

# Isaiah 3:16-23 Commentary

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Isaiah 3:16 Moreover, the **LORD said**, "**Because** \* the **daughters** of **Zion** are **proud** and **walk** with **heads held high** and **seductive eyes**, and **go** along with **mincing steps** And **tinkle** the **bangles** on their **feet**, (**NASB: Lockman**)

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): Thus saith the Lord, Because the daughters of Sion are haughty, and have walked with an outstretched neck, and with winking of the eyes, and motion of the feet, at the same time drawing their garments in trains, and at the same time sporting with their feet:

**Amplified:** Moreover, the Lord said, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks and with undisciplined (flirtatious and alluring) eyes, tripping along with mincing and affected gait, and making a tinkling noise with [the anklets on] their feet, (**Amplified Bible - Lockman**)

**KJV:** Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:

**NET:** The LORD says, "The women of Zion are proud. They walk with their heads high and flirt with their eyes. They skip along and the jewelry on their ankles jingles. (**NET Bible**)

**NJB:** Yahweh says: Because Zion's daughters are proud and walk with heads held high and enticing eyes -- with mincing steps they go, jingling the bangles on their feet- (**NJB**)

**NLT:** 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. (**NLT - Tyndale House**)

**Young's Literal:** 'Because that daughters of Zion have been haughty, And they walk stretching out the neck, And deceiving with the eyes, Walking and mincing they go, And with their feet they make a tinkling,

**Moreover, the LORD said, "Because the daughters of Zion are proud and walk with heads held high and seductive eyes, and go along with mincing steps and tinkle the bangles on their feet:**

- Daughters Is 1:8; 4:4; Matthew 21:5; Luke 23:28
- Proud - Is 24:4; 32:9, 10, 11; Pr 16:18; 30:13; Ezek 16:49,50; Zeph 3:11
- [Isaiah 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The LORD said** - Emphasizing that **Jehovah** is speaking.

**Because** - explains in the verse why **Jehovah** will judge the women beginning in the next verse.

**The daughters of Zion** (phrase used in Song 3:11, Is 3:16, 17, 4:4) - Jehovah specifically focuses on the proud, wealthy women in Judah who were the benefactors of their husbands' crimes against the poor (Is 3:14, 15-notes).

**Proud** ([01361](#))(**gabah**) literally is that which is tall or high (like a tree Ezek 19:11; Isaiah speaks of the Suffering Messiah who would be very high [gabah] in Is 52:13). Here in Is 3:16 **gabah** is used figuratively to describe these women's pride or haughtiness. It is notable that pride is linked with the heart (Ezek 28:2, 5, 17; Ps 131:1; Pr 18:12; 2Chr 26:16; 32:25), with the eyes (words related to gabah used in Is 2:11; 5:15, Ps 101:5).

**Pride** was their root problem

The **KJV** translates it as **haughty** which describes one who is blatantly and disdainfully proud. Furthermore, **haughty** suggests a consciousness of superior birth or position (cp the phrase "a haughty aristocrat").

The **Septuagint** translates **gabah** with the verb **hupsoo** which literally means lifted up or raised high and figuratively means to exalt oneself or think of oneself as better than others (used with this meaning in Mt 23:12).

**Solomon** uses **gabah** describing the heart declaring that...

Before destruction (ruin, affliction) the heart of man is **haughty** (gabah), but humility goes before honor. (Pr 18:12).

The prophet **Jeremiah** uses **gabah** exhorting his hearers...

**Listen** (command) and **give heed** (command), do not be **haughty** (gabah), (**Why not?**) for the Lord has spoken. (Je 13:15).

**Gabah** - 33v in the OT -

1Sa 10:23; 2Chr 17:6; 26:16; 32:25; 33:14; Job 5:7; 35:5; 36:7; 39:27; Ps. 103:11; 113:5; 131:1; Pr. 17:19; 18:12; Isa. 3:16; 5:16; 7:11; 52:13; 55:9; Je 13:15; 49:16; Ezek 16:50; 17:24; 19:11; 21:26; 28:2, 5, 17; 31:5, 10, 14; Ob 1:4; Zeph 3:11

The **NAS** renders **gabah** as build high(1), exalt(2), exalted(4), haughty(4), high(4), higher(3), lifted(3), loftier(1), made high(1), make high(1), mounts(1), proud(4), raised(1), raises(1), taller(1), took great pride(1), upward(1).

