

Isaiah 3

This is a prayer, then, which contains much of truth. They are God's people. They are God's people chosen for a purpose, that God did not choose the Israelites to be His pet; He chose them to be His pattern. He chose them to be His instruments. He chose them to accomplish a purpose through them, not merely to give them blessing, but to use them for a blessing to the whole world, and when these people are demanding that God bless them because they are His and saying, "You never bore rule over those other people. They weren't called by your name. They are outside the pale. We are the ones to bless." God says: "That is not the spirit." It is then, it seems to me, an expression of a false attitude which is given in this chapter, an expression of an attitude which takes true promises of God, which takes true attitudes of God, but which does not take the right response to those attitudes, and, somebody might say, "Well, why on earth do you have something like that in the Scripture?" Well, we have it in the Scripture in many places. As early as Genesis 3, a lying statement of Satan is recorded in order to show its effects upon Eve, as results in God's curse upon the serpent and upon the entire creation. In Isaiah 7, the hypocritical evasions of Ahaz are quoted to show God's responses. In Isaiah 36:14-20, you have the blasphemous words of the Assyrian king whom God later defeated without utilizing human effort. In one case you have an entire book, the book of Ecclesiastes, which is the presentation of a human attitude rather than a direct revelation of divine idea, which is presented as a true picture of a human attitude in order to show us the vanity of purely human efforts under the sun. So that it seems to me that to take this as a wonderful, poignant prayer for God's mercy and then say, instead of answering the prayer he proceeds with denunciation for a while and then gives an answer, fails to recognize the progress of the project. It is a prayer which contains much that is truth but which has a predominantly false attitude, and therefore God answers the prayer in two ways. He begins