

# Isaiah 3:10-12 Commentary

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Isaiah 3:10 **Say** to the [righteous](#) that it will go [well](#) with them, for they will [eat](#) the [fruit](#) of their [actions](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): Woe to their soul, for they have devised an evil counsel against themselves, saying against themselves, Let us bind the just, for he is burdensome to us: therefore shall they eat the fruits of their works.

**Amplified:** Say to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

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

**NET:** Tell the innocent it will go well with them, for they will be rewarded for what they have done. ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** Say, 'Blessed the upright, for he will feed on the fruit of his deeds; ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** But all will be well for those who are godly. Tell them, "You will receive a wonderful reward!" ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal:** Say ye to the righteous, that it is good, Because the fruit of their doings they eat.

**Say** to the righteous that it will go well with them, for they will eat the fruit of their actions

- Is 26:20,21; Eccl 8:12; Je 15:11; Ezek 9:4; 18:9-19; Zeph 2:3; Mal 3:18; Ro 2:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
- Eat - Ps 18:23,24; 128:1,2; Gal 6:7,8; He 6:10

**Say** - Isaiah is commanded to speak to the righteous. God remembers His children even in the times of judgment. Note that he does not promise the righteous will be immune to suffering during this time but that **it will go well**.

God is our Refuge and Defense;  
In trouble our unfailing Aid;  
Secure in His omnipotence,  
What foe can make our souls afraid?

**The righteous** - These are those Jews who like "father" Abraham, had humbled their hearts and believed in God's revelation of Messiah (Ge 15:6, Gal 3:8, 16). They constituted the believing **remnant**, those who were genuinely saved. They were reckoned as **righteous** before God not because they kept the Mosaic Law but because they were saved by grace through faith. This is God's plan for the redemption of sinners whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament. The OT saints looked forward to the Cross while NT believers look back to the Cross. From this brief discussion, it follows that although Israel was chosen by God to be a people for His own possession, this choosing did not guarantee salvation to every individual Israelite. In fact, careful study of the OT reveals that most of the nation of Israel were not genuinely saved, but trusted in their own righteousness rather than God's provision of righteousness in the Messiah. Nevertheless, God preserved a faithful, believing **remnant** throughout the history of Israel. It is that believing **remnant** which Isaiah is referring to in this passage.

God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.  
  
Therefore we will not fear...  
Ps 46:1, 2a

**Spurgeon** commenting on **Psalm 46:1** writes...

**God is our refuge and strength.** Not our armies, or our fortresses. Israel's boast is in Jehovah, the only living and true God. Others vaunt their impregnable castles, placed on inaccessible rocks, and secured with gates of iron, but God is a far better refuge from distress than all these: and when the time comes to carry the war into the enemy's territories, the Lord stands His people in better stead than all the valour of legions or the boasted strength of chariot and horse. Soldiers of the cross, remember this, and count yourselves safe, and make yourselves strong in God. Forget not the personal possessive word **our**; make sure each one of your portion in God, that you may say, "He is my refuge and strength." Neither forget the fact that God is our refuge just now, in the immediate present, as truly as when David penned the word. God alone is our all in all. All other refuges are refuges of lies, all other strength is weakness, for power belongeth unto God: but as God is all sufficient, our defence and might are equal to all emergencies.

**A very present help in trouble**, or in distress he has so been found, he has been tried and proved by his people. He never withdraws himself from his afflicted. He is their help, truly, effectually, constantly; he is present or near them, close at their side and ready for their succour, and this is emphasized by the word very in our version, he is more present than friend or relative can be, yea, more nearly present than even the trouble itself. To all this comfortable truth is added the consideration that his assistance comes at the needed time. He is not as the swallows that leave us in the winter; he is a friend in need and a friend indeed. When it is very dark with us, let brave spirits say, "**Come, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm**" ([Listen to Psalm 46 in Song](#))

"A fortress firm, and steadfast rock,  
Is God in time of danger;  
A shield and sword in every shock,  
From foe well known or stranger."

**Clarke** summarizes the **righteous** as...

the person, 1. Who fears God. 2. Departs from evil (cp Job 1:1). 3. Walks according to the testimony of God. 4. And expects and prepares for a glorious immortality. (**Ed**: I agree with all 4 points which speak primarily to practical righteousness or righteous behavior. Remember that the only one who can truly behave righteously is the one who has received righteousness [who has been declared righteous] from God by grace through faith - see He 11:2-note).