**Young** explains that...

When the women are wholly vain and self-centered, the cancer of moral decay is truly consuming the nation's heart. Proper adornment and true beauty in women should be a reflection of the glory of God. When women cultivate and cherish beauty only for itself, they are infringing upon and detracting from the glory and beauty that belong to Him. That ordinary women of the world should be vainglorious might be expected. But the daughters of Zion, women who live in the city of God, under the very shadow of the Temple, who should have set the example of the beauty of holiness, these are haughty and walk with outstretched neck.

**Walk with heads held high** - This picture needs no description, for we have all encountered "snooty" women who think more highly of themselves than they ought (Ro 12:3). Literally the Hebrew here reads "**with an outstretched neck.**" **Why outstretched?** They were seeking attention, attempting to proudly display the jewelry around their necks.

**Young** observes that...

"To stretch out the neck" served in the ancient world as a succinct expression for haughtiness. In the ancient Syriac language, for example, "to stretch out the neck" meant "to be haughty." In the Hamasa it is said, "by our noses and necks pride is shown," and in the Proverbs of Maidani (No. 30), we read, "Much money does nothing else than to make the neck long." ([Young, Ed: The Book of Isaiah - 3 Volume Commentary. Eerdmans Pub. 1992](#))

**Seductive eyes... mincing steps... bangles** - Flirtatious attention seekers!

**Seductive** ([08265](#)) (**saqar** - this verse is the only use in OT) describes a flirting glance, ogling with one's eyes, communicating the message of desire for a possible relationship.

**Solomon** warns men...

Do not desire her beauty in your heart, nor let her catch you with her eyelids. (Pr 6:25-note) (Listen to the words "*it's the second glance that ties your hands as darkness pulls the string*" in the powerful [Slow Fade by Casting Crowns](#))

**Go along with mincing steps** - English dictionaries define mincing describes one's manner, speaking or gait as affectedly (affectation = act of taking on or displaying an attitude or mode of behavior not natural to oneself or not genuinely felt) dainty or delicate. Isaiah's point is that these wealthy women were too self absorbed, self centered and puffed up to be humble and God absorbed. Their lack of concern for justice and righteousness in Judah was manifest in the way they dressed.

**Young** observes (and I think history bears him out) that...

When the women of a nation have turned to such an extent away from God, the end of that nation cannot be far away. (Ibid)

**Constable** sums up the **proud** appearance of these women writing that...

Pride led these ladies to walk with their noses in the air assuming superiority over others and to use their eyes to draw men to themselves. They took small steps to give the appearance of humility and drew attention even to their feet. Everything they did was designed to attract attention. ([Isaiah 3 - Expository Notes](#))

**John Calvin** adds that God's warnings of judgment are now directed...

against the ambition, luxury, and pride of women... He therefore pronounces censure on gorgeous robes and superfluous ornaments, which were undoubted proofs of vanity and ostentation... First he justly declares pride to be the source of the evil, and points it out by the **sign**, that is, by their gait (**mincing steps**). ([Commentary on Isaiah](#))

**John MacArthur** observes that...

When women cultivate beauty for beauty's sake, they thereby reflect the moral decay of the nations and detract from the glory of God. Rather than emphasizing outward apparel and activities (Is 3:16-24), ladies should cultivate the beauty of the inner person (1Ti 2:9,10; 1Pe 3:3,4). ([MacArthur, J.: The MacArthur Study Bible Nashville: Word](#))

**Isaiah 3:17** Therefore the **Lord** will afflict the **scalp** of the **daughters** of **Zion** with **scabs**, And the **LORD** will **make** their **foreheads bare**." ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): therefore the Lord will humble the chief daughters of Sion, and the Lord will expose their form in that day;

**Amplified**: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the heads of the daughters of Zion [making them bald], and the Lord will cause them to be [taken as captives and to suffer the indignity of being] stripped naked. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV**: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts.

