

Isaiah 3:6-9 Commentary

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English Translation of the Greek (Septuagint): For a man shall lay hold of his brother, as one of his father's household, saying, Thou hast raiment, be thou our ruler, and let my meat be under thee.

Amplified: When a man shall take hold of his brother in the house of his father, saying, You have a robe, you shall be our judge and ruler, and this heap of ruins shall be under your control— ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand:

NET: Indeed, a man will grab his brother right in his father's house and say, 'You own a coat— you be our leader! This heap of ruins will be under your control.' ([NET Bible](#))

NJB: Yes, a man will catch hold of his brother in their father's house, to say, 'You have a cloak, so you be leader, and rule this heap of ruins.' ([NJB](#))

NLT: 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!" ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Young's Literal: When one layeth hold on his brother, Of the house of his father, by the garment, 'Come, a ruler thou art to us, And this ruin is under thy hand.'

When a man lays hold of his brother in his father's house, saying, "You have a cloak, you shall be our ruler, and these ruins will be under your charge:

- Is 4:1; Judges 11:6, 7, 8; John 6:15

When a man lays hold of his brother - Normally envy reigns when it comes to who rules, but the desperate conditions override even the envy of natural man.

MacArthur reasons that...Conditions of anarchy were to be so bad that no one would accept a position of authority over the people. ([MacArthur, J.: The MacArthur Study Bible Nashville: Word or Logos](#))

You have a cloak - Given the horrible conditions, the people would become so desperate that anyone even possessing a cloak would be considered worthy of being the leader of the people. How unlike this pattern is when compared with that seen when times are "good" where men covet and seek and go to great lengths to win positions of public power and prestige. After Judah experiences the hand of God's judgment, these "power positions" will actually be shunned.

Calvin says...

Hence it follows that everything is in a deplorable condition, when that dignity is not only despised but obstinately rejected; for the mournful calamity has reached its lowest depth, when that which men naturally desire with the greatest ardour is universally disdained.

Constable observes that in regard to a **man laying hold** of one with **a cloak**...

Things would become so bad that the possession of a mere coat (an outer garment) would lead others to thrust its owner into leadership despite his protestations. Any type of superiority will seem like an indication that the possessor can provide desperately needed authority and power. Yet the chosen leader will refuse to take responsibility, even lying about his resources, because what he would rule is only a ruin and because he knows he lacks the qualifications to lead...

Note the stages in Israel's degradation that Is 3:1-7 trace. Good leaders disappear (Is 3:1, 2, 3), and immature, capricious leaders (Is 3:4) who begin to oppress the populace (Is 3:5) take their place. Society becomes divided as age gaps open up and respect for the respectable breaks down (Is 3:5). Unqualified people get pressed into leadership, and a spirit of despair dominates elections (Is 3:6,7). ([Isaiah 3 - Expository Notes](#))

The **NET Bible** has an interesting note writing that...

The man's motives are selfish. He tells his brother to assume leadership because he thinks he has some wealth to give away. ([NETBible Isaiah 3:4 - Scroll to bottom of page](#))

Grogan writes...

that the mere possession of some outward semblance of wealth or rank would attract the attention of those desperately seeking for someone to bring a measure of order to a situation of chaos. The phrase "this heap of ruins" (Is 3:6) anticipates the later picture of a destitute and defeated city (Is 3:26). O. Kaiser (in loc.) makes a most telling comment: "It is astonishing how realistically the prophet is here able to describe the consequences of a total collapse of the state. Anyone who remembers the months that followed May 1945 in Germany will have the sensation in reading this passage of being carried right back to those days." ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary OT 7 Volume Set: Books - Grogan, G. Isaiah. Zondervan Publishing or Pradis = computer version](#))

W A Criswell writes that...

As a result of God's judgment the people will become desperate for leadership, but the hardness of their hearts will prevent their consideration of God as the best leader. ([Criswell, W A. Believer's Study Bible: New King James Version. 1991. Thomas Nelson](#))

Cloak ([08071](#)) (**simlah**) a relatively large external garment but one often worn by the poor, here another sign of the abject poverty.

Young says...