**Martin** writes that...

God's judgment is always fair. Wicked people often think that sinful living is the way to get ahead in life. Isaiah noted, however, that it is far better for a person to live righteously. ([Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor or Logos](#))

**Solomon** writes...

Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly. (Eccl 8:12, cp Eccl 3:14, 12:13,14)

This principle of preservation of the **righteous** is promised again in **Ezekiel** in the time of destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon...

And the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark (Literally = a "taw" = the shape of a cross!) on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst."

**Zephaniah** (a contemporary of Jeremiah prophesying during the reign of Josiah about **625BC**) speaking to **Judah** wrote...

Seek the LORD, all you humble (the proud will not seek Him) of the earth who have carried out His ordinances (obedience); Seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden (concealed) In the day of the LORD'S anger (Babylon's sacking of Jerusalem in **586BC**). (Zeph 2:3)

**Righteous** ([06662](#)) (**tsaddiq**) is from a root which emphasizes conformity to an ethical or moral standard, which is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God Who the psalmist describes as follows...

The LORD is **righteous** in all His ways, and kind in all His deeds. ( Ps 145:17-[note](#))

As **Spurgeon** says...

Jehovah cannot be unjust or impure. Let His doings be what they may, they are in every case righteous and holy. This is the confession of the godly who follow His ways, and of the gracious who study His works. Whatever God is or does must be right. In the salvation of His people he is as righteous and holy as in any other of His ways and works: He has not manifested mercy at the expense of justice, but the rather He has magnified His righteousness by the death of His Son.

For Old and New Testament believers **righteousness** is all that God is, all that God commands, all that God demands, all that God approves, & ultimately all that God provides in Christ.

**Tsaddiq** is used 11 times (out of a total of 196v) in Isaiah (Is 3:10; 5:23; 24:16; 26:2, 7; 29:21; 41:26; 45:21; 53:11; 57:1; 60:21)

**Well** ([02895](#)) (**tob**) is a verb which describes something that has attractive or beneficial qualities. It is that which of a favorable character or tendency (be it economic or material good, abstract good like pleasant, morally good, etc). Tob describes that which has admirable, pleasing, superior, or positive qualities and not that which is negative, bad or mediocre.

I love David's picture of God's **goodness** ("**tob**" - David uses the adjective) chasing after the **righteous**...

Surely **goodness** (tob) and **lovingkindness** (mercy) will **follow** (Hebrew = pursue after cp the picture in Ge 14:14) me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Ps 23:6)

**Ray Stedman** wrote...

Some quaint commentator has said that those two words **goodness** and **mercy** are God's **sheep dogs**. This is the Shepherd's Psalm. David wrote it when he was but a lad, keeping sheep. In referring to the **goodness** and **mercy** of God, he is referring to the **sheep dogs** that nip at the heels of the flock and keep them in line, driving them into place. "Surely Goodness and Mercy shall follow me all the days of my life," nipping at my heels, humiliating me, turning me back from that which looks good but is really evil, keeping me from getting what I think I need, and what I think I want. But in the end we must name these what God names them -- **goodness** and **mercy**!

**Charles Haddon Spurgeon** adds...

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.** This is a fact as indisputable as it is encouraging, and therefore a heavenly verily, or "surely" is set as a seal upon it. This sentence may be read, "only goodness and mercy," for there shall be

unmingled mercy in our history. These twin guardian angels will always be with me at my back and my beck. Just as when great princes go abroad they must not go unattended, so it is with the believer. Goodness and mercy follow him always -- all the days of his life -- the black days as well as the bright days, the days of fasting as well as the days of feasting, the dreary days of winter as well as the bright days of summer. Goodness supplies our needs, and mercy blots out our sins. ([Psalm 23:6 - Treasury of David](#))

**Clarke** comments on "well" (good) writing that...

He is a **good** man, he does nothing but **good**, and has a **good** God to deal with, from whom he expects nothing but **goodness**. It shall **be well** (good) with such in all circumstances of life. 1. In prosperity. 2. In adversity. 3. In sickness. 4. In health. 5. In death. 6. In judgment. And, 7. Through eternity. In every case, occurrence, and circumstance, he shall eat the fruit of his doings-he shall derive benefit from being a righteous man, and walking in a righteous way.