**NET**: So the sovereign master will afflict the foreheads of Zion's women with skin diseases, the LORD will

make the front of their heads bald." ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** the Lord will give Zion's daughters scabby heads, Yahweh will lay their foreheads bare. ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** 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; ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal:** The Lord also hath scabbed The crown of the head of daughters of Zion, And Jehovah their simplicity exposeth.

### Therefore the Lord will afflict the scalp of the daughters of Zion with scabs, and the LORD will make their foreheads bare

- Afflict - Leviticus 13:29,30,43,44; Deuteronomy 28:27; Revelation 16:2
- make naked - Is 20:4; 47:2,3; Jeremiah 13:22; Ezekiel 16:36,37; 23:25, 26, 27, 28, 29; Micah 1:11; Nahum 3:5
- [Isaiah 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Solomon's** proverb applies...

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. (Pr 16:18)

**The Lord** ([0136](#)) (**adon**) means the one who is master, is often used in place of Yahweh which many Jews felt was too holy to utter, and emphasizes the supreme authority or absolute mastery of God over all things, animate and inanimate.

**Will afflict the scalp** - There is no reason to not interpret this prophecy of future judgment literally. It is certainly a horrible picture and the antithesis of their ostentatious, pomposity described look in Is 3:16!

**Scabs** - These are characterized by a crust of hardened blood and serum over a wound. Scabs in place of beauty. They held their heads high, so fittingly it would be their heads that would be so severely affected by God's judgment.

**Constable** comments that...

God would humble them by making the hair that they loved so much a patch of scabs and the foreheads they decorated so carefully bare. Having delighted in immodest exposure, God gave them over to it (cf. Ro 1:24, 26, 28). He did not condemn their luxurious lifestyle but their arrogant spirit, which their lifestyle demonstrated. ([Isaiah 3 - Expository Notes](#))

**NETBible notes** observes that

In the Hebrew text Is 3:16,17 is one long sentence, "Because the daughters of Zion are proud and walk..., the sovereign master will afflict..." In Is 3:17 the Lord refers to himself in the third person.

**LORD will make their foreheads bare - Jehovah** , the covenant keeping God, will cause the "glory" of these women, their hair, to fall out. Imagine for a moment what these proud women looked like in their day of glory and how contemptible they would appear in their day of judgment. This is a powerful picture of God's just and righteous wrath directed against pride, and it is one that should make all sane men and women tremble with a holy fear and dread.

Note that the **Septuagint** says that...

the Lord will humble the chief daughters of Sion, and the Lord will expose their form in that day

**Clarke** comments...

It was the barbarous custom of the conquerors of those times to strip their captives naked, and to make them travel in that condition, exposed to the inclemency of the weather; and the worst of all, to the intolerable heat of the sun. But this to the women was the height of cruelty and indignity; and especially to such as those here described, who had indulged themselves in all manner of delicacies of living, and all the superfluities of ornamental dress; and even whose faces had hardly ever been exposed to the sight of man. This is always mentioned as the hardest part of the lot of captives.

Isaiah 3:18 In that [day](#) the [Lord](#) will [take away](#) the [beauty](#) of their [anklets](#), [headbands](#), [crescent ornaments](#), ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): and the Lord will take away the glory of their raiment, the curls and the fringes, and the crescents,

**Amplified:** In that day the Lord will take away the finery of their tinkling anklets, the caps of network, the crescent head ornaments, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon,

**NET:** At that time the sovereign master will remove their beautiful ankle jewelry, neck ornaments, crescent shaped ornaments, ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** That day the Lord will take away the ornamental chains, medallions, crescents, ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** The Lord will strip away their artful beauty--their ornaments, headbands, and crescent necklaces; ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal:** In that day doth the Lord turn aside The beauty of the tinkling ornaments, And of the embroidered works, And of the round tires like moons,

### In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets, headbands, crescent ornaments

- Jdg 8:21
- [Isaiah 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**In that day** - The day when Adonai afflicts their scalps and makes them bald, in the time leading up to and culminating in the third and final siege of Jerusalem in 586BC when Judah would be utterly defeated, sacked and plundered by the Babylonian forces who would seize these showy babbles and bangles. As stated earlier, there are some that see a more complete fulfillment in the time of the **Jacob's distress = the Great Tribulation**.