As Matthew Henry comments, "The government goes a begging"; and we thus see how an extreme condition can blind men's proper use of their judgment.

Be our ruler - Failure to govern with integrity has resulted in dissolution of the government and removal of those rulers, with no one competent left to rule. A society without rule is not a society but is anarchy. One is reminded of the repetitive phrase in Judges where the root problem was that there was no king (alluding to God Who should have been their King) in Israel and every man did that which was right in his own eyes (i.e., they did wrong but saw it as "right" = deceived - when you are deceived you don't even know it!). The results of no ruler (those times when the judge God had raised up died and the next generation reverted to being lovers of self, etc) was total and even abominable degrees of anarchy (if you have never read Judges 17:1-21:1ff [notes - Judges 17; Judges 18; Judges 19; Judges 20; Judges 21], you need to read this "x rated" torrid tale of what happens when men have no ruler). (cp Jdg 21:25-note)

Ruler (07101) (qasiyn) is one who governs by pronouncing decisions. The translates this with the Greek noun **archegos** meaning one who has a preeminent position. The people would be desperate for any type of leadership to restore order out of the chaos created by the loss of the leading men of Judah and Jerusalem. Indeed God has so structured this world that leadership and government are imperative for a civil state to exist without chaos...

Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God... for it is a minister of God to you for good. (Ro 13:1-note, Ro 13:4-note)

Qasiyn - 12v in the OT - Jos 10:24; Jdg 11:6, 11; Pr 6:7; 25:15; Is 1:10; 3:6, 7; 22:3; Da 11:18; Mic. 3:1, 9 and is rendered in NAS as chief(3), chiefs(1), commander(1), ruler(3), rulers(4).

Ruins (04384)(makselah from **kasal** = to cause to stumble or fall, cp Is 3:8-note) means a heap of ruins or pile of rubble, which is what the tottering city of Jerusalem and the barren land of Judah would look like after the judgment of Jehovah (cp Zeph 1:3). The next verse explains that the people are looking for this "conscripted" ruler to be their healer, instead of looking to the true healer Jehovah Rapha: (Jehovah Rophe) The LORD our Healer. **This begs the question of where do I go for help and healing when my life is seemingly in "ruins", especially as a result of sin?** Do we go to human counselors or to the ultimate Counselor, God Himself? While it is not wrong to seek human counselors, to do so in place of seeking God is not the best path to true healing. Jehovah's pattern for healing is seen in the following passage...

If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, and My people who are called by My name **humble** themselves and **pray**, and **seek** My face and **turn from** their wicked ways, then I will **hear** from heaven, will **forgive** their sin, and will **heal** their land. (2Chr 7:13, 14)

Young adds that...

Those who seek to conscript a ruler recognize well enough that a sad condition of things has arrived, but they do not recognize the basic reason for the condition, namely, their own sin. Even now, when in desperation men seek for a ruler to help them, they will not confess their wickedness and turn in repentance to God.

Isaiah 3:7 He will **protest** on that **day**, **saying**, "I will not be your **healer**, for in my **house there** is **neither bread nor cloak**; You should not **appoint** me **ruler** of the **people**." (NASB: Lockman)

English Translation of the Greek (Septuagint): And he shall answer in that day, and say, I will not be thy ruler; for I have no bread in my house, nor raiment: I will not be the ruler of this people.

Amplified: In that day he will answer, saying, I will not be a healer and one who binds up; I am not a physician. For in my house is neither bread nor clothing; you shall not make me judge and ruler of the people. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people.

NET: At that time the brother will shout, 'I am no doctor, I have no food or coat in my house; don't make me a leader of the people!'" ([NET Bible](#))

NJB: And, that day, the other will protest, 'I am no healer; in my house there is neither food nor clothing; do not make me leader of the people.' ([NJB](#))

NLT: "No!" he will reply. "I can't help. I don't have any extra food or clothes. Don't ask me to get involved!" ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Young's Literal: He lifteth up, in that day, saying: 'I am not a binder up, And in my house is neither bread nor garment, Ye do not make me a ruler of the people.'