**They will eat the fruit of their actions** - This passage in no way teaches that actions ("good" deeds or works, attempts to keep the Law) in any way merit salvation, which is always wholly by grace through faith (Ep 2:8, 9-note). Paul is quite clear when he writes...

we maintain that a man is justified (declared righteous) by faith apart from (choris = a marker of dissociation = indicates a distinct, definitive separation from) works of the Law. (Ro 3:28-note)

**The fruit of their actions** (Literally = for the fruit of their deeds they will eat) - The principle of sowing and reaping. See Rev 20:12,13, 22:12, Ps 62:12 Isa 3:10,11 Mt 16:27 Ro 2:5, 6, 7, 8,9, 10,11, 14:12 2Co 5:10 Ga 6:7 1Pe 1:17 Je 17:10.

**Isaiah** promises...

Behold, the Lord God will come with might, with His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him and His recompense before Him. (Is 40:10, cp Re 22:12-note)

**Paul** gives the most succinct summary of the sowing/reaping principle first warning us...

**Do not be deceived**, (present imperative + negative = stop an action already under way!) God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. (Gal 6:7, 8)

**Solomon** records that...

What the wicked fears will come upon him, And the desire of the righteous will be granted. 25 When the whirlwind passes, the wicked is no more, But the righteous has an everlasting foundation. (Pr 10:24, 25)

**Octavius Winslow** - Devotional - 27 February - Isaiah 3:10

In all the spiritual exercises through which the believer in Jesus passes, it must in truth be well with him as to his real standing in Christ. You may be walking in darkness, or in light. You may be mourning in the valley, or rejoicing on the mount; now conquering, now foiled; now weeping, now rejoicing; yet it is still well with you as a pardoned, justified, saved sinner. Nothing can touch your interest in the Savior, or expel you from the covenant, or change the love of God towards you. There are tides in the faith and comfort of a child of God, even as there are in the ocean. The believer has his ebb and flow, his fluctuations of spiritual feeling. It is often low tide with his soul. The waves of spiritual joy and peace ebb, and all looks barren and cheerless. And now he begins to question the reality of all his former experience, and the sincerity of all his past professions. He abjures his adoption, doubts his interest in Christ, puts from him the promises, appropriates the judgments, keeps back from the ordinances, and his soul refuses to be comforted. But beloved saint of God - is there no flow, as well as ebb, in the spiritual joy and comfort of the believer? Is there no return of the tide of faith and consolation and hope, in the Christian's experience-the wave of love's infinite ocean, of the soul's perfect peace, of glory's anticipated joy, rolling back again upon the shore, in sweet heavenly cadence? Oh yes! Listen to the Divine assurances of this: "I have loved you with an everlasting love." "I have chosen you, and not cast you away." "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." "I have prayed for you, that your faith frill not." "I will restore comforts unto you." "I will not leave you comfortless." You have a little strength." "Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you." "He will be very gracious unto you at the voice of your cry: when he shall hear it, he will answer you." "He restores my soul." All these exceeding great and precious promises, beloved, are yours. They are your Father's epistles of love, and He bids you read, believe, and enjoy them.

Oh, it is, it must be, well with those whose sins are forgiven through Christ, whose people are accepted in the

Beloved, whose God is the Lord, and upon whom His eye of love and delight rests from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. Say not it is ill with your soul, and not well, because the Holy Spirit is inserting the plough more deeply into your heart, thus discovering more of its hidden evil, detecting the lurking sin where its existence was not suspected, and discovering the flaw and the failure in the action, the principle, the motive, the end, which the fair surface, self-flattery, or specious reasoning had concealed. Oh say not that it is ill with your soul, and not well, because Jesus does not speak, God does not smile, and prayer is not answered. "For a small moment," says God, "have I hid myself from you; but with great mercies will I gather you." In the dreary, lonely, trying path you now tread, trace you not the footsteps of the flock, and, yet more distinct and blessed than all, the footprints of the Shepherd of the flock? Do not be, then, cast down. The Lord will bring you through this night of weeping into a morning of joy. And your knowledge will be the deeper, and your faith the stronger, and your joy the fuller, and your hope the brighter, and your song the sweeter and the louder, for all the painful exercises through which your soul has passed, and with deeper emphasis you shall exclaim, "It is well."

Isaiah 3:11 **Woe** to the **wicked**! It will go **badly** with him, for **what** \* he **deserves** \* will be **done** to him. ([NASB: Lockman](#))  
([NASB: Lockman](#))

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): Woe to the transgressor! evils shall happen to him according to the works of his hands.