**The Lord will take away the beauty** - Adonai, the Master, will remove the trappings of their external beauty, the very things they trusted in, instead of placing their trust in God.

**Anklets** ([05914](#)) ('**ekec**) is used only one other place in the OT. In Pr 7:22 **ekec** describes fetters or stocks, which serve as instruments for confining persons or for controlling them to lead them to execution! One wonders if there is a *double entendre* intended in Isaiah's description of these proud women!

**Headband** - Used only here and describes an ornamental decoration which encircled these women's heads.

Beginning in this verse Isaiah records 22 Judean "fashion" items that were a clear manifestation of the pomposity and pride of the wearers. With the exception of the **amulets**, these 22 fashion statements in themselves were not wrong. It was the fact that these fashion statements were manifestations of their proud hearts.

**Crescent ornaments** ([07720](#)) (**saharon**) refers to moon shaped ornaments that were found on camels (Jdg 8:21), kings (Jdg 8:26) and women (Is 3:18).

Isaiah 3:19 [dangling earrings](#), [bracelets](#), [veils](#), ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): and the chains, and the ornaments of their faces,

**Amplified:** The pendants, the bracelets or chains, and the spangled face veils and scarfs, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,

**NET:** earrings, bracelets, veils, ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** pendants, bracelets, trinkets, ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** their earrings, bracelets, and veils of shimmering gauze. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal:** Of the drops, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,

### dangling earrings, bracelets, veils:

- Genesis 24:22,30,53; 38:18,25; Exodus 35:22; Numbers 31:50; Ezekiel 16:11
- [Isaiah 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Dangling earrings** - Ear pendants. Drop shaped ornaments that hang from some point such as ear lobe. Only other use in Jdg 8:26.

**Bracelets** - Only use in the OT

**Veils** - Cloth covering the face to accentuate the beauty. Only use in the OT

We need to understand that in this list of 22 fashion items, it is not the items per se that are the problem. The root problem as he has stated is pride, and these fashion items simply reflect the arrogant hearts of these women.

As **John Calvin** observed...

Wherever dress and splendor are carried to excess, there is evidence of ambition, and many vices are usually connected with it; for whence comes luxury in men and women but from **pride**? ([Commentary on Isaiah](#))

**Peter** describes the divine "fashion statement" as he exhorts women to...

let not your adornment be merely external-- braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses but **let it be the hidden person of the heart**, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. (1Pe 3:3,4-notes)

The heart of the problem of these women in Jerusalem and Judah was their heart!

### Isaiah 3:20 [headdresses, ankle chains, sashes, perfume \\* boxes, amulets](#), ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): and the array of glorious ornaments, and the armlets, and the bracelets, and the wreathed work, and the finger-rings, and the ornaments for the right hand,

**Amplified:** The headbands, the short ankle chains [attached from one foot to the other to insure a measured gait], the sashes, the perfume boxes, the amulets or charms [suspended from the ears or neck], ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings,

**NET:** headdresses, ankle ornaments, sashes, sachets, amulets, ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** diadems, ankle-chains, necklaces, scent bottles, amulets, ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** Gone will be their scarves, ankle chains, sashes, perfumes, and charms; ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal:** Of the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, And of the bands, And of the perfume boxes, and the amulets,

### headdresses, ankle chains, sashes, perfume boxes, amulets:

- [Isaiah 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Headdresses** - 7v in OT - Exod. 39:28; Isa. 3:20; 61:3, 10; Ezek. 24:17, 23; 44:18 and rendered in NAS as decorated(1), garland(2), headdresses(1), turban(1), turbans(2).