He will protest on that day, saying, "I will not be your healer, for in my house there is neither bread nor cloak; You should not appoint me ruler of the people:

- Swear - Ge 14:22; Dt 32:40; Re 10:5,6) (Is 58:12; Je 14:19; La 2:13; Ho 5:13; 6:1)

He will protest - The one with a cloak who has been sought out to fill the void of leadership will refuse this mantle of responsibility. The NET Bible renders it this way...

At that time the brother will shout, 'I am no doctor, I have no food or coat in my house; don't make me a leader of the people!'"

On that day - This phrase describes the time of the anarchy discussed in the previous verses (Is 3:5, 6) but might have a broader meaning as described below.

When is **that day**? Remember Isaiah's prophecy was given in **740-680BC** and Jerusalem and Judah fell to the Babylonians in **586BC** which would be **on that day**. Some commentators (eg, John MacArthur) feel that the fall in 586BC was only a partial fulfillment, and the final fulfillment would occur in the Great Tribulation which terminates with the Second Coming of Christ.

Healer ([02280](#)) (**habas**) is a verb which means to bind up or wrap (cp Ps 147:3) in this case referring to the ruined state of the city and land.

The Amplified Bible adds " I am not a physician".

Earlier **Isaiah** had described **Judah** this way...

From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil. (Is 1:6-note)

For in my house there is neither bread nor cloak - The assumption that he had a cloak was incorrect. He refutes any claim by those would conscript him into service, explaining that he has nothing that should make him a ruler over others.

You should not appoint me ruler - The call for him to rule is flatly refused. The point is that there would be no honor to rule over Judah during this time. Men would seek help from one another, but in light of the fact that all would be helpless, none would be able to provide remedy, rations or rule.

Isaiah 3:8 For [Jerusalem](#) has [stumbled](#) and [Judah](#) has [fallen](#), because their [speech](#) and their [actions](#) are [against](#) the [LORD](#), to [rebel](#) against His [glorious presence](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

- **English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judea has fallen, and their tongues have spoken with iniquity, disobedient as they are towards the Lord.
- **Amplified:** For Jerusalem is ruined and Judah is fallen, because their speech and their deeds are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of His glory and defy His glorious presence. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))
- **KJV:** For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.
- **NET:** Jerusalem certainly stumbles, Judah falls, for their words and their actions offend the LORD; they rebel against his royal authority. ([NET Bible](#))
- **NJB:** For Jerusalem has collapsed and Judah has fallen, because their words and deeds affront Yahweh and insult his glorious gaze. ([NJB](#))
- **NLT:** 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. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))
- **Young's Literal:** For stumbled hath Jerusalem, and Judah hath fallen, For their tongue and their doings are against Jehovah, To provoke the eyes of His glory.

For Jerusalem has stumbled and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their actions are against the LORD, to rebel against His glorious presence:

- Jerusalem - 2Chr 28:5, 6, 7,18; 33:11; 36:17, 18, 19; Je 26:6,18; La 5:16,17; Mic 3:12
- Because - Is 5:18,19; 57:4; Ps 73:8,9; Ezek 8:12; 9:9; Ho 7:16; Mal 3:13, 14, 15; Mt 12:36,37; Jude 1:15
- To provoke - Is 65:3, 4, 5; 2Chr 33:6,7; Ezek 8:4, 5, 6,17,18; Hab 1:13; 1Co 10:22

The **KJV** is very blunt...

For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD (Jehovah), to provoke the eyes of His glory.

For - This conjunction explains God's judgment manifest in a complete collapse of the social order of **Jerusalem** and **Judah**.

Young writes that...

The greatest act of self-preservation in which any nation can engage is that of hearkening unto the commandments of God.

Stumbled ([03762](#)) (**kasal**) (used 59x in OT and 10 of those uses in Isaiah = Is 3:8; 5:27; 8:15; 28:13; 31:3; 35:3; 40:30; 59:10, 14; 63:13) speaks of physical falling and thus means to stagger or totter (cp Israel "stumbled" in Ho 14:1). In the OT uses of **kasal**, the stumbling in individuals is usually from weakness or weariness or in nations the result of attackers.

