

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Yahweh Is Salvation

III. God's Promise To Punish Oppressive Rulers, Replacing Them With Righteous Men (Isaiah 1:21-31)

I. Introduction

- A. Those who lead in government, church, family and marital institutions have a marked effect on the integrity of the institution itself, so they bear a greater responsibility than do others before the Lord, cf. James 3:1.
- B. This truth is illustrated in Isaiah 1:21-31 with edifying instruction for all of us believers today (as follows):

II. God's Promise To Punish Oppressive Rulers, Replacing Them With Righteous Men, Isaiah 1:21-31.

- A. After God's Isaiah 1:1-20 call for Judah to repent from her wicked mistreatment of the vulnerable, the Lord further explained that the city of Jerusalem had fallen from faithfulness to spiritual harlotry, Isaiah 1:21-23a:
 - 1. God explained through the prophet Isaiah that Jerusalem in her past had once been known as the Faithful City, one that followed the Lord in heart and in precept, Isaiah 1:21a.
 - 2. However, she had become unfaithful to her spiritual Husband, to God, much like a woman who turns to harlotry in unfaithfulness to her husband: (a) where righteousness had once lodged in the city, now murderers lived there, Isaiah 1:21b; (b) Jerusalem's once valuable silver had turned to dross, the worthless impurities that are smelted away from the valuable silver, Isaiah 1:22a, and (c) her once valuable wine was now diluted with water, making it both undesirable and worthless, Isaiah 1:22b.
- B. This problematic shift from faithfulness to spiritual harlotry occurred through the city leaders, Isa. 1:23, 29-31:
 - 1. Jerusalem's leaders had rebelled against God's rule, so they had ignored His Word, Isaiah 1:23a.
 - 2. Accordingly, they had succumbed to the god of covetousness (Col. 3:5b), their judgment in courts being impacted by bribes that caused injustice to vulnerable orphans and widows, Isaiah 1:23b,c:
 - 3. Isaiah 1:29-31 also notes that these leaders had succumbed to the idolatry of pagan idol worship, thwarting just judgment in accordance with God's Law in His Word.
- C. Accordingly, God as the Lord of Hosts, the mighty Sovereign over the seemingly impervious, unjust rulers of Jerusalem, would ease Himself of these His adversaries, avenging Himself of His enemies, Isaiah 1:24. The Lord elsewhere identifies Himself as the Defender of vulnerable subjects of human leaders to whom He comes to their aid of those who are mistreated by oppressive rulers (Exodus 22:21-24), so He takes personally the injustices committed against the vulnerable in exercising vengeance upon the oppressive!
- D. Consequently, the Lord promised to turn His hand upon Jerusalem and thoroughly purge away her dross and take away all her impurities, removing her unrighteous rulers (Isaiah 1:25), and in their place restore the city's judges as of old, giving her godly counselors once again who revered the Lord and adhered to His Word in rendering just, impartial verdicts to the vulnerable, Isaiah 1:26a.
- E. In the end, Jerusalem would be called the city of righteousness, the Faithful City as she had once been called in days of old, Isaiah 1:26b with Isaiah 1:21a.
- F. To that end, God said He would redeem Zion with justice and her penitent ones with righteousness, but rebels and sinners would be broken, and those who forsake the Lord would perish, Isaiah 1:27-28.
- G. The Lord would make the rulers who had turned aside after false idols and idol worship ashamed of the sacred oaks in which they had delighted themselves and disgraced by the gardens they had chosen in idolatry, Isaiah 1:29; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1037.
- H. Instead, these leaders would be like an oak with fading leaves, a garden without water, once mighty who became tinder and their work a spark so they might self destruct with none to quench the fire, Isaiah 1:30-31.

Lesson: *God placed the main blame for Jerusalem's unrighteousness on the city's leaders. Unlike good leaders in former days, they had replaced reverence for the Lord with the false idols of covetousness and pagan gods, distorting their judgment into harming their vulnerable subjects. Accordingly, God Himself would hold these men accountable, replacing them with men who revered the Lord and faithfully administered justice for the vulnerable.*

Application: *(1) May we who lead others in government, Church, family or marriage institutions realize our accountability to Almighty God so as to revere Him and so heed His Word that we lead others justly for their blessing. Otherwise, we will turn to false idols that detract us from our sense of accountability to God coupled with replacing Him with false idols, leading to bad judgment that hurts subordinates followed by God's discipline. (2) If we suffer under errant leadership, may we trust the Lord Almighty to deliver us so we can do His will, Isaiah 1:24.*