**Ankle chains** - These ornaments have made a revival in America in the 21st century. The Amplified Bible has an interesting translation describing these ornaments as "short ankle chains [attached from one foot to the other to insure a measured gait]". This is an interesting thought that could explain their "mincing" steps

**Sashes** - Is used only here in the OT and describes a band worn about the waist (or over one shoulder) as a dress accessory.

**Perfume boxes** - Literally the Hebrew reads "houses of breath" where the Hebrew word for "breath" (nephesh) refers to the soul, so one might call these "houses of the soul"! Compare similar boxes in Song 1:13; Pr. 27:9; alabaster boxes of Lk 7:37; Mt 26:7, Mk 14:3.

**Amulets** ([03908](#))(lahas) means whispering (speaking in low volume tones - Is 26:16), enchantment (influencing with charms and incantation or charms. The action of whispering, with the connotations of casting a spell, is the basis for **lahas**. Isaiah uses **lahas** to describe **amulets** as charms (as an ornament) often inscribed with a magic incantation or symbols to protect the wearer against evil (as disease or witchcraft). **Lahas** describes the charming of deadly snakes through soothing sounds of some kind (Eccl 10:11; Je 8:17),

**Lahas** - 6v in OT - Eccl 10:11; Isa. 3:3, 20; 26:16; Je 8:17 and rendered in **NAS** as amulets(1), charm(1), charmed(1), enchanter(1), whisper a prayer (1).

**Isaiah** uses this Hebrew noun **lahas** earlier in this chapter to describe those who craft clever words so as to enchant (**enchanters** = Is 3:3-note)

## EXCURSUS ON PERFUME BOXES

Isaiah 3:20 - The Hebrew literally reads "**houses of breath**" or "houses of life" -- I am not sure what this means but clearly Isaiah is using the word bayith (usually "house" but bayith is translated once as "box" in the NAS) not literally but figuratively. The idea would seem to be that the house ("box") represents a "container" (so to speak) and the combined idea of breath (nephesh) being descriptive of what comes out of the house. Can't do much better than that. Below is a search of my personal library of over 25,000 resources...

Isaiah 3:20 HALOT 124 s.v. defines them as "scent-bottles";

**Joseph Alexander** - the **houses** (i. e. places or receptacles) **of breath**, (meaning probably the perfume-boxes or smelling-bottles worn by the oriental women at their girdles)

Martin Luther has an interesting suggestion but not seen this explanation anywhere else - "Perfume boxes are wrapped spices by the scent of which the **breath** is refreshed."

שִׁבְרֵי הַנְּפֶשֶׁת Is 3:20 perfume boxes; meaning evident from context; but not necessarily scent (breath)-boxes; may be 6 a, boxes of desire, or 5, boxes exciting the sense of smell; = smelling boxes or bottles. No sufficient evid. in BH, therefore, for meaning breath, odour.—See, for complete study of שִׁבְרֵי (all passages), Br 1897, 17 ff. - BDB

The "tablets"—literally houses of breath or smell—are thought to have been perfume boxes or smelling bottles, suspended from their girdles; v. 24 alludes to them. - Henry Cowles

In Isaiah 3:20, שִׁבְרֵי הַנְּפֶשֶׁת, (botte hannephesh,) are understood to mean perfume boxes. In the Authorized Version, tablets. How much precious ointment, fragrant woods, and spices were esteemed by the ancient Orientals is attested by many passages of both the Old and the New Testaments. (See M'Clintock & Strong's Cyclopædia, under the word "Anoint.") - Commentary on the OT - Burr

Ladies among the Jews sometimes carried perfume boxes at their girdles (Is 3:20); these were called שִׁבְרֵי הַנְּפֶשֶׁת, and this is translated 'tablets' (i.e. lockets) in AV. They were most probably metallic boxes containing ointment or frankincense. Such boxes have been found in Egypt. Perfumes were sprinkled on garments or placed in boxes with clothing to give them a pleasant odour (Ps 45:8; Ca 4:11). This is still done in the East as in the West (see Lane, ib. i. 256). - Hastings