The Septuagint translates **kasal** with **aniemi** (also in Is 1:14; 2:6, 9; 3:8; 5:6, 24; 25:11; 27:10; 35:3; 37:27; 42:2; 46:4; 62:1) which has the basic sense of relaxation of tension and so to unloose or unfasten (e.g., chains in Ac 16:26) and figuratively conveys the idea of to give up (Ep 6:9). The idea of **aniemi** in Isa 3:8 is to be "loosed", to be neglected, to be left to oneself and so to be ruined. It is interesting that in Hebrews 13:5 **aniemi** conveys the opposite sense regarding believers - that God will never desert or abandon us (**aniemi** is used this same way in Moses' exhortation to Israel before they crossed the Jordan Dt 31:6).

Fallen ([05307](#)) (**naphal**) (used over 400x in the OT - 24x in Isaiah - Is 3:8, 25; 8:15; 9:8, 10; 10:4, 34; 13:15; 14:12; 16:9; 21:9; 22:25; 24:18, 20; 26:18, 19; 30:13, 25; 31:3, 8; 34:17; 37:7; 47:11; 54:15)

The Septuagint translates **naphal** with **sumpipto** (also in Is 3:5, 34:7, 64:10, in NT only in Lk 6:49) meaning to fall in, fall together in a heap, to collapse (secular use describes houses collapsing from downfall of rain and hail).

Both of the Hebrew verbs for **stumbled** and **fallen** (and the corresponding Greek verbs, **aniemi** and **sumpipto** respectively) are in the **perfect mood** which pictures the fall as occurring at some specific point in time with the effects of that fall continuing to exist.

Because their speech and their actions - The conjunction **because** explains why Jerusalem and Judah have stumbled. It has to do with their bold faced rebellion (Is 3:9-[note](#)) manifest in their godless words and deeds.

To rebel against His glorious presence - This identifies their godless speech and actions as not just "lapses" but as their deliberate provocation and direct affront against God's glorious presence.

Rebel ([04784](#))(**marah**) is a verb which means to rebel or be contentious. Most uses are in the context of rebellion against God. An individual (Dt. 21:18, 20), a nation (Nu 20:24), and a city (Zeph 3:1) may be described as "being rebellious." **Marar** describes Israel's rebellion as a nation in (Dt 9:23, 24; Ps 78:8; Je 5:23). **Marah** also clearly conveys the sense of to rebelliously disobey (Is 63:10, Dt 9:7, 1Ki 13:21).

The **Septuagint (LXX)** translates **marah** in Is 3:8 with the verb **apeitheo** (see word study) which means to disobey, to refuse to comply, to refuse to believe (see use of **apeitheo** in Ac 14:2). This disobedience is always toward God, His ordinances, or His revelation.

Zephaniah gives us a vivid picture of the rebellious spirit associated with **marar**...

Woe to her who is **rebellious (marar)** and defiled (cp Je 5:1; 19:5; 23:13,14; 32:35), the tyrannical city (**Ed**: referring to Jerusalem)! She (Jerusalem) heeded no voice. She accepted no instruction. She did not trust in the LORD. She did not draw near to her God. (Zeph 3:1,2)

Marah - 45v in the OT - Ex 23:21; Nu 20:10, 24; 27:14; Dt. 1:26, 43; 9:7, 23f; 21:18, 20; 31:27; Jos. 1:18; 1 Sam. 12:14f; 1 Ki. 13:21, 26; 2 Ki. 14:26; Neh. 9:26; Job 17:2; Ps. 5:10; 78:8, 17, 40, 56; 105:28; 106:7, 33, 43; 107:11; **Isa. 1:20; 3:8; 50:5; 63:10**; Jer. 4:17; 5:23; Lam. 1:18, 20; 3:42; Ezek. 5:6; 20:8, 13, 21; Hos. 13:16; Zeph. 3:1

The **NAS** renders **marah** as became disobedient(1), bitter(1), disobedient(1), disobeyed(2), provocation(1), rebel(6), rebelled(18), rebellious(12), rebels(2), very rebellious(1).

