

## APPLICATION

- God is the rightful judge of peoples, elders, and princes. Does that change how you see God? What have you realized about Him through these verses?
- Is there an area in your life God is bringing your attention to that requires humility? How can you humble yourself before Him?
- God, as the Judge, also has the authority to forgive us when we repent of our actions. Read Isaiah 1:16–17. How should we respond when something in our lives needs to change? Why is this only possible by trusting in Christ's finished work on the cross?

## PRAYER

- Thank God for sitting in rightful judgment over those who oppress the poor and the vulnerable. Thank Him for bringing justice to those experiencing oppression.
- Pray that God will reveal to you any area of your life that needs to change. Submit these areas to Him and ask Him to change your heart.
- Ask God to show you opportunities to be salt and light to the world (Matthew 5:13–14): to speak up or act against oppression that you encounter or experience in daily life. Pray for the grace to make the right decisions at the right times.

## SALT & LIGHT

## God versus Oppression

WEEK 2

## WARM-UP

- What is one organization you have been involved in? Why did you join?
- Share a story about an injustice you saw, encountered, or experienced.
- What is one decision you made that you knew was unfair to someone else? What happened?

**WORD** <sup>13</sup>The LORD has taken his place to contend; he stands to judge peoples. <sup>14</sup>The LORD will enter into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: "It is you who have devoured the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses." **ISAIAH 3:13-14**

(Read also **ISAIAH 3:15-26; 5:8-10; 10:1-4.**)

It is God's rightful place to *contend* and to *judge peoples*. He has the full authority to judge even the *elders and princes*, the leaders of the land, and confront them with their injustice. God sits in judgment when we deliberately close our eyes to the impact on others, especially when we are inconsiderately extravagant or oppress others. In this lesson, we'll look at how God speaks against injustice and teaches His people humility.



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## 1 | God calls out extravagance and pride.

*<sup>13</sup>The LORD has taken his place to contend; he stands to judge peoples. <sup>14</sup>The LORD will enter into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: "It is you who have devoured the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses. <sup>15</sup>What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?" declares the Lord God of hosts. ISAIAH 3:13-15*

God sits in judgment on those who are proud and whose wealth comes from oppressing the poor. Because of their actions, God says He would take away all their accessories and fine clothing, leaving them empty. While we may think that having more finery and accumulating wealth and property is a good goal in life, God actually calls His people out on extravagance and neglecting the poor. How is this also happening today? What is an area of extravagance or pride that God is asking you to examine?

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## 2 | God calls out the oppression of the helpless.

*<sup>1</sup>Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees, and the writers who keep writing oppression, <sup>2</sup>to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey!*

**ISAIAH 10:1-2**

God sits in judgment on those who intentionally design decrees and writings for their gain, but who oppress the poor and vulnerable. Because of those actions, God says on the day of punishment, there will be no one who extends help, and nowhere to keep their wealth (Isaiah 10:3). How should your decisions consider the needs of the poor and

vulnerable? Why is this an important consideration for us as God's people?

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## 3 | God calls out sin to humble us.

*<sup>15</sup>Man is humbled, and each one is brought low, and the eyes of the haughty are brought low. <sup>16</sup>But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness. <sup>17</sup>Then shall the lambs graze as in their pasture, and nomads shall eat among the ruins of the rich. ISAIAH 5:15-17*

God's calling out of the arrogant and oppressive is intended to humble them. He shows His holiness through His righteousness and justice, which we can never have apart from Him. His call to humility always has redemption and restoration in mind. We have a choice on how to respond: to harden our hearts and continue to exalt ourselves, or yield to Him as God. James 4:6 says that *God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble*. We will find ourselves going against Him if we keep a disposition of arrogance. But when we choose the route of humility, we will experience His grace and even be channels of His grace to the world. Is God still first in your heart? What are some things that take first place in your heart?

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