Perfume boxes (שִׁבְרֵי הַנְּפֶשֶׁת) are spoken of in Is 3:20 RV. In Van Dyck's Arab. tr. they are called ḥānājir, the common word for small pots of earthenware for carrying ointments. In Mt 26:7, Mk 14:3, Lk 7:37 'alabaster box (RV cruse) of ointment' (λάβαστρον) is mentioned. The word used in Arabic is ḡārūrah, which may mean a small vase or jar of earthenware or other material. Hastings Dictionary of the Bible

the fourth item has the peculiar translation **“the perfume boxes”** (v. 20; NRSV) for Hebrew batte hannefesh (שִׁבְטֵי הַחַיִּים), lit., “the houses of life (or soul).” This unusual Hebrew phrase could refer to a type of Egyptian cylinder pendant that encloses a small piece of papyrus inscribed with religious words or a prayer to a deity asking for protection, presumably an “amulet.” The features of these Egyptian cylinders may relate in size and shape to Jewish phylacteries of later times that seek to carry out the instructions in Deut 6:8–9 to keep the words of the central commandment, the Shema, prominent in daily life (see AMULETS). - New Interpreter's Dictionary

The word ‘tablets’ is also the tr. of bottē hannefesh in AV Is 3:20 (RV **‘perfume boxes,’** lit. ‘houses of the soul’). It is doubtful if nefesh actually means ‘odour,’ but from meaning ‘breath’ it may have come to mean scent or smell. On the other hand, the idea of life may suggest that some life-giving elixir, scent, or ointment was contained in the vessels; but the meaning is doubtful. Hastings Dictionary of the Bible

The ‘tablets’ (i.e. lockets) of AV in Is 3:20 become in RV ‘perfume boxes’ (so Ges.; cf. Vulg. olfactoriola), and some such sense [possibly ‘ointment boxes’; so P. Haupt (deriving from Assyr. pašāšu, ‘to anoint oneself’) in Cheyne’s ‘Isaiah,’ SBOT p. 82] is required by the context for the Heb. שִׁבְטֵי הַחַיִּים, although it may be doubted whether שִׁבְטֵי ever in the OT [Pr 27:9 is a doubtful passage] actually means ‘odour.’ The meaning is perh. ‘of health,’ i.e. serving to give health to those who smell them (= ‘revising,’ ‘refreshing’; cf. the Niph. of the root שָׁפַח, and its use in Ethp. in Syr. = ναψύχω). - Hastings

Other paraphernalia uncovered include small glass vials and small pottery juglets used as perfume containers, alabaster jars used for ointments, ivory flasks, cosmetic burners, and **perfume boxes** such as that mentioned in Isa. 3:20. - Holman Bible Dictionary

Archaeological evidence indicates that during NT times perfume was packaged and stored in ivory containers, alabastra (see Matt 26:7), terra-cotta jars, and **perfume boxes**. In 2008, Italian archaeologists found vases containing perfumed ointment in Magada, a town outside Jerusalem. The vases, which remained unopened until their discovery, date from the first century AD and were preserved in mud at the bottom of a swimming pool. They contained greasy substances that might have been similar to those used by the woman whose anointing of Jesus’s feet is recorded in Luke 7:36–50. - Dictionary of Daily Life

**The term (BDB 108) translated “boxes” is literally “houses.”** The Tyndale OT Commentaries, J. Alec Motyer thinks it may refer to a “high collar” (p. 58). There is so much that we moderns do not know about the details of ANE cultures that often our interpretations are educated guesses based on cognates and context. None of these details are crucial to an understanding of the larger concept and theological issues. The vast majority are interesting, but not important to understanding the central truth of the strophe or paragraph. Do not focus on the minutia. - Bob Utley

BOX.—1. The nature of the prophet’s ‘box of oil’ (2 K 9:1, 3 RV vial, as 1 S 10:1 AV) is unknown. Was it another name for ‘the born of oil’ of 1 K 1:39? 2. For the ‘alabaster box’ (Mt 26:7 ||, RV cruse) see JEWELS AND PRECIOUS STONES, ad fin. 3. For Judas’ money-box (Jn 12:6, 13:29 AV ‘bag,’ RVm ‘box’) see BAG. 4. **Nothing is known of the perfume boxes** (lit. ‘houses, i.e. receptacles of perfume [or perhaps ointment]’) of the Jerusalem ladies (Is 3:20 RV and AV ‘tablets’).A. R. S. KENNEDY.

