

Living in a Messed Up World: This World Will Fail

By Pastor Matt Black

19 March 2006

Lord's Day evening

Isaiah 3:1-11

Introduction: Open your Bibles to the book of Isaiah chapter 3. The title of tonight's message is "Living in a Messed up World." Not many people really want to look into the first 39 chapters of Isaiah. Just like the 39 books of the Old Testament, it is filled with disappointment and judgment. And yet tonight, we are going to see that whenever the Lord is in the equation, disappointment and despair can be turned into delight. God can take a messed up situation and right all the wrongs. He can and will take an unredeemed rebellious people and turn them into kings and priests before the LORD (Revelation 5:10).

We need to approach Isaiah in the way that God intended it. This is not just a prophecy to earthly Israel, but to all the true children of Abraham, and the Bible says you are a child of Abraham if you have the same faith as Abraham. Are you trusting in the God of Abraham tonight? Then this message is for you!

The title of our message tonight is "Living in a Messed up World." When you read this third chapter of Isaiah, you realize they were living in a messed up world. We find in this chapter that God's people joined forces with the world. They started worshipping the world's idols, and loving the world's lusts and harlotry. What eventually happens is that the world begins eating it's own children. Do you understand what I mean? If you give yourself to this world, the world will use you for its own purposes and spit you out when it's all done with you.

How do we live in this world without being taken in by the world? I mean, you go to the store, and you pass the movie aisle right? You start looking for a "good" movie, and you end up buying a movie you know you shouldn't watch. Or let's say you turn on the radio, and you know you shouldn't be listening to this stuff because it will rot your brain and make your soul dull. How do you say NO to the world. How can we live godly in Christ Jesus in this messed up world? That's the question we need to answer tonight. How can we live godly in a messed up world? Essentially Isaiah's answer is that we need to hate the world, love the Lord, and rest in Christ. Are you doing those three things tonight? Look at verse 1.

Proposition: We need to realize that the world *always* **FAILS** (3:1-4:1).

1 For, behold, the Lord [the Sovereign], the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water,

- I. Man's **provisions** will fail. And whenever any of man's provisions fail, always remember that it is God who takes them away. It is vain to trust in bread and water. Poverty can come tomorrow. God is the Sovereign, that is what our text says: "Behold, the Lord." The title "Lord" means sovereign. Ponder Him. Think of Him. Behold Him. Provisions will fail, but God will never fail.

Remember in **1 Kings 17:8**, there was a widow woman in Zeraphath. All she had was "handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse" and she says, "behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die" (17:12). But God can say, "The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth" (17:14).

Do you want to know why you are being entrapped in this messed up world? Because you are trusting in earthly provisions, and they will always eventually fail. The sovereign will take the stock out of the stock market. In a day Disney and Wal-Mart and Microsoft will worth nothing. So don't trust in them.

Don't you know that He "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (**Ephesians 1:11**).

Proverbs 16:9 tells us that "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps." It is not your provisions that sustain you!!

Matthew 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

So no matter how fortified we are, no matter how much sustenance we have, it will always eventually fail. And when the do, we say with Job, "the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (**Job 1:21**). We have learned with Paul that "in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content" (**Philippians 4:11**).

Don't trust in man's provisions. They fail. The Sovereign Lord will take them away. Neither should we trust in man's leadership.

II. Man's **leadership** will always fail.

2 The mighty man [HERO],

- A. Your **heroes** will fail. That is what "mighty man" means. We have to be careful that we do not make heroes of men. They will all fail. I have known people to get devastated and forsake the Lord when a leader falls. Dear friends, if you fall away from the faith because of a leader, you've got your eyes in the wrong place. Put your eyes back on the Lord!

and the man of war [WARRIOR],

- B. Your **armies** will fail. Homeland security is not even close to invincible. They like to make you feel safe, but only God can give you safety.

Only the Lord's people can say with David...

Psalms 4:8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

the judge,

- C. Your **Politicians** will fail. "the judge." Mayors and governors and presidents and princes will all fail. All earthly leadership will let you down some time or another. Don't trust in them!

and the prophet,

- D. Your **Preachers** will fail. Isaiah puts himself in this category. There are Elijah's out there who can call down fire from heaven, but who run from Jezebels. There are Isaiahs out there who preach the Gospel, but realize that they are ultimately men who have "unclean lips." Preachers all have feet of clay. You cannot even trust in a faithful preacher, because preachers fail, but God will never fail you.

and the prudent,

- E. **Physics** will fail. The word "Prudent" here is the word elsewhere translated "diviner" or "soothsayer." Basically it is referring to witchcraft. A diviner is a witch. Those who seem to be prudent and wise. Without knowing God, they seem to know the things that God knows. We would call these people today mediums, psychics, and anyone who claims to know something only God can know like the future, or who promises you blessing.

