written by men,*" or "*God didn't write the Bible.*" They obviously have never read Isaiah. But I've learned over the course of my lifetime that there is no limit to the number of people who have no reluctance whatsoever to speak with authority concerning things they know nothing about. The Bible was written by men and women who were instructed as what to write by God.

Isaiah 2:2-5

*2 It shall come to pass **in the latter days** that the mountain of the **house of the Lord** shall be established as the **highest of the mountains**, and shall **be lifted up above the hills**; and all the nations shall flow to it,*

*3 and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

*4 He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.*

*5 O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.*

Here Isaiah sees a vision of a world without war. "*In the latter days,*" refers to some undefined time in the future, most likely during the thousand year reign of Christ on the earth after He returns (the Millennium). During this time the entire world will look to Jerusalem as its capital.

The hill on which the Temple stood was called "*Mount Moriah*" (2 Chronicles 3:1). "*The highest of mountains...lifted above the hills,*" doesn't have any reference to the elevation of Mount Moriah (also referred to as Mount Zion). Rather it suggests that Jerusalem will be the home of the King of the World and "*all the nations will flow into it.*" God will at this time restore the nation of Israel to glory and bless all the nations of the world, that is **all people in all nations of the world who have accepted Christ as their Savior**. The rest will go to Hell to await final judgment.

The idea is simply that where now disputes are settled by the sword, during the Millennium they will be settled by peaceful arbitration; and where now men and women spend time and energy in studying the art of war, there will come a time when instead they will settle issues peacefully.

We now move into the first of three series of judgment prophecies. The first covers Isaiah 2:6-4:1; the second, 5:1-30; and the third, 9:8-10:34. These passages give us a pretty clear view of world conditions in the eighth century B.C.

Isaiah 2:6-8:

*6 For you (God)<sup>1</sup> have rejected your people, the house of Jacob, because they are full of things from the east and of fortunetellers like the*

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<sup>1</sup> Parentheses added.

*Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners.*

*7 Their land is filled with silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is filled with horses, and there is no end to their chariots.*

*8 Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made.*

We could sum up these three verses by saying the land of **Judah has no room for God**. That is the condition we see in the United States today. If we were smart, we would pay attention to what happened to Judah so that we might avoid the same outcome. Do you think perhaps the people of Judah passed laws which prohibited prayer in schools? Do you think Judah passed laws that prohibited the Ten Commandments from being displayed in government buildings? Do you think Judah accepted and promoted homosexuality and same sex marriage? Do you think Judah flaunted sexuality in every aspect of its culture? Do you think the people of Judah thought that each person had the right to create their own god, one that made them feel comfortable and to whom they had no accountability or dependence? We too bow down to the work of our hands, to what our own fingers have made, and we have no room for God anymore.

There is little doubt in my mind that if Jesus Himself returned to warn the people of this country of what was about to happen to us if we don't turn from our evil ways, He would be rejected and ridiculed just as He was the first time He came, and just as Isaiah was when he tried to warn them in the eighth century B.C.

Judah was, and the United States is, so full of their own successes that they forgot, and we have forgotten, that *“the Lord alone will be exalted,”* a theme that runs throughout Isaiah's prophecies (e.g., Isaiah 31:1). **The warning here is against foreign influences in general, which threaten the unique relationship between God and His people.** *“The east,”* in verse 6 suggests exotic ideas and foreign influences, and the Philistines represent all that Saul and David had fought to free Israel from. *“Striking hands with foreigners”* means that there are foreigners everywhere in the land and that the people of God are shaking hands with them or making agreements with them. Isaiah is not saying that there is anything wrong with having a lot of foreigners in the country, that would be racism. God elsewhere in Scripture (Exodus 23:9; Leviticus 19:10, 33, 34; Zechariah 7:9, 10) tells His people to take in the stranger, the foreigner, to treat them well and to remember that they were once foreigners in a strange country. The danger is that in all the tolerance and acceptance of new ideas, new languages, and new religions, God will be forgotten. And that is what was happening in Judah. They at first had tolerated and accommodated the worship and the idols of the foreigners by building the *“high places”* where such idols were worshiped. Then the Jews had begun worshiping those idols themselves, thereby *“striking hands”* with the settlers and making alliances with them. Tolerance led to acceptance and then to participation.

