

THE MILLENNIUM FORECAST

The Book of Isaiah

Text

Isaiah 3:1 - 4:1

Topic

The leadership in Judah was so incapable that it was like having babies for rulers

Title

"Boss Babies"

He is known as 'The Boy King.'

King Tut became Pharaoh of Egypt at age nine, then ruled for ten years. Archaeologists have cataloged over 5000 items entombed with him. The latest find was a pair of his underwear. They bear the label, *Fruit of the Tomb*.

The southern Jewish kingdom of Judah was sometimes ruled by boy kings.

- Uzziah was 16yrs old when he became king.
- Manasseh was 12.
- Josiah was 8.
- Jehoash was 7.

It's one thing to have a boy for your king, but quite another to call your adult king a baby. In verse four God said, "I will give children *to be* their princes, And babes shall rule over them."

The LORD wasn't referring to their ages. God would give them leaders who had the characteristics of babies and toddlers. We are talking about children at their worst. Defiant, disobedient, disrespectful. Think back on your most difficult moments with your kids and imagine what the consequences would have been if they had been in charge and gotten their way.

Isaiah's primary audience was eighth century Judah. But because God is over *all* the nations, some of his descriptions and warnings apply to *any* nation.

Hope is expressed in verse ten, "Say to the righteous that *it shall be well with them*, For they shall eat the fruit of their doings."

Verse ten needs to be our national identity.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 God Gives Your Nation Leaders It Deserves**, and **#2 God Gives You Righteousness You Don't Deserve**.

#1 - God Gives Your Nation Leaders It Deserves (3:1-9, 3:11-4:1)

Can you say *Lord of the Flies*? In that classic, a group of British boys are stranded on an island. Their attempts to govern themselves are horrific.

God provides Boss Babies when He is trying to get a nation to turn to Him.

Isa 3:1 For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, Takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah The stock and the store, The whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water;

We don't want to look at what is happening in our nation and shoehorn it to 'fit' everything God said about Judah. Some of the things we'll talk about, however, are definitely happening in the United States.

"Stock," "store," "supply." God promised the Jews physical, abundant resources if they'd obey Him. If they rebelled, they could expect shortages.

This is not unique to the Jews. God wants to bless every nation that looks to Him. Shortages can be an indication God has withdrawn blessing.

Stock-store-supply shortages are now.

Here is an ominous quote: *“The cost of some food items in supermarkets has already increased up to 44%. One importer/exporter of goods has identified another predicament - **a looming food shortage.**”*

Some recent headlines amplify the shortages:

- US braces for pain as farmers warn 2023 to be plagued by shortages.
- UN Chief warns of catastrophic food shortages.
- France bracing for catastrophic food shortages.
- World Food Program says the world faces a global hunger crisis of unprecedented proportions.

One expert said, *“The only question is how high food prices will go and how severe the food shortages will be.”*

What are some of the world’s Boss Babies doing about food shortages?

- The chairman of the largest industrial manufacturing company in Europe told a panel at the World Economic Forum that, “One billion people should stop eating meat in order to save the climate.”
- Dutch livestock farmers are being forced out of business because they cannot meet new UN nitrogen emission standards.
- Bill Gates is pushing genetic engineering of “lab food” as the solution. That’s why he is in the process of taking over the world’s food supply.

Isa 3:2 The mighty man and the man of war, The judge and the prophet, And the diviner and the elder;

Isa 3:3 The captain of fifty and the honorable man, The counselor and the skillful artisan, And the expert enchanter.

- “Diviner” derives from a word that can be applied to a wise advisor, devoid of occult connotations.
- “Enchanter” can be *eloquent orator*.

There would be a catastrophic shortage of good men.

Last week, the last of Haiti’s elected leaders departed office. **The country has no leaders.** It is hard to exaggerate how awful conditions have become.

One op-ed writer said of us, *"Whether one is Democrat, Republican or independent, poor leadership or the lack of leadership is the cause of our country's plunge into the abyss of depravity."*

A poll, conducted in January, found 21% rank the government and poor leadership as "the most important problem facing our nation today." Sadly, the same poll found that only 4% think "ethical, moral, and family decline" is the most important problem.

Isa 3:4 "I will give children to be their princes, And babes shall rule over them.

Isa 3:5 The people will be oppressed, Every one by another and every one by his neighbor; The child will be insolent toward the elder, And the base toward the honorable."