His glorious majesty - Literally this reads "the eyes of His majesty" or "the eyes of His glory", His eyes which observe everything that profanes His holy Name and character. Have you ever had someone wantonly, rebelliously commit an act before you simply to provoke you to react? Then you have some sense of the brazen affrontery of Judah's sin against the glorious God.

John describes the "eyes" of the Lord in his face to face encounter on the Isle of Patmos writing that...

His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and **His eyes were like a flame of fire** (Re 1:14-[note](#), cp Re 19:12-[note](#))

Tony Garland commenting on the eyes like a flame of fire writes...

His eyes are singled out as being like a flame of fire . This evokes the image of a gaze which instantly pierces the deepest darkness to lay bear all sin. It is a reference to His omniscience, omnipresence, and judgment. There is no evil activity of men which Jesus does not see (Job 28:24; Ps 90:8; 94:9; 139:23; Pr. 15:3). There is no den of iniquity so dark that Jesus is not there (Job 34:22; Ps. 139:7; Jer. 23:24; Amos 9:2). There is no work of man which will go unjudged by His piercing gaze (1Cor. 3:15; 2Cor. 5:10; Heb. 4:13-note). Truly, God is an all-consuming fire (Nu 11:1; Dt. 5:25; 9:3; 2Ki1:10; Ps. 50:3; 78:63; Is 33:14; Lk 9:54; He 12:29; Re 11:5-[note](#)).

When speaking to the church at Thyatira, after mentioning His "eyes like a flame of fire" (Rev. 2:18-[note](#)), Jesus continues, "I know your works" (Rev. 2:19-[note](#)). He says to the same church, "all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works" (Rev. 2:23-[note](#)).

His piercing eyes are an identifying description in Rev. 19:12-[note](#). It is impossible to escape His gaze! "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (He 4:13-note).

His gaze is absolutely piercing and impossible to hide from. His absolute righteousness and the justice of His judgment would be impossible to endure except through identification with Him as one of His own: "Who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderers' soap" (Mal. 3:2).

Solomon records that...

The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good. (Pr 15:3, **cp** Pr 5:21, Job 34:21, 22)
(See Related Studies on Omnipresent and Omniscient)

This phrase reminds one of the repeated phrase **"the splendor of His majesty"** (Isa 2:10-note, Is 2:19-note, Is 2:21-note) from which rebels will attempt to flee! Rebellion is especially bold and wicked when it in **the eyes of His glory**. It is interesting to note that at the time of Isaiah's prophecy (740-680BC) Solomon's Temple was still intact and the glory (the **"Shekinah glory cloud"**) of the Lord was still present in Jerusalem. Ezekiel describes the departure of the glory of Jehovah prior to the final destruction of the Temple (586BC)...

Then the cherubim lifted up their wings with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them. And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood over the mountain which is east of the city. (Ezek 11:22, 23-see notes) (See related discussions of the **Departure of the Glory of Jehovah from Solomon's Temple** and God's Name **Jehovah Shammah** - The LORD is There)

Glorious ([03519](#)) (**kabod** related to **kabed** = verb = to be heavy) frequently refers to the Lord's royal splendor that is an outward manifestation of his authority as king (Ex 33:18; Ps 72:19; Ezek 1:28)

Kabod - 189v in OT - Gen. 31:1; 45:13; 49:6; Exod. 16:7, 10; 24:16f; 28:2, 40; 29:43; 33:18, 22; 40:34f; Lev. 9:6, 23; Num. 14:10, 21f; 16:19, 42; 20:6; 24:11; Deut. 5:24; Jos. 7:19; 1 Sam. 2:8; 4:21f; 6:5; 1 Ki. 3:13; 8:11; 1 Chr. 16:24, 28f; 17:18; 29:12, 28; 2 Chr. 1:11f; 5:14; 7:1ff; 17:5; 18:1; 26:18; 32:27, 33; Neh. 9:5; Est. 1:4; 5:11; Job 19:9; 29:20; Ps. 3:3; 4:2; 7:5; 8:5; 16:9; 19:1; 21:5; 24:7ff; 26:8; 29:1ff, 9; 30:12; 49:16f; 57:5, 8, 11; 62:7; 63:2; 66:2; 72:19; 73:24; 79:9; 84:11; 85:9; 96:3, 7f; 97:6; 102:15f; 104:31; 106:20; 108:1, 5; 112:9; 113:4; 115:1; 138:5; 145:5, 11f; 149:5; Prov. 3:16, 35; 8:18; 11:16; 15:33; 18:12; 20:3; 21:21; 22:4; 25:2, 27;