The United States of America was founded and thrived on a belief in the one true God of the Bible. The freedom to worship as guaranteed in our constitution implied the freedom

to worship the one true God of the Bible as a member of *any Christian or Jewish* denomination. This freedom was not intended to encourage Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or other foreign gods and religions. It is the acceptance and accommodation of such foreign beliefs that has contributed to our nation as a whole forgetting, and even rejecting, the Lord God Jehovah. Tolerance has led to acceptance and to participation as we are seeing many reject their Judeo-Christian heritage to embrace Islam and other ideologies, including an atheistic reliance on “*science*” as expressed in the concept of Darwinism and evolution.

Isaiah 2:9-11:

*9 So man is humbled, and each one is brought low— do not forgive them!*

*10 Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of the Lord, and from the splendor of his majesty.*

*11 The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.*

Throughout this section (Isaiah 2:6-4:1) and many others in the Book of Isaiah, there is an interesting interplay between the judgment which the Lord will inflict on the nation by the Assyrian (722 BC, 701 BC) and Babylonian (605-537 BC) captivities and the judgment which will come on Israel and the whole world in the “*last days*” just before the Millennium. Though many of the predictions in 2:10-21 happened when Assyria and Babylon attacked Israel and Judah, **the passage looks ahead to a cataclysmic judgment on the whole world** <sup>2</sup>

Isaiah 2:12-16:

*12 For the Lord of hosts **has a day against all** that is proud and lofty, against **all** that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low;*

*13 against **all** the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against **all** the oaks of Bashan;*

*14 against **all** the lofty mountains, and against **all** the uplifted hills;*

*15 against **every** high tower, and against **every** fortified wall;*

*16 against **all** the ships of Tarshish, and against **all** the beautiful craft.*

Notice in verses 9, and 11-16 the emphasis on haughtiness and pride. Verses 12-16 particularly describe for us the fate of the proud and arrogant. Pride is listed as one of the seven deadly sins and throughout the Bible God consistently says He will punish the proud person and bring them to their knees (Proverbs 8:13; 11:2; 16:5, 18; 1 John 2:16 are just a few of the references). Humility is the opposite of pride. God also promises to bless the humble person (Psalm 10:17; Proverbs 22:4; 29:23; Isaiah 57:15; Matthew 18:4; 23:12; James 4:6, 10)

In these verses mighty trees, high mountains, huge fortified towers, and tall ships all represent proud and arrogant people. “*Ships of Tarshish*” reminds us of our recent study in Jonah. Tarshish had one of the biggest shipping industries in the known world at that

<sup>2</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. 1983-c1985. The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures . Victor Books: Wheaton, IL

time, with large seaworthy vessels, which could carry great loads and travel long distances. This passage tells us to take a close look around us at all the great idols we create: money, homes, power, sex, and all kinds of other self-indulgent satisfactions, and to remember that they pass away and cannot compare with the glory and majesty of the Lord. In our culture the monuments we proudly build to ourselves, such as the best submarines and anti-aircraft carriers, tall buildings, great SUVs and luxury automobiles, million-dollar homes, etc., will be as nothing when the Lord lifts His hand against them.

Isaiah 2:17-22:

*17 And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.*

*18 And the idols shall utterly pass away.*

*19 And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the splendor of His majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth.*

*20 In that day mankind will cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats,*

*21 to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the splendor of His majesty, when He rises to terrify the earth.*

*22 **Stop regarding man** in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?*

These verses speak to the basic nature and values of people. They will finally toss away their idols of silver and gold when they see the wrath of God beginning to unfold. Moles and bats live in the darkness of caves and holes in the ground, and this will be a very dark day for the wicked. They will clearly see that they no longer can trust in the wisdom of mankind because mankind's materialism, arrogance, and secularism will be powerless before the almighty God of the universe. They will no longer be able to trust in people and their achievements and will throw away their idols, but it may be too late. Today is the day to worship the Lord God. Today is the day of salvation:

2 Corinthians 6:2, NKJ:

*For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

So the big ideas, or the main themes, in this chapter are:

1. God wins. God will be victorious. He tells us that upfront in verses 1-4. Worship of the true God will be established in Jerusalem. So God starts this chapter, this vision He gave Isaiah, with the good news. God also assures us that peace will ultimately prevail.

