

Exod 03-12-14a

Let's continue our worship this morning. This is December the 14th, 2003. We continue our study of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20.

And at the outset, as is our custom, we will stop for a moment and give each one of us the opportunity to go before the Lord and acknowledge the importance of His Word and the importance of the ministry of the Spirit as we enter into our time of fellowship in His Word. Shall we pray? Father, thank You for preserving us, protecting us, providing for all of our needs, bringing us together at this time with the opportunity to study Your Word and have our souls nourished and built up and strengthened. We know that left to ourselves, our minds tend to run according to the laws of entropy and devolve and degenerate, and we fall into the ways of the world from which we have been delivered.

And we know that it is the presence of Your Spirit and it is the power of Your Word that lifts our thinking, that gives us objectivity and enables us to pursue greater and higher things than what can be seen in the world around us. We have been given a great calling, a great opportunity to redeem the time and to convert it into something of eternal value. We pray that our study this morning will contribute to that goal.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. For our Scripture reading this morning, turn with me to Isaiah chapter 3. Isaiah chapter 3. On this day when we, as we have mentioned a little earlier, we have had something of a national sigh of relief with the capture of the former Iraqi leader.

It puts us in mind of national issues. We find ourselves studying the constitution of the nation of Israel as delivered from Mount Sinai some 3,400 years ago. And it is fitting, I think, that our Scripture reading this morning also reflects national issues.

Nations, however, in the Old Testament, teach us individual truths, things that apply to the nation of Israel when we go through interpretation and application become individual sources of guidance and encouragement and instruction for us. So, for example, when we see the nation given these Ten Commandments, the principles that are embodied and are illustrated and reflected in those commandments are something that each of us need to apply, even though we are not under the law. We are under grace.

But it is the same God with the same principles of righteousness who gave the nation of Israel the Ten Commandments that calls us to be holy because He is holy. So, with that in mind, as we look at our Scripture reading this morning in Isaiah chapter 3, in the New King James, this is subtitled, Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem. And judgment is a part of what we are looking at as a consequence of disobedience to commandments.

You'll remember the third commandment, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Why? For he will not hold guiltless the one who takes his name in vain. There is a penalty.

Having no other gods before me and not making any graven image. Also, there is a consequence attached to that. We'll see more when we return to our text.

But take a look at this chapter. 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, the mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder, the captain of fifty and the honorable man, the counselor and the skillful artisan, and the expert enchanter. All of these are taken away from Jerusalem and Judah.

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

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. 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.

For Jerusalem stumbled and Judah is fallen because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord. To provoke the eyes of his glory, 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. Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

Woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him. 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.

Well, the rest of the chapter continues in that vein, but the principle here is clear. God watches and God listens to his people. When it says that the Lord is going to take away the stock in the store, the bread and the water, the mighty man, the judge and the prophet and so on, all of these are blessings.

All of these were part of what God gave Israel when they first came to the land. We're studying their journey to the land of promise, the land flowing with milk and honey. It was a promise of God to them.

It was a provision and a blessing of God to them. Now, I don't know about you, but to me this is kind of a scary thing. God delivers, saves out of slavery to take Israel to a land which he has promised them.

He wants to bless them. He wants to fulfill the promises that he gave to their forefathers. So he takes them there and he gives them these things.

And here is the record of God saying all of these are going to be removed, going to be taken away. Now, wouldn't it be great if your blessings were permanent? Once you got them, you could never lose them. They come and they're untouchable.

But it is not the case. The blessings that were given to those who were faithful and to those who trusted God to cross the Jordan into the land are subsequently removed. They are subsequently removed.

The stock in the store, the whole supply of bread, and the whole supply of water. Now, people in jail, that's all they get is bread and water. And even that is going to be unavailable.

And there will be no one who wants to take charge. It's going to be such a mess. Normally people want to be running for office.

They want to hold a government job of some sort. They want to have power and authority. But this is going to be such a mess.

People are going to push each other away. A man's own brother will say, look, we got the ruins of the house here. Tell you what, even though I'm the older brother, you take charge of it.

You can be the heir. You can be the guy. And he's going to say, no, no.

I've got no food. I've got no clothing. Look at verse 7. In that day he will protest.