26:1, 8; 29:23; Eccl. 6:2; 10:1; **Is 3:8; 4:2, 5; 5:13; 6:3; 8:7; 10:3, 16, 18; 11:10; 14:18; 16:14; 17:3, 4; 21:16; 22:18, 23, 24; 24:23; 35:2; 40:5; 42:8, 12; 43:7; 48:11; 58:8; 59:19; 60:1, 2, 13; 61:6; 62:2; 66:11, 12, 18, 19;** Jer. 2:11; 13:16; 14:21; 17:12; 48:18; Ezek. 1:28; 3:12, 23; 8:4; 9:3; 10:4, 18f; 11:22f; 31:18; 39:21; 43:2, 4f; 44:4; Dan. 11:39; Hos. 4:7; 9:11; 10:5; Mic. 1:15; Nah. 2:9; Hab. 2:14, 16; Hag. 2:3, 7, 9; Zech. 2:5, 8; Mal. 1:6; 2:2.

The **NAS** renders **kabod** as bosom(1), **glorious(8), glory(147)**, honor(33), honorable(1), honored(1), riches(1), soul(2), splendid(1), splendor(2), wealth(3).

As **Clarke** says Jehovah's eyes...

cannot look upon iniquity but with abhorrence; therefore, the eyes of his glory might be well provoked by their crimes.

Delitzsch sums up this section writing that...

Israel, instead of living in the consciousness of being a constant and favoured object of these majestic and earnestly admonishing eyes, is studiously defying them in word and deed, not even hiding its sin through fear of them, but exposing it abashed for all to view ([Isaiah 3 Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah](#))

Isaiah 3:9 The **expression** of their **faces bears witness** against them, and they **display** their **sin** like **Sodom**; They do not even **conceal** it. **Woe** to them! For they have **brought evil** on themselves. (**NASB: Lockman**)

English Translation of the Greek (Septuagint): Wherefore now their glory has been brought low, and the shame of their countenance has withstood them, and they have proclaimed their sin as Sodom, and made it manifest.

Amplified: Their respecting of persons and showing of partiality witnesses against them; they proclaim their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil [as a reward upon themselves]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: The show of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

NET: The look on their faces testifies to their guilt; like the people of Sodom they openly boast of their sin. Too bad for them! For they bring disaster on themselves. ([NET Bible](#))

NJB: Their complacency bears witness against them, they parade their sin like Sodom; they do not conceal it, all the worse for them, for they have hatched their own downfall. ([NJB](#))

NLT: 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. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Young's Literal: The appearance of their faces witnessed against them, And their sin, as Sodom, they declared, They have not hidden! Woe to their soul, For they have done to themselves evil.

The expression of their faces bears witness against them, and they display their sin like Sodom; They do not even conceal it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil on themselves:

- Is 3:16; 1Sa 15:32; 2Ki 9:30; Ps 10:4; 73:6,7; Pr 30:13; Je 3:3; 6:15; Da 7:20
- Ge 13:13; 18:20,21; 19:5, 6, 7, 8, 9; Je 44:16,17; Ezek 23:16) (La 5:16; Ho 13:9

The expression of their faces bears witness against them (cp Is 3:16-note) - The brazen sin against the Almighty bears witness in their countenance. It is as if they "wear their sin" on their faces!

The Septuagint has the noun **aischune** which means shame or disgrace, which shows on their faces. The Greek actually says something like this "their shame has set itself against them" which conveys the sense of opposition or resistance (Brenton renders it "the shame of their countenance has withstood them.")