2. The bad news, at least for some, is that the arrogant, the haughty, all proud people, will be humbled. Though maybe that's not such bad news after all. The promise is that the Lord God will be exalted one way or another.

Now let's move on to chapter 3 and we will include the first verse of chapter 4, because it concludes this vision of Isaiah.

## CHAPTER 3

Isaiah 3:1-26 (NLT):

*1 The Lord, the Lord Almighty, will cut off the supplies of food and water from Jerusalem and Judah.*

*2 He will destroy all the nation's leaders—the heroes, soldiers, judges, prophets, diviners, elders,*

*3 army officers, honorable citizens, advisers, skilled magicians, and expert enchanters.*

*4 Then he will appoint children to rule over them, and anarchy will prevail.*

*5 People will take advantage of each other—man against man, neighbor fighting neighbor. Young people will revolt against authority, and nobodies will sneer at honorable people.*

*6 In those days a man will say to his brother, “Since you have a cloak, you be our leader! Take charge of this heap of ruins!”*

*7 “No!” he will reply. “I can’t help. I don’t have any extra food or clothes. Don’t ask me to get involved!”*

*8 Judah and Jerusalem will lie in ruins because they speak out against the Lord and refuse to obey him. They have offended his glorious presence among them.*

*9 The very look on their faces gives them away and displays their guilt. They sin openly like the people of Sodom. They are not one bit ashamed. How terrible it will be for them! They have brought about their own destruction.*

*10 But all will be well for those who are godly. Tell them, “You will receive a wonderful reward!”*

*11 But say to the wicked, “Your destruction is sure. You, too, will get what you deserve. Your well-earned punishment is on the way.”*

*12 Children oppress my people, and women rule over them. O my people, can’t you see what fools your rulers are? They are leading you down a pretty garden path to destruction.*

*13 The Lord takes his place in court. He is the great prosecuting attorney, presenting his case against his people!*

*14 The leaders and the princes will be the first to feel the Lord’s judgment. “You have ruined Israel, which is my vineyard. You have taken advantage of the poor, filling your barns with grain extorted from helpless people.*

*15 How dare you grind my people into the dust like that!” demands the Lord, the Lord Almighty.*

*16 Next the Lord will judge the women of Jerusalem, who walk around with their noses in the air, with tinkling ornaments on their ankles. Their eyes rove among the crowds, flirting with the men.*

*17 The Lord will send a plague of scabs to ornament their heads. Yes, the Lord will make them bald for all to see!*

*18 The Lord will strip away their artful beauty—their ornaments, headbands, and crescent necklaces;*

*19 their earrings, bracelets, and veils of shimmering gauze.*

*20 Gone will be their scarves, ankle chains, sashes, perfumes, and charms;*

*21 their rings, jewels,*

*22 party clothes, gowns, capes, and purses;*

*23 their mirrors, linen garments, head ornaments, and shawls.*

*24 Instead of smelling of sweet perfume, they will stink. They will wear ropes for sashes, and their well-set hair will fall out. They will wear rough sackcloth instead of rich robes. Their beauty will be gone. Only shame will be left to them.*



*25 The men of the city will die in battle.*

*26 The gates of Jerusalem will weep and mourn. The city will be like a ravaged woman, huddled on the ground.*

*4:1 In that day few men will be left alive. Seven women will fight over each of them and say, "Let us all marry you! We will provide our own food and clothing. Only let us be called by your name so we won't be mocked as old maids."*

The third and fourth prophecies in this series turn from the plight of man in general to the situation in Jerusalem in particular. The description of the lack of effective government and the breakdown of law and order in the city are set in the context of a famine (verse 1), and are clearly interpreted as punishment brought upon the city by the sins and wickedness of her leaders (verses 13-15). We see here a society where insolence, greed, injustice, and godlessness prevail.

