

Boys for Men – Isaiah 3:1-15

Introduction – One of the things we learn from the Bible is that, while there is a separation of church and state (both are established authorities), there is no separation from God and state. This means that when a nation falls into any idolatry (including the idolatry of trusting in demos, the people-god), it is only a matter of time until that nation also falls under tyranny. Rulers who hate the first Great Commandment will soon show their true colors, hating the second as well. A nation which places its trust in anything other than the Lord God Almighty will lose everything it thought it could put its trust in. This is true for Israel and especially for any nation blessed with the knowledge of the true King of kings.

What is Going to Happen: Boys for Men (vv1-7) – Why should Judah sever themselves from the leaders who trust in men (2:22)? Because the LORD is going to remove all of Judah's stability and leadership (vv1-3). He will bring in childish, capricious, and ruthless leaders (v4), fragmenting society socially and morally (v5) until no one wants any part of leadership at all (vv6-7).

Why This is Going to Happen: Brazen Iniquity (vv8-12) – Jerusalem does not trust in God, but in men, in military might, in wealth, in their own "knowledge" and "wisdom." Their society, like Sodom, openly denied God's sovereign reign and laws and openly oppressed His angel-messengers (vv8-9). However, God will not judge indiscriminately; it shall be well with the righteous and terrible upon the wicked (vv10-11). Verse 12 would bring to mind, for instance, the narcissistic, self-serving king Ahab and his dominating queen Jezebel, or the wicked rule of Athaliah in the southern kingdom, destroying the ways of righteousness and grinding the faces of the righteous into the ground.

The Lord Takes His Stand: A Formal Indictment (vv13-15) – God stands as a prosecutor making His case against these rebellious leaders. Kingship is not a privilege; it is a responsibility to serve and protect God's people. The Lord had established Israel as a vineyard to be cultivated; these kings have instead devoured and destroyed that vineyard. They have plundered the weak and poor, they have ground them down to take all they could for themselves. But Sovereign Yahweh of all strength will not stand and watch.

Loss of Stability – Consider again verse 1, *"For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stock and the store..."* The warning for every generation is this: God will not allow a people who trust in the things which can be shaken to remain in a place of security and stability. When the worship of a people goes awry, in doctrine and in practice, there are social, economic, and political repercussions.

Supplies – Why is our nation so wealthy and why does Jesus teach us to pray, *"Give us this day our daily bread?"* Do we really see any connection to our supplies and *our Father in heaven*? What is our tithe supposed to teach us?

Leadership – When the church denies the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Resurrection, the inerrancy of Scripture, and the requirements of those Scriptures for qualifications for leadership in the church, relying instead upon modern notions of egalitarianism, individualism, and secular humanism, she has abandoned her God and set her people on a path of sentimentalism and impotence. The civil government will respond, seizing the opportunity to be the nanny-state, the divine protector and provider, the all-wise lawmaker and administrative bureaucrat, the savior from cradle to grave.

Compartmentalized Gods – *"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan"* (Prov 29:2). There is no separating God and state. When a nation lives like Isaiah 3:8-9, provoking *"the eyes of His glory,"* the Lord will take away the very *"stock and store"* upon which that nation has trusted.

True Leadership – What does godly leadership look like? John 10:10-11 records these words of Jesus, *"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."* Two things. First, these are wonderful comforting words for those who trust this King as Lord of all and receive gratefully from Him all things that He brings. He has given His life for His sheep and He will grant eternal life to them all – and life *"more abundantly"*. But, second, these are not just sweet words. They are true words from the One who really is Lord of all. You don't get to receive Jesus in some compartmentalized way; He will have none of that. If Jesus is Lord, He is Lord of all. If He is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all. And a nation whose god is not the Lord Jesus is a nation bound for judgment.

Implementing and Living Out True Leadership – It is not enough to say we believe these things about Jesus. We are called to follow Him. And this means trusting the Father, like Jesus, laying down our lives, like Jesus, giving ourselves away, like Jesus, and proclaiming the King rights of Jesus over everything, like Jesus. We are able to do this like Jesus does only when we find that we are in Jesus. Reformation and revival are His to give and ours for the asking. *"What do you mean by crushing My people and grinding the faces of the poor?" says the Lord God of hosts. – v15.*