**Amplified**: Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with them, for what their hands have done shall be done to them. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

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

**NET**: Too bad for the wicked sinners! For they will get exactly what they deserve. ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB**: woe to the wicked, it will go ill with him, for he will be treated as his actions deserve.' ([NJB](#))

**NLT**: But say to the wicked, "Your destruction is sure. You, too, will get what you deserve. Your well-earned punishment is on the way." ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal**: Woe to the wicked -- evil, Because the deed of his hand is done to him.

**Woe to the wicked! It will go badly with him, for what \* he deserves \* will be done to him:**

- Woe - Is 48:22; 57:20,21; 65:13, 14, 15,20; Ps 1:3, 4, 5; 11:5,6; Eccl 8:13
- Deserves - Ps 28:4; 62:12; Pr 1:31; 2Co 5:10; Jas 2:13) (Done Ps 120:3,4

**Constable** comments that...

Sin does bring its own wages (Ro 6:23). Here the long term blessing of the righteous contrasts with the short term blasting of the unrighteous. There were these two groups among God's chosen people then as there are now. The faithful frequently suffer along with the unfaithful, but their ultimate ends are very different (cf. Rev. 2:10,11). ([Isaiah 3 - Expository Notes](#))

**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 (twice); 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)}

'**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. The Lxx translates the Hebrew with the interjection ouai which expresses extreme displeasure, much like the Hebrew equivalent.

**Wicked** ([07583](#)) (*rasha'*) is the opposite of the **righteous** (Is 3:10) and identifies one who is guilty of a crime and deserving of punishment. In context the **wicked** are guilty of hostility toward God.

The **Septuagint** translates **rasha'** with **anomos** which means without law and so behaving contrary to the law, which is to be wicked or godless.

**Clarke** writes this is...

the man who is, 1. Evil in his heart. 2. Evil in his purposes. 3. Evil in his life. As he is wicked, he does that which is wicked; and is influenced by the wicked one, of whom he is the servant and the son... Of him you can speak no good; and to him you can speak no good—all is evil, in him—before him—after him—round about him—above him—below him. Evil in time—evil through eternity!

Psalm 1 contrasts the blessed way of the **godly/righteous** (cp Ps 1:1-note, Ps 1:2-note, Ps 1:3-note) with that of the **ungodly/wicked**...

Psalm 1:4 The **wicked** are not so, but they are like chaff (the light, worthless husks that surrounds the valuable grain) which the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the **wicked** will not stand in the judgment, nor **sinner**s in the assembly of the righteous. 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish. (Ps 1:4, 5, 6-note)

**Badly** ([07451](#)) (**ra**) is an adjective which means bad, evil, wicked. It describes the one with inability to come up to good standards (and is the opposite of good).

The **Septuagint** translates **ra** with **poneros** which means harmful, toilsome, painful, grievous.

**For what he deserves will be done to him** - Literally "for the work of his hands will be done to him."

**Clarke** adds...

He shall be paid that for which he has laboured, and his reward shall be in proportion to his work. O, what a lot is that of the wicked! Cursed in time, and accursed through eternity!

**Paul** exhorts us...

**Do not be deceived**, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. (Gal 6:7, 8)

**"Sow a thought, reap an action.  
Sow an action, reap a habit.  
Sow a habit, reap a character.  
Sow a character, reap a destiny."**

Ecl 8:13 But it will not be well for the **evil man** and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow, because he does not fear God.

Isaiah 48:22 "There is no peace for the **wicked**," says the LORD.

Isaiah 57:20 But the **wicked** are like the tossing sea, For it cannot be quiet, And its waters toss up refuse and mud. 21 "There is no peace," says my God, "for the **wicked**."

Psalm 11:5 The LORD tests the **righteous** and the **wicked**, and the one who loves violence His soul hates. 6 Upon the **wicked** He will rain snares; Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup.

**Spurgeon comments:** The Lord trieth the righteous: he doth not hate them, but only tries them. They are precious to him, and therefore he refines them with afflictions. None of the Lord's children may hope to escape from trial, nor, indeed, in our right minds, would any of us desire to do so, for trial is the channel of many blessings.

"It is my happiness below  
Not to live without the cross;  
But the Saviour's power to know,  
Sanctifying every loss."  
"Trials make the promise sweet;  
Trials give new life to prayer;  
Trials bring me to his feet --  
Lay me low, and keep me there."

