



Meditation— Isaiah 3.⁴⁻⁸

- ⁴And I will give children to be their princes,
and babes shall rule over them.
- ⁵And 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.
- ⁶When 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:"
- ⁷In 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."
- ⁸For Jerusalem is ruined,
and Judah is fallen:
because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD,
to provoke the eyes of his glory.

In his first two chapters, Isaiah has identified institutions and individuals in which Israel sought security and wellbeing. These included economic, military/national security, political, and religious institutions and individuals such as political leaders, economic leaders, military leaders, and religious leaders. In looking to these institutions rather than to God, Israel has engaged in a form of idolatry and committed, essentially, treason against God. Though he warned Israel repeatedly, the nation continued its rebellious ways. In hopes of reclaiming Israel from its idolatrous attitudes and actions, Yahweh exposed the deficiencies of all these institutions and individuals, going so far as to remove His support and allowing them to fail under the weight of their own presumption. But we see in today's reading that rather than "ceas[ing]... from men" who were not worthy of trust (See 2.²²), and yielding themselves once more to God's perfect governance, they continued to trust in the arm of flesh, even when those in whom they placed their trust were even less qualified to lead than their predecessors.

In identifying children, woman, uneducated, and family members as classes of citizens to whom Israel looked for leadership in its desperation, Isaiah focused on the inexperience and incompetence of the new leaders (In identifying woman, Isaiah is not being sexist, but is simply reflecting the reality that in his society, unlike our own, woman were not educated or trained in ways that would qualify them as effective leaders). But when God withdraws his support, human leaders, competent or incompetent, cannot repair the damage done to society by even the most competent of human leaders.

We would do well to heed Israel's experience, so wisely and graciously preserved for our benefit. We would do well to refuse to trust in the arm of flesh and place full trust and confidence in God alone. For, as the Psalmist bore witness,

“It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes” (Ps. 118.⁸⁻⁹).

Otherwise, we will find out the hard way that, as Isaiah warned, “Yahweh alone shall be exalted in that day.”

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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