There are plenty of these kinds of people on Christian television. They prophesy falsely in the name of the Lord about future events. They claim to know things only God would know. Demons and witches may guess about having knowledge of the future, but Jesus Christ alone is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (Revelation 22:13).

and the ancient,

- F. **Teachers** will fail. The **ancient** refers to the one who seems to know everything. This is also translated "elder" elsewhere. There are whole churches that are built around these kinds of people. In true Christianity there ought not to be any gurus. The Roman church has for ages fallen in that heresy. They have their popes and their doctors. We as sincere Christians can never fall into that trap! We must not elevate any teacher above what is normal respect and honor.

Matthew 23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.

The Lord is our teacher.

Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding.

3 The captain of fifty,

- G. **Generals** fail. These are those who have real power in the armies of men. They can make decisions of peace and safety. But remember Generals and Presidents may make decisions regarding war, but the end of the war is already decided.

and the honourable man

- H. **The Famous and Powerful** fail. These were famous because they were political appointments. You may gain favor with men, but it is favour with God that matters! You may be accepted in the world, but are you accepted in the Beloved?

and the counsellor,

- I. **Counselors** fail. Human counselors can bring some safety. It is true—
Proverbs 11:14 in the multitude of counsellors *there is* safety, but human counsel is always inferior to our counsel from the Lord and from the Word!

Remember the Lord's name! "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

and the cunning artificer

- J. **Craftsmen and Artists** fail. How is that? Well there is coming a day, when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, and the first will be passed away! There is coming a day when God will make the best human works to look like shacks and shambles!!

and the eloquent orator.

- K. **Magicians** fail. This title has the idea of those who could whisper a magic formula and make things happen. Of course all of that was false. There are no magic formulas.

Man's provisions fail, all human leadership ultimately fails! Don't trust in men—trust in the Lord. The Lord is your shepherd. He will not fail you! Stop trusting in your own provisions and even in human leadership.

III. Then, we see that in this messed up world, God's rightful **order** fails.

4 And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

- A. God's order fails in the **government**. The way of the youth becomes the way of the land. MTV rules who is elected president! Reject this! Grown men are wearing the clothes that are decided by the youth of our nation. This ought not to be! In our culture, the youth rule, and it is because a failure of God's order. We see it in the government, but it really begins in the home.

5 And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.

- B. God's order fails in the **home**. What is the fifth commandment? Honor thy father and thy mother. Is your child in order in your home? If not, you are following the way of the world in some way.

Young people, you ought never to bad mouth your father and mother. You ought never to talk back. What does God think about that?

Exodus 21:17 And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.

C. God's order fails in society.

6 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: 7 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.

Don't you see that when God is rejected, the society is ultimately brought to nothing. Here in verse 6 we read exaggerated language. The only requirement for leadership is the right set of clothes. But isn't that the case in some parts of our society? Children are killing each other over Nike tennis shoes! The one who has power and popularity in school is not the one with leadership, but the one with the right clothes!

Yet, this word "clothing" in verse 6 shows what this really is. It is a rag. Matthew Henry says on this verse that when God is rejected from the land, the government and the society go a begging!

IV. This messed up world will ultimately completely fail!

8 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.

Their houses in Jerusalem and Judah were filled with the world goods, and their hearts were filled with the world's idols, but the Lord prophesied through Isaiah that "Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen" (verse 8). Oh, it didn't look like it at the time, but it was as good as gone. You see this world will ultimately come to destruction.

2 Peter 3:12 The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat

Christ will come, and that will be the end of this messed up world. And it's as good as gone.

Why such a harsh judgment?

their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.

Because we are called to glorify God. If we do not glorify God you provoke His glory. Nothing else matters. You may have goals in life, but your ultimate goal is to please God and to glorify Him. Do you have a happy marriage? Is that your goal? Or is your goal to glorify God and serve Him whether you have a happy marriage or not? True commitment will only come from a real commitment to God.

So we see, in this messed up world, that man's provisions fail, man's leadership fails, because of our depravity, God's order will fail in our homes and government and ultimately Judah and Jerusalem and the entire world will fail.

A. In that day, man's pride will be exposed.

9 ¶ The shew 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.

B. In that day, the righteous will be vindicated.

10 Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

C. The **wicked** will ultimately reap what they sow.

11 Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

There is coming a day when death and hell will deliver up the dead and they shall be judged according to their works (Revelation 20:13). If you are trusting in this messed up world, you may be the one prophesied about in this verse.

Conclusion: Are you living in this messed up world? Are you being controlled by it? **Galatians 5:16** Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. Are you controlled by the world or by the Spirit? Has God called you sovereignly to Himself? Why should you be dominated by the world?

Do you realize that this world will fail? It will pass away! Put away the words of the flesh from your mouth. Let no corrupt communication proceed from your mouth. Let the life of the Spirit reign in you! Tomorrow is a new day. Don't trust in your provision or in human leadership. Trust in the Lord!

1 John 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Closing Hymn: 613 For Me to Live is Christ to Die is Gain