"Did I meet no trials here --  
No chastisement by the way --  
Might I not, with reason,  
fear I should prove a cast away?"  
"Bastards may escape the rod,  
Sunk in earthly vain delight;  
But the true born child of God  
Must not -- would not, if he might."  
William Cowper.

Is not this a very cogent reason why we should not distrustfully endeavour to shun a trial? -- for in so doing we are seeking to avoid a blessing.

**But the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth:** why, then, shall I flee from these wicked men? If God hateth them, I will not fear them. Haman was very great in the palace until he lost favour, but when the king abhorred him, how bold were the meanest attendants to suggest the gallows for the man at whom they had often trembled! Look at the black mark upon the faces of our persecutors, and we shall not run away from them. If God is in the quarrel as well as ourselves, it would be foolish to question the result, or avoid the conflict.

Sodom and Gomorrah perished by a fiery hail, and by a brimstone shower from heaven; so shall all the ungodly. They may gather together like Gog and Magog to battle, but the Lord will rain upon them "an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone." Ezekiel 38:22. Some expositors think that in the term "horrible tempest," there is in the Hebrew an allusion to that burning, suffocating wind, which blows across the Arabian deserts, and is known by the name of Simoom. "A burning storm," Lowth calls it, while another great commentator reads it "wrath wind;" in either version the language is full of terrors. What a tempest will that be which shall overwhelm the despisers of God! Oh! what a shower will that be which shall pour out itself for ever upon the defenceless heads of impenitent sinners in hell! Repent, ye rebels, or this fiery deluge shall soon surround you. Hell's horrors shall be your inheritance, your entailed estate, the portion of your cup. The dregs of that cup you shall wring out, and drink for ever. A drop of hell is terrible, but what must a full cup of torment be?

Think of it -- a cup of misery, but not a drop of mercy. O people of God, how foolish is it to fear the faces of men who shall soon be faggots in the fire of hell! Think of their end, their fearful end, and all fear of them must be changed into contempt of their threatenings, and pity for their miserable estate.

**Motyer** writes that...

The tragedy of sin is that it ruins the life of the sinner; the danger of sin is that it excites the wrath of God. (Motyer, J. A. The Prophecy of Isaiah. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press)

**ILLUSTRATION of REAPING:** The Emperor Charlemagne wanted to have a magnificent bell cast for the church he had built. An artist named Tancho was employed by the church to make it. He was furnished, at his own request, with a great quantity of copper, and a hundred pounds of silver for the purpose. He kept the silver for his own personal use, however, and substituted in its place a quantity of highly purified tin. When the work was completed, he presented the bell to the Emperor, who had it suspended in the church tower. The people, however, were unable to ring it. So Tancho himself was called in to help. But he pulled so hard that its tongue fell down and killed him. **Woe!**

Isaiah 3:12 O My **people!** Their **oppressors** are **children**, and **women rule** over them. O My **people!** Those who **guide** you **lead** you **astray** and **confuse** the **direction** of your **paths**. (NASB: Lockman) (NASB: Lockman)

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): O my people, your exactors strip you, and extortioners rule over you: O my people, they that pronounce you blessed lead you astray, and pervert the path of your feet.

**Amplified:** As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people, your leaders cause you to err, and they confuse (destroy and swallow up) the course of your paths. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

**NET:** Oppressors treat my people cruelly; creditors rule over them. My people's leaders mislead them; they give you confusing directions. ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** O my people, their oppressors pillage them and extortioners rule over them! O my people, your rulers mislead you and efface the paths you ought to follow! ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** Children oppress my people, and women rule over them. O my people, can't you see what fools your rulers are? They are leading you down a pretty garden path to destruction. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal:** My people -- its exactors are sucklings, And women have ruled over it. My people -- thy eulogists are causing to err, And the way of thy paths swallowed up.

**O My people! Their oppressors are children, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who guide you lead you astray and confuse the direction of your paths:**

- children - Is 3:4; 2Ki 11:1; Nah 3:13
- Guide - Is 9:15; Nu 6:23, 24, 25, 26, 27; Je 5:31; Mt 15:14
- Mt 23:14

**O My people... O My people** - This repetition emphasizes a deep lament and pain for Judah and Jerusalem. Either God or Isaiah is speaking but given that Isaiah is God's messenger, this message is addressed to God's people regardless of who is making the declaration.