I can't cure your ills. And my house is neither food nor clothing. Do not make me a ruler of the people.

I don't want the responsibility. All of the ambition, all of the pride, all of the strutting about will be gone. If you saw any of the presidential candidate debate amongst the Democratic candidates, it was held, at least the one I saw, the part I saw was held on the day that Mr. Gore endorsed one candidate and it wasn't his former running mate.

So there was all kinds of fur flying about, well, why did he do that and what do you think? And so on. Nobody's going to be standing up trying to be a candidate for office. No one is going to want authority.

Why? Jerusalem stumbled. Judah is fallen because, verse 8, their tongue and their doings are against the Lord. Their tongue and their doings provoke the eyes of His glory.

The issue for the people of God in any dispensation is God's glory. God and what is glory? It isn't that God is going to strut around and say everyone admire me, everyone praise me and sing songs to me. I just feed on that.

It's something that God just has to have. He's sort of a glory hound or something. What is God's glory really? What is the glory of God? We talk about the glory of celebrities in this life.

What is God's glory? It is the revelation of His character. He is a glorious God. He is an admirable God.

That's the understatement of the universe. But His attributes, His nature, His character, what makes Him, what He reflects in His actions throughout human history is intrinsically to be admired. He is faithful and never changes.

He never goes back on His word. He is righteous. He is not capricious.

He doesn't do things for no reason. And I don't know about you, but I am exceedingly thankful that that is the case. What if God was capricious? What if you couldn't really count on Him to keep His word? What if for no reason at all He decided to take away Judah's bread and water and their blessings and their security, their mighty men, their communicators, their prophets? You notice the things that are taken away are in the realm of provision.

You say, wait a minute, didn't God promise My God shall supply all your needs? I've never seen the righteous go hungry or His seed begging bread. Well, that's the key right there. The righteous don't go hungry.

The seed of the righteous do not beg bread. When is it that you lose provision? Why would God take away basic logistical support? Verse 8 and 9. Their tongue and their doings are against the Lord. We get a wake-up call when something happens to our provision.

We get a wake-up call when something happens to our basic staples of life. And this is not just finances. This is not just how much we can afford.

This is in the realm of the things that God has promised that are part of the basic package. Peace, provision, security, guidance. Notice that He has taken away the mighty man and the man of war.

What is that? Security. God will remove the hedge. God will take away the ring of fire that normally surrounds His people as a wake-up, as a form of discipline that is designed to turn us.

This is something God wants to do. But if we insist... This is like someone who needs police protection. So the police come out and post three or four patrolmen all around the house.

And the guy in the house just goes out and starts insulting the policeman and talking bad about the police department and, oh, you inept, incompetent, this, that, and the other. Well, if I was a policeman, I'd say, fine. If you don't think we're ept, if you think we're inept, why, we'll leave and you can protect yourself.

And this is God's attitude. Either trust in Him, accept His provision, accept His protection, accept His guidance, accept His plan, or, fine, He'll leave and let us do our own plan, make our own arrangements for provision and protection and guidance, security, and the like. And this is a very potent example from the Old Testament Scriptures.

The Lord of hosts takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stock and the store, the bread and the water, the mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet. Justice is no longer available. Do you wonder why the court system is so fouled up in our country? Why the judiciary is tangled and it can take years and even decades to get any kind of justice? We lose the judge.

We lose the prophet. It's getting harder and harder to find good teaching of the Word of God in our country. And it is because people, their tongue and their doings in this country are against the Lord.

To provoke the eyes of His glory, you have entertainments and attitudes that make light of God, that make Him a figure of fun, a figure of comedy. And all of us have a good sense of humor, but there is a line across which we do not go. Look at verse 9. The look on their countenance witnesses against them, and they declare their sin like Sodom.

All through our culture now, there is widespread promotion, and it is considered fashionable and chic to be very accepting and very pro-homosexual and pro-immorality, to accept without question adultery and fornication and the complete obliteration of marriage and family. The humor and the lightheartedness with which homosexuals are paraded toward us and at us masks a very great evil. What is this passage saying? The look on their countenance witnesses against them.