Isaiah 3:1-4 (NRSV):

*1 For now the Sovereign, the Lord of hosts, is taking away from Jerusalem and from Judah **support and staff**— all support of bread, and all support of water—*

*2 warrior and soldier, **judge** and prophet, diviner and elder,*

*3 captain of fifty and dignitary, counselor and skillful magician and expert enchanter.*

*4 And I will make boys their princes, and babes shall rule over them.*

This once holy city had strayed so far from the path of obedience that God would bring about judgment against them by creating a famine and weakening their ability to defend themselves. Soldiers have not yet returned from the battlefields. Judges can't be relied on to preserve justice and peace. That should certainly ring a familiar note to all of us. Even the skills and charms of false prophets, diviners, soothsayers, and magicians, often a last resort for the frightened and superstitious, have nothing to offer. "*Boys their princes, and babes shall rule over them*" simply means that their leaders would be like infants unable to control themselves, much less to lead the nation. So disorder and confusion would prevail in the place of orderly government. When God is forgotten in a society, effective government always breaks down.<sup>5</sup> It's happening right here today with the government of the United States.

Isaiah 3:5-7:

*5 The people will be oppressed, everyone by another and everyone by a neighbor; the youth will be insolent to the elder, and the base to the honorable.*

*6 Someone will even seize a relative, a member of the clan, saying, "You have a cloak; you shall be our leader, and this heap of ruins shall be under your rule."*

*7 But the other will cry out on that day, saying, "I will not be a healer; in*

<sup>5</sup> Ironside, H. A., *Isaiah*.

*my house there is neither bread nor cloak; you shall not make me leader of the people.”*

The authority of the elders will be undermined by insolent youth. Those who live a decadent life style will have no respect for honorable people. There’s that familiar note again. In their desperation, people will follow anyone who might seem to be able to provide a way of escape from their misery and bring order out of chaos. But those to whom they turned were just as confused and incompetent as everyone else, and so refused any role of leadership.

Isaiah 3:8-12:

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

*9 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 innocent how fortunate they are, for they shall eat the fruit of their labors.*

*11 **Woe to the guilty!** How unfortunate they are, for what their hands have done shall be done to them.*

*12 My people—children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, your leaders mislead you, and confuse the course of your paths.*

The root cause of all the trouble is found in verse 8, “*Jerusalem is ruined and Judah has fallen, because what they say and what they do are against God’s will and therefore defy His role as king over all people.*” Thus they have brought judgment upon themselves and the “woes” begin. In verses 9 and 11 God promises to bring judgment on them. However, in verse 10 **God promises to care for the righteous.** In verse 12, “*children are their oppressors, and women rule over them*” is possibly, or probably, not literal, but instead suggests the “immature” and “weak” will be their rulers.

Isaiah 3:13-15:

*13 The Lord rises to argue his case; he stands to judge the peoples.*

*14 The Lord enters 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? says the Lord God of hosts.*

This is a trial scene. The Lord rises to judge the defendant, the unrepentant people of Israel. Judah’s leaders have not paid any attention to the needs of the poor. The breakdown of society is a direct result of their criminal behavior. In verses 13-15, Isaiah sees a vision of the heavenly court in which people are confronted with their sins. Psalm 82:1 describes this scene for us as well:

*1 God presides over heaven's court; he pronounces judgment on the judges.*

The elders and princes of Judah take their place before the judgment seat of the Lord alongside the leaders of all the other nations of the world. Judah's greed and inhumanity are no better than that of their Gentile neighbors. The damage they have done to the "vineyard" of the Lord, which is Judah, is inexcusable.

This direct confrontation between men/women and the judge of all the earth is about the ultimate social and moral responsibility which each one of us has for others.

Then Isaiah directs his condemnation on the women of Israel. Isaiah 3:16-26:

*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 the Lord will afflict with scabs 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 scarfs;*

*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 garments of gauze, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils.*

*24 Instead of perfume there will be a stench; and instead of a sash, a rope; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a rich robe, a binding of sackcloth; instead of beauty, shame.*

*25 Your men shall fall by the sword and your warriors in battle.*

*26 And her gates shall lament and mourn; ravaged, she shall sit upon the ground.*

When women desire beauty just for the sake of gratifying their own desire to make others drool over their beauty, they reflect the moral decay of the nation and detract from the glory of God. We see such behavior everywhere we look today and according to these verses such behavior existed in Judah as well in the eighth century BC. Instead of emphasizing outward beauty, women should develop beauty on the inside (1 Timothy 2:9,10; 1 Peter 3:3,4). "Mincing along as they go, tinkling with their feet, was a description of women who put ornamental chains around their ankles requiring shorter steps which produced tinkling sounds which attracted attention. I hope that bit of information doesn't leave this room or the very next fashion statement we'll see will be tinkling chains on women's ankles.