**Oppressors** ([05065](#))(**nagas**) means to be pressed or harassed, to be a taskmaster. The root conveys the sense of exertion of demanding oppressive pressure for payment or labor. Although **nagas** is a verb, the participle is used to describe a taskmaster or slave driver. For example in Ex 3:7 the taskmasters caused affliction of God's people, but in the present context the affliction is not from the Egyptians, but from one Jew to another illustrative of the total breakdown of society in Judah and Jerusalem.

**Delitzsch** comments that **nagas**

signifies to treat as tyrant or taskmaster. The meanest selfishness then stifles all nobler motives; one becomes a tyrant over another, and rude insolence takes the place of reverence, which, by the law of nature, as well as the Torah (Lv 19:32) and custom, is due to the aged and superiors from boys and those in the humbler ranks... When there is disregard of the distinctions due to age and rank, the State in a short time becomes a wild and waste scene of confusion. ([Isaiah 3 Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah](#))

**Nagas** - 23v in the OT - Ex 3:7; 5:6, 10, 13, 14; Dt 15:2f; 1Sa 13:6; 14:24; 2Ki. 23:35; Job 3:18; 39:7; Is 3:5, 12; 9:4; 14:2, 4; 53:7; 58:3; 60:17; Da 11:20; Zec 9:8; 10:4.

**Rule** ([04910](#)) (**mashal**) means to have dominion, reign over, be in charge, exercise authority over another.

The translates **mashal** with **kurieuo** (present tense = continuous action) which means to be lord of, to exercise control over, to be master of or to dominate.

**Mashal** - 73x in OT - Gen. 1:18; 3:16; 4:7; 24:2; 37:8; 45:8, 26; Exod. 21:8; Deut. 15:6; Jos. 12:2, 5; Jdg. 8:22f; 9:2; 14:4; 15:11; 2 Sam. 23:3; 1 Ki. 4:21; 1 Chr. 29:12; 2 Chr. 7:18; 9:26; 20:6; 23:20; Neh. 9:37; Job 25:2; Ps. 8:6; 19:13; 22:28; 59:13; 66:7; 89:9; 103:19; 105:20f; 106:41; Prov. 6:7; 12:24; 16:32; 17:2; 19:10; 22:7; 23:1; 28:15; 29:2, 12, 26; Eccl. 9:17; 10:4; **Isa. 3:4, 12; 14:5; 16:1; 19:4; 28:14; 40:10; 49:7; 52:5; 63:19**; Jer. 22:30; 30:21; 33:26; 51:46; Lam. 5:8; Ezek. 19:11, 14; Dan. 11:3ff, 39, 43; Mic. 5:2; Hab. 1:14; Zech. 6:13 and is rendered in the NAS as dominion(1), gain control(1), govern(1), had charge(1), have authority(1), master(1), obtain dominion(1), really rule(1), rule(27), ruled(5), ruler(18), ruler's(2), rulers(6), rules(9), ruling(3), wielded(1).

**Children and women** - These groups who would generally be considered the least suited to rule would in fact rule.

**Women rule over them** - In Isaiah 3:6,7 we see that no one wanted to hold office (be ruler), so here we see women and children rule which would have been especially humiliating in Judah's male-dominated society! Some commentators (Ed Young, John MacArthur) do not take this literally but rather as a figurative description of the rulers who were as weak as women. Others think this may refer to wives (or mistresses) influencing the leadership of their husbands. The interpretation of this phrase is difficult and not conclusive.

**Nahum** does use women in a figurative description of the people...

Behold, your people are women in your midst! The gates of your land are opened wide to your enemies; Fire consumes your gate bars. (Nah 3:13)

There are references in the **OT** which indicate women did exert considerable impact on the nation...

When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she rose and destroyed all the royal offspring. (2Ki 11:1)

**Those who guide you lead you astray** - This text finds a parallel in Psalm 1:1 which says...

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! (Ps 1:1-note)

**Jeremiah** describes false prophets...

The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; and My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it? (Je 5:31)

**Guide** ([0833](#))(**asar**) means to lead or to set right, the exact opposite of what their leaders accomplished.

**Asar** - 15v in the OT - Gen. 30:13; Job 29:11; Ps. 41:2; 72:17; Prov. 3:18; 4:14; 9:6; 23:19; 31:28; Cant. 6:9; Isa. 1:17; 3:12; 9:16; Mal. 3:12, 15. The NAS renders asar as bless(1), call blessed(3), called blessed(3), direct(1), guide(2), guided(1), happy(2), proceed(2), reprove(1).