Albert Barnes commented, *"This describes the state of anarchy and confusion which would exist under the reign of children and babies, when all law would be powerless, and all rights violated, and when the feeble would be oppressed and borne down by the strong."*

The relaxation of sentencing laws, the early release of violent offenders, organizing violent protests across America...Whatever you think of these issues politically, our country is definitely suffering from a legislated breakdown of law and order.

Isa 3:6 When a man takes hold of his brother In the house of his father, saying, "You have clothing; You be our ruler, And let these ruins be under your power,"

Isa 3:7 In that day he will protest, saying, "I cannot cure your ills, For in my house is neither food nor clothing; Do not make me a ruler of the people."

The shortages would bring out the worst in people. It would be every man for himself - even among family.

Isa 3:8 For Jerusalem stumbled, And Judah is fallen, Because their tongue and their doings Are against the LORD, To provoke the eyes of His glory.

Isa 3:9 The look on their countenance witnesses against them, And they declare their sin as Sodom; They do not hide it. Woe to their soul! For they have brought evil upon themselves.

Lot took the two angels God dispatched to Sodom into his house for the evening, fearing what his godless, sexually deviant neighbors would do. We read, "They called to Lot, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them' " (19:7).

The Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, aka, The Meese Report, was ordered by President Reagan. One reporter described it, saying, "*The 11 commissioners devoted hundreds of hours to scrutinizing the unwatchable and listening to the unspeakable, descriptions of which are unprintable.*" Several of them were prominent Christian leaders.

You don't need to watch porn to identify sexual sin. You know by revelation. God has explained in his Word what is holy and undefiled.

God's gift of sexuality is to be enjoyed in a marriage between one biological male and one biological female, in a monogamous, heterosexual covenant of companionship that exists as long as they are both living. Anything else is sexual sin.

God said, "For they have brought evil upon themselves." Sin has inevitable temporal and eternal consequences. One of the most awful is that God withdraws His presence and protection. Left on our own, we will go down the drain.

An ever accelerating rate of sexual immorality is absolutely a sign God has withdrawn.¹

Isa 3:12 *As for My people, children are their oppressors, And women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, And destroy the way of your paths."*

Do you remember the terrible twos? It is no longer politically correct to refer to toddlers that way. It belongs to the bygone Golden Age of parenting.

The leaders were full-size toddlers in the terrible twos.

The reference to women ruling isn't about the role of women. The leaders were taking foreign wives and mistresses. They were influenced by them to idolatry. Most of the time it involved sexual perversions as so-called 'worship' of the idols. The people were stumbled.

Isa 3:13 The LORD stands up to plead, And stands to judge the people.

¹ Take a moment and read the first chapter of the book of Romans. Note how sexual sin accelerates the deterioration of society.

Isa 3:14 The LORD will enter into judgment With the elders of His people And His princes: "For you have eaten up the vineyard; The plunder of the poor is in your houses.

Isa 3:15 What do you mean by crushing My people And grinding the faces of the poor?" Says the Lord GOD of hosts.

God will later speak endearingly of Judah as His vineyard. Its leaders devoured it for themselves, crushing and grinding the people instead of nurturing them.

Beginning with verse sixteen, I'm asking you ladies to please sit still to refrain from making noise with your "jingling anklets!"

Isa 3:16 Moreover the LORD says: "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, And walk with outstretched necks And wanton eyes, Walking and mincing as they go, Making a jingling with their feet,

Isa 3:17 Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab The crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, And the LORD will uncover their secret parts."

Isa 3:18 In that day the Lord will take away the finery: The jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents;

Isa 3:19 The pendants, the bracelets, and the veils;

Isa 3:20 The headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands; The perfume boxes, the charms,

Isa 3:21 and the rings; The nose jewels,

Isa 3:22 the festal apparel, and the mantles; The outer garments, the purses,

Isa 3:23 and the mirrors; The fine linen, the turbans, and the robes.

Ladies - Do you "mince" when you walk? It's the only occurrence of this word in the Bible. It might be similar to a word rarely used, coquettish. It means, *to act in a way that tries to attract attention*.

On a spiritual level, we are to decrease so that Jesus increases. Men and women really shouldn't be trying to attract attention to themselves. It's OK to look nice and be presentable. Don't dress to kill.

Just because something is on this list doesn't make it sinful. This list isn't here to once-for-all solve the theological dilemma of nose rings. One of the commentators I trust explains that the women of Judah were being influenced in all things by the women from the godless neighbor nations: Egypt, Moab, Philistia, Syria, and Assyria.