**Perfume Boxes** (Heb. nepesh, “breath”; “tablets,” KJV). Smelling bottles. - Unger's Dictionary

The perfume boxes were probably bags or bottles of fragrant nard or myrrh which the ladies of Jerusalem wore suspended from their necks. For example in Song of Solomon 1:13 we read "My beloved is to me a pouch (Heb = tseror - bag) of myrrh which lies all night between my breasts."

**Perfume-boxes.**—The ancients were fond of perfume. “Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant” is a Hebrew poet’s description of an elegantly dressed man. (See Cant. 3:6.) Perfume-boxes, in which the various kinds of perfume were kept, frequently are found in excavating; (see, for example, Fig. 180). Women’s perfume-boxes are denounced in Isa. 3:20.

This all makes me think of 2 Cor 2:14-16

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us **the sweet aroma** of the knowledge of Him in every place. 15 For **we are a fragrance of Christ** to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; 16 **to the one an aroma** from death to death, **to the other an aroma** from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

Grace and peace to you in Christ and by the power of the Spirit may we all be a fragrance of Christ to God and to all we encounter for the glory of God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen



**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): and the ear-rings, and the garments with scarlet borders,

**Amplified:** The signet rings and nose rings, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** The rings, and nose jewels,

**NET:** rings, nose rings, ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** finger-rings, nose-rings, ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** their rings, jewels, ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal:** Of the seals, and of the nose-rings,

#### finger rings, nose rings

- Jewelry has some interesting connotations in the following cross references - Ge 35:4; Ex 32:2; Ezek 16:12; Ho 2:13
- [Isaiah 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Nose rings** - How interesting to see a reemergence of this and similar fashions in this section in our own day! One wonders what it portends?!

#### Isaiah 3:22 [festal robes](#), [outer tunics](#), [cloaks](#), [money purses](#) ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): and the garments with purple grounds, and the shawls to be worn in the house, and the Spartan transparent dresses,

**Amplified:** The festal robes, the cloaks, the stoles and shawls, and the handbags, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the cringing pins,

**NET:** festive dresses, robes, shawls, purses. ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** party dresses, cloaks, scarves, purses ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** party clothes, gowns, capes, and purses. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal:** Of the costly apparel, and of the mantles, And of the coverings, and of the purses,

#### festal robes, outer tunics, cloaks, money purses:

- [Isaiah 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Walter L Wilson** writes that baldness...

It is evident that the garments referred to in this passage represent and are types of the outward show with which hypocrites adorn themselves, thinking that this outward pretense and sham will influence our Lord in the time of His judgment. (Wilson's Dictionary of Bible Types)

#### Isaiah 3:23 [hand mirrors](#), [undergarments](#), [turbans](#) and [veils](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): and those made of fine linen, and the purple ones, and the scarlet ones, and the fine linen, interwoven with gold and purple, and the light coverings for couches.

**Amplified:** The hand mirrors, the fine linen [undergarments], the turbans, and the [whole body-enveloping] veils. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.

**NET:** garments, vests, head coverings, and gowns. ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** mirrors, linen clothes, turbans and mantillas. ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** their mirrors, linen garments, head ornaments, and shawls. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal:** Of the mirrors, and of the linen garments, And of the hoods, and of the veils,

#### hand mirrors, undergarments, turbans and veils:

- Mirrors - Exodus 38:8
- undergarments - Genesis 41:42; 1 Chr 15:27; Ezekiel 16:10; Luke 16:19; Revelation 19:8,14
- Genesis 24:65; Ruth 3:15; Song of Solomon 5:7
- [Isaiah 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The purpose for this lengthy list is to impress the reader concerning the guilt of these gaudy, proud, materialistic women who undoubtedly are able to dress this way because of the oppression and plundering of the poor.

**Vine** comments that a "general worldliness found its great expression in the ways and doings of the females, in their luxurious style of dress, and adornment... Dire retribution must ensue."