Women today, however, have their own method of attracting attention. They wear very

tight tops to seem as if they were topless. Others wear so little that one is provided with a view of a good portion of bare chest. They also wear skin-tight pants that leave very little to the imagination about what's underneath, and to top it all off they expose a very generous portion of bare skin below their naval.

Am I such a prude that I'm not attracted by the nakedness of women? To the contrary. I have to fight every natural impulse not to stop and stare at them. But I question the wisdom of their dressing like that. It seems like poor judgment and I wonder what drives them to do it. Does it make a woman feel good when she's attractive to men and when men obviously glance her way? I'm sure that it does. Does it make her feel like she's going to attract the perfect man of her dreams by being so sexually provocative? I think that could very well be true as well. But I can tell you that from a lifetime of girl watching, until of course I married Betty, there is only one thing a boy or man is attracted to when he sees a girl or a woman so exposed. His first thought is not one of respect and a desire to establish a lifelong relationship. His first thought is sexual and he will develop that thought in any number of ways. The thing that the girl or woman wants most is the last thing that she will get by appealing only to a man's sexual interests.

The chances are that such a girl or woman will attract all kinds of men and allow herself to become sexually involved, thinking that is what love is all about. But all she'll get is disappointment, hurt, and a feeling of despair and depression. And with each new sexual encounter she will give a little bit of her precious self away and before long she'll have very little or none to give when Mr. Right does come along. That relationship too will then probably fail, or at least have big problems. The same thing happens to a man in multiple sexual relationships. That's a big reason why half the married people in our country get divorced and a good percentage of the other half don't get along. We live in a country that requires extensive training in order to get a driver's license, a pilot's license, or a license to practice medicine, but we don't even require a single hour of counseling for people who want to get married and become wives and mothers, husbands and fathers—who want to take on the most important job in the world, that of rearing the next generation.

In these verses such vain women came in for a stern rebuke. In their pride and empty-headedness, their primary concern was personal appearance. They sought after every possible device known to humankind to add to it. But God was about to punish them with diseases that would disfigure them and make them repulsive to former admirers. You might be amazed at how glamorous Hollywood stars end up when age robs them of beauty and sexuality. That is not what life is all about and it's certainly not what provides real happiness in life. It simply, as it did in Judah, reflects the moral decay of the nation and detracts from the glory of God. So the exotic luxurious lifestyle of Judah came to a swift and final end.

In addition, many of the eligible men will be killed in battle so that women will be fighting over the few available ones left. Verse 1 of chapter 4 tells us that these women will be so desperate that they beg the men to marry seven of them at once. These women will be willing to be participants in polygamy just to say that they are married. How sad.

We want to close today by focusing on the one bright shining promise in this chapter, verse 10. While the overall tone of the chapter is warning and promise of judgment, God provides a way to avoid the judgment. He always does, if we listen to it and if we obey.

So let's not lose sight of the fact that God says, "*It will go well with the godly.*" Their actions will bring them blessing. So that causes us to wonder, "*what does it mean to be godly?*" and "what actions bring this reward or blessing?"

A godly person is one who has given the Lord God Jehovah his or her whole heart. And we give our whole heart by realizing that God's Son, Jesus Christ, died to take the judgment or punishment we deserve for our sins. Then He came back to life, returned to heaven, and lives today to help you and me and to forgive us.

The actions that bring blessing are living a life of faith and obedience to all Christ asks us to do. This is what constitutes making Christ the Lord of our life, basically putting Him in charge of all that we think and are and do. We let God call the shots in our lives and live to please Him.

That brings blessing in this life and assures us of a place in heaven in the next life. Don't leave here this morning without making sure you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and are walking the road of godliness.