Proper adornment is described by the apostle Peter, "Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward - arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel - rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" (First Peter 3:3-4).

Isa 3:24 And so it shall be: Instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench; Instead of a sash, a rope; Instead of well-set hair, baldness; Instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth; And branding instead of beauty.

This is a good description of what it was like to be conquered and go into captivity. Stench, shaved to humiliate, sackclothed, and branded.

Do you ever look at old pictures of yourself and wonder what you were thinking? Looking back you understand why your parents said "No" to your outfit.

There are several places in the Bible where God describes how people see themselves compared to how He sees them. If we are walking in sin, we may think it is our freedom. God sees us as conquered by sin - stinking, shaved, sackclothed, and branded.

Isa 3:25 Your men shall fall by the sword, And your mighty in the war.

Isa 3:26 Her gates shall lament and mourn, And she *being* desolate shall sit on the ground.

God addressed Jerusalem directly in these two verses. The great city of God, of which the LORD said, "I have chosen Jerusalem that my name may be there" (Second Chronicles 6:6), would be brought low on account of Judah's sin.

We address our nation directly:

*My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing*

There's a lyric I'd never heard before:

*Our fathers' God to Thee,
Author of liberty,
To Thee we sing.*

*Long may our land be bright,
With freedom's holy light,
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God our King!*

Maybe you know that lyric, and I'm the dummy. We need to acknowledge our great God and King.

Isa 4:1 And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, "We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel; Only let us be called by your name, To take away our reproach."

How would you answer the theological question, "Why go to Surf City?" 'Coz girls outnumber boys two to one.

In Jerusalem, it would be seven to one. It was a reproach for a woman to remain unmarried. So many men would be killed that the only way to be married would be to go Mormon and have Big Love as a multiple wife. Even then the ladies would have to fend for themselves instead of having the protection of a husband.

They were willing to set aside biblical morality in order to fit in with what society expected of them.

Let's review what characterizes a nation that is being warned by God to repent:

- Stock-store-supply shortages.
- Sodom-level deviant, open sexual immorality.
- Incapable leadership likened to being ruled by disobedient, rebellious, terrible twos toddlers.
- Succumbing to sinners pressure to relax God's standards and disobey His Word.

Is our governor a Boss Baby? Governor Newsom announced his plan to self-medicate our state out of our addiction epidemic. He said, "*Clean and sober is one of the biggest mistakes this country ever made... We all need to self medicate periodically.*"

#2 - God Gives You Righteousness You Don't Deserve (3:10-11)

If you are anything like me, you are probably thinking, "I know it's bad, Gene, but what are we supposed to do about it? What's the plan?"

- On a national level, Proverbs 14:34 says, "Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin *is* a reproach to *any* people."
- On a personal level, the apostle Paul put it like this: "[turn] to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (First Thessalonians 1:9 ESV).

The plan is to call unbelievers to God *from* idols, and to rid ourselves of idols in order to walk in righteousness.

Isa 3:10 "Say to the righteous that *it shall be* well *with them*, For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

Isa 3:11 Woe to the wicked! *It shall be* ill *with him*, For the reward of his hands shall be given him."

The "wicked" is the person whose only "reward" is based on his or her own works. The work God will accept is to believe Jesus Christ. Their own works are not sufficient for salvation. They will be cast alive into the Lake of Fire to suffer eternal, conscious torment.

A person is declared righteous by God when he or she believes. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

The believer produces "fruit," not works. It would be more accurate to say that the indwelling God the Holy Spirit produces spiritual fruit as the believer yields to Him.

What's the plan? Righteousness.

We might call it a revival of righteousness:

- Unbelievers being declared righteous by believing God for salvation, as they respond to the Gospel, turning to God from idols.
- Believers behaving righteously, bearing spiritual fruit, as we pursue holiness in all things in obedience to the Holy Spirit.

God is on the record in the Book of Jeremiah regarding His dealings with **all** nations:

“The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy *it*, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant *it*, if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it” (18:7-10).

God was talking to Israel, but when He says “nations,” it is the word for foreign, Gentile nations.

I think it’s irrefutable that, as a nation, we are doing evil in God’s sight so that we do not obey His voice, and God has relented concerning the good with which He said He would benefit us.

We can turn from evil, trusting God will relent of the disaster that He thought to bring upon us.