Delitzsch comments that this...describes an insolent look which their sinfulness is stamping upon their faces, without the self-condemnation which in others takes the form of dread to commit sin... The expression of their countenance testifies against them, for it is the distorted and troubled image of their sin that cannot and will not hide itself. They do not even content themselves, however, with this open thought silent display; they further speak openly of their sin, making not concealment of it, like the Sodomites who proclaimed their fleshly lust... Jerusalem is, in fact, spiritually Sodom, as the prophet called it in Is 1:10-note. Through such shameful sinning they do themselves harm: this the undeniable fact, the actual experience. ([Isaiah 3 Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah](#))

Young comments that...The very expression which appears on the faces of the inhabitants of Judah is such that it enables one to learn what sort of people they are. The emotions of the heart often find expression on the countenance, a fact which should remind us of the importance of keeping the thoughts of the heart true and pure; and inasmuch as these emotions do find expression in the countenance, there is no need for outside witnesses. The very look which the inhabitants of Judah bore on their faces was sufficient to serve as a witness against themselves... While it is true that we cannot always judge the character of a man by his countenance, it is also true that that character often comes to expression in the countenance. In a very true sense, we are what we think. ([Young, Ed: The Book of Isaiah - 3 Volume Commentary. Eerdmans Pub. 1992-hardcopy](#) or [Logos](#) or [Wordsearch](#))

Clarke adds that...The eye is the index of the mind. Envy, hatred, malice, malevolence, concupiscence, and murder, when in the heart, look most intelligently out at the eye. They tell the innocent to be on their guard; and serve the same purpose as the sonorous rings in the tail of the rattlesnake—they announce the presence of the destroyer. Impure propensities are particularly legible in the eyes: whoever has beheld the face of a debauchee or a prostitute knows this; of these it may be said, they wish to appear what they really are. They glory in their iniquity. This is the highest pitch of ungodliness.

The **psalmist** writes...

The wicked, in the **haughtiness of his countenance**, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, "There is no God." (Psalm 10:4-[note](#))

As **Spurgeon** said...

Proud hearts breed proud looks and stiff knees. It is an admirable arrangement that the heart is often written on the countenance, just as the motion of the wheels of a clock find their record on its face. A **brazen face** and a **broken heart** never go together. We are not quite sure that the Athenians were wise when they ordained that men should be tried in the dark lest their countenances should weigh with the judges; for there is much more to be learned from the motions of the muscles of the face than from the words of the lips. **Honesty shines in the face, but villainy peeps out at the eyes.** See the effect of pride; it kept the man from seeking God. It is hard to pray with a stiff neck and an unbending knee.

Therefore **pride** is their **necklace**. The garment of violence covers them. (Psalm 73:6-[note](#))

Spurgeon comments that...

They are as great in their own esteem as if they were aldermen of the New Jerusalem; they want no other ornament than their own pomposity. No jeweler could sufficiently adorn them; they wear their own pride as a better ornament than a gold chain.

Solomon records that...

There is a kind—oh how lofty are his eyes! And his eyelids are raised in arrogance. (Pr 30:13)

Display ([05046](#)) (**nagad**) means to make know by declaring something. To announce or inform. This root basically denotes "to place a matter high, conspicuous before a person" (TWOT). The idea is to bring something to another's attention. In this context Judah is flaunting their sin publicly, casting off all fear of God and respect for men even reveling in or glorying in their sin! This is the essence of self delusion or deception and is one of the awful effects of sin (Heb 3:13-note).

Nagad is used 29 times in Isaiah - Is 3:9; 7:2; 19:12; 21:2, 6, 10; 36:22; 40:21; 41:22, 23, 26; 42:9, 12; 43:9, 12; 44:7, 8; 45:19, 21; 46:10; 48:3, 5, 6, 14, 20; 57:12; 58:1; 66:19.

Like Sodom ([See note Sodom](#)) - Flagrant sin is the idea. Modesty has been jettisoned. Out in the open. Woe to the nation makes no attempt to conceal its sins, sins that speak of a morally corrupt heart! **Do we see this in post-Christian America?** (Obviously that is a rhetorical question!) Lot warned the Sodomites but they flatly rejected his warning. As Judah's sin was like Sodom, so too would be their punishment (cp Is 1:9-note, Is 1:10-note)

Moses describes **Sodom** as follows...

Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the Lord. (Ge 13:13, cp Ge 18:20)

Jeremiah who like Isaiah also prophesied primarily against Judah (627-585BC cp Isaiah whose prophecy ended some 50 years earlier circa 680BC) described their flagrant "Sodom-like" sin...

Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? They were not even ashamed at all. They did not even know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall. At the time that I punish them, they shall be cast down," says the Lord. (Je 6:15)

Jeremiah records an example of Judah's brazen attitude...

As for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord(Note that they were so deceived and depraved, they did not argue by what authority Jeremiah spoke. They had made up their mind - their way or the highway!), **we are not going to listen to you!** But rather we will certainly carry out every word that has proceeded from our mouths, by burning sacrifices to the **queen of heaven** (**Ed**: She is identified as **Astarte**, the goddess of the planet Venus, called **Ishtar** by the Assyrians and Babylonians and **Ashtoreth** by the Phoenicians and other Canaanites. She was regarded as the sister or consort of Baal, the storm god. Together they were looked upon as symbolizing the generative powers of nature, and their worship is denounced in the OT as abominable in the sight of Jehovah. Cp Je 7:18) and pouring out drink offerings to her, just as we ourselves, our forefathers, our kings and our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then we had plenty of food and were well off and saw no misfortune (**Ed**: Professing to be wise, they became fools! They foolishly and audaciously attributed their lack of plenty to the discontinuance of honor they paid to the goddess!!!). (Je 44:16, 17, cp Je 44:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25)

RIGHTEOUS RETRIBUTION

Woe to them - Isaiah literally cries out "Woe to their soul", which is an apt exclamation for their sin sick souls were the source of the societal collapse. "The chickens would soon come home to roost" or as the KJV renders it "they have rewarded evil unto themselves"!

Woe ([0188](#))(**'owy/'oy**) is an impassioned onomatopoeic (word whose sound suggest the sense or meaning) interjection (act of uttering an exclamation) used to express grief, despair, regret, distress, sorrow, pain, discomfort, or unhappiness. **Woe** is a distinctive form of prophetic speech, found both in the OT and in the NT. {46x in 35v in the NT - Mt 11:21; 18:7; 23:13, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29; 24:19; 26:24; Mk 13:17; 14:21; Lk 6:24, 25 (twice), Lk 6:26; 10:13 (2x); Lk 11:42, 43, 44, 46, 37, 52; 17:1; 21:23; 22:22; 1Co. 9:16; Jude 1:11; Re 8:13 (3x); Re 9:12 (2x); Re11:14(2x); Re 12:12; 18:10(2x), Re 18:16(2x), Re 18:19(2x)} The Lxx translates the Hebrew with the interjection ouai which expresses extreme displeasure, much like the Hebrew equivalent.

'Owy/'oy - 22v in the OT - Nu 21:29; 24:23; 1Sa 4:7, 8; **Is 3:9, 11; 6:5; 24:16**; Je 4:13, 31; 6:4; 10:19; 13:27; 15:10; 45:3; 48:46; La 5:16; Ezek 16:23; 24:6, 9; Ho 7:13; 9:12 is translated "Woe" 19 times and "Alas" 2 times.

Martin adds that **woe**...

is an interjection of distress or of a threat voiced in the face of present or coming disaster. Isaiah's book includes 22 occurrences of that word or its companion word hōy, more than in any other prophetic book. ([Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor or Logos](#))

Brought evil upon themselves - Judah and Jerusalem had sown the evil seed of pride and would reap its rotten fruit (Gal 6:7, 8). Sin always results in just requital. Indeed the wages Sin pays its workers are death (Ro 6:23-note).

Hosea records a parallel thought...

Israel, you have destroyed yourself though in me lies your help. (Hosea 13:9, New Jerusalem Bible)

Motyer aptly puts it that...

The boomerang quality of sin is highlighted and the sinner is his own paymaster (brought ... upon) (Motyer, J. A. The Prophecy of Isaiah. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press)

Clarke writes that...

Every man's sin is against his own soul. Evil awaiteth sinners—and he that offends his God injures himself.