They declare their sin. They come right out and promote it and say, Oh, yes, we're in favor of this. We accept this.

This is wonderful. We're inclusive. We're not bigoted.

We're not prejudiced. We're not biased. They do not hide it.

Woe to their soul, for they have brought evil upon themselves. Now, this is the Word of God. It isn't fashionable.

It isn't politically correct in our social climate, but it's the Word of God. The society that accepts homosexuality, that accepts alternatives to marriage and family as the fundamental building block, will rot, will corrupt, will degenerate, and will be judged, will be deprived of security, will be deprived of provision, will be deprived of guidance, all of the things that are mentioned in this chapter. And what is the sign and symbol of this? It is the ascendancy of children who have no business ruling, the ascendancy of women who have no business ruling.

There's another politically incorrect statement for which I'm sure I could be pilloried in a number of quarters. But the Word of God, look at the example it gives beginning in verse 4. I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. We've got people in their early, mid, and late teens who sway huge segments of our American population, merchandising-wise, marketing-wise.

People part with their money to the tune of millions and millions of dollars a year for styles, for trends, for music, for merchandising items, dolls, and various kinds of things that come and go. And that's not government, but it is ruling. It is wielding influence and authority over children, over fans, over those who, even parents are bent to the will of children.

Babes shall rule over them. Families that are controlled by the children are in the grip of evil. It is a topsy-turvy, upside-down order.

The people will be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor. This happens, again, because of the litigious nature of our modern society. Your neighbor can wreak all manner of havoc on you by calling the police frivolously, by suing frivolously, by raising a stink with the city or with the newspaper or whatever frivolously, by abusing the freedoms that are supposed to pertain and doing all manner of things on their property and saying, well, it's my right.

There is oppression, every one by another, every man by his neighbor. But look at the last half of verse 5. The child will be insolent toward the elder and the base toward the honorable. There is a great amount of insolence.

It is the look on the face that is spoken of in verse 9. Throughout our culture, individuals feel free to curse, to denigrate, to insult those who rightfully have authority over them, whether it is teachers or employers or supervisors or parents or anyone else in authority, the police who stop them or who seek to detain them or question them are insulted and treated with great disrespect. All of these are symptoms. All of these are characteristics of the nation that God is going to deprive.

And these are his own people in this. Well, why are we covering this? Let's turn back to Exodus chapter 20. Exodus chapter 20.

I asked the question a week or two ago about the tables of the law. Why would someone divide these as four that point toward God and six that point toward man? It's fairly easy to see that thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. All pertain to God. But let's ask ourselves this question.

If there are ten commandments and there are two tablets of the law, it would sort of make sense that there would be five on one and five on the other, right? I saw an interesting idea that was put forward in later times where someone thought there were three and seven. Three on the first tablet pertaining to God and seven on the second tablet pertaining to man. And one of the rationalizations for that would be not only the significance of the two numbers, three being the number of perfection with God and seven being the number of perfection with regard to things human, God's interaction with man, the number four plus the number three of God, but also because the latter commandments, if you look at 20, 13 through 16, you have several one-

liners there.

You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness and that you could fit more on the second tablet because they are shorter and that you would have a tablet for God and a tablet for man. It's possible. If you notice, there is a characteristic, however, about the first five that is distinct from the second five.

Our first commandment is, you shall have no other gods before me. And the rationale for that is given in the introduction. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of bondage, out of Egypt, out of the house of servitude.

We discussed that that's not really bondage. Bondage means you are locked in some fashion. You have bonds or chains.

This is Ebed, this is servitude, the house of servitude. You're out of that and should be serving God rather than serving Egypt, serving sin. But the rationale for the first commandment is given right along with it.

The second commandment, you shall not make yourself a carved image. It goes on in great detail. Not of something in heaven, in earth, or the water under the earth.

You will not bow down to them nor serve them for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. There's a reason given for the second commandment just as there is for the first. The third commandment, verse 7, you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

This is also accompanied by explanation. There is a consequence. If someone uses the tongue, as in Isaiah chapter 3, if someone uses their tongue to defame the Lord, he will not be held guiltless.

This is a fascinating statement in Hebrew when you look at verse 7. When it says you will not take, this is the word *nesah*, which means to lift up. It's used of different body parts, lifting up the hand. It's used of lifting up the eyes.

When Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the mountain after he traveled for three days with Isaac to perform the sacrifice, *nesah*, to lift up. It means to claim something. You lift up a banner.

You make an issue of something when you lift it up. So what does it mean to lift up the name of the Lord? Well, it means to make an issue of it, to claim it and say, this guarantees my words, I or my actions. To claim the name, to lift it up, to wrap yourself in that flag, for it doesn't mean vain.

This is not even the word *hevel* or any such thing that we found in Ecclesiastes. This is the word *awain*, which means for that which is evil. For evil.

And it's evil in the sense of deceit and guilt. It is a deceit, a falsehood. So there is a consequence.

The Lord will not hold him guiltless. And this not holding guiltless is used elsewhere. We see it over in Exodus 34 where it says that God reserves mercy for thousands.

It's a parallel passage to verse 5 and 6 here. Visiting iniquity on the third and fourth generations of them that hate me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love me and keep my commandments. The visiting of iniquity, that word iniquity there is the very same word that you have applied to the use of the Lord's name.

It is awain. So, what's the point here? You get to the fourth commandment. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

And once again we have explanations. Six days thou shalt labor and do all thy work. The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

In it you shall do no work. And notice in commandment number one, no other gods before me. The preceding statement that introduces it says the Lord your God.

I am the Lord your God. God's impremature is attached to that first commandment. The second commandment, you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself a carved image. Why? Verse five. I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.

So, commandment number one, the Lord your God is attached to the explanation. Commandment number two, the Lord your God is attached to the explanation. Commandment number three, you will not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

For the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. The impremature, the stamp of the Lord God is on that third commandment. The fourth commandment, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Why? It is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. The name of the Lord God is stamped on that fourth commandment. So now, this morning, we come to the fifth commandment.

Should this one be on tablet number one? Honor your father and mother, verse twelve, so that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you. Commandment number five has the impremature, the stamp of the name of the Lord God, and it goes on that first tablet, right along with the first four. God puts his name on each one of those five commandments.

He says, you do this because I am the Lord your God. I'm the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt and out of the house of servitude. I am a jealous God.

I visit iniquity on those who hate me, but I reserve mercy for the thousands who love me. I will not hold him guiltless who lifts up my name for the cause of evil. Now, would this include people who say, praise God, hallelujah, on television and then take people's money under false pretenses? It absolutely does.

A lot of people say, well, that's cussing. Just don't say Jesus Christ when you want an epithet. Find something else to say.

It has nothing to do with that whatsoever. What it means is you wreak havoc while bearing the name of the Lord. You lift up his name, and at the same time, you commit evil.

You commit deceit. You bring guilt upon yourself while claiming his name. This was the Pharisees' problem, and it's why Jesus pronounced seven woes on them.

He said, you claim to be sons of Abraham, and you claim to be followers of God, but you don't listen to Abraham, and you don't follow his example. You claim to be sons of the law, but you don't hear the law. You wrap yourself in God's name, and then you defile it, and you defame it.

And that is lifting up his name for evil. And his fifth commandment is all the same. Honor your father and your mother so that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

God says, if you don't honor your father and your mother, you're not going to be long in the land. He said, I will take away the blessing. I will take away everything that comes with the land.

What did we see in Isaiah chapter 3? What all does that include? That includes security. It includes provision. It includes guidance.

It includes justice. It includes the basic necessities of life like clothing and a roof over your head, a house to live in. One brother is standing in the ruins saying, well, you take charge of it.

And the other guy says, not me. I've got no clothes and no bread. I don't want charge of this mess.

There will be chaos. There will be destruction. And these are the very same people to whom it was given.

And what is one of the reasons they lose it? Because their tongue and their actions are defiant and against the commands of God. And this is one of the ways that it happens. Now, why of all of the possible things that God could say for the fifth commandment, why does he say honor your father and mother? Well, we're going to pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to look at what the scriptures have to say about honoring father and mother and why it applies on a much grander scale than just children in the household of their parents. Honoring father and mother is a principle so important that it's included with the other four that pertain to God on that first tablet. We're going to see why

when we come back.