

Prosperity Gospel: National?

If the prosperity an individual is a false standard to use as a measure God's pleasure, then it is also a false standard for a nation.

Consider the prosperity of Israel during the evil times in which Isaiah lived:

1. The king is viewed as astute and powerful.
2. The priests are powerful and wealthy.
3. The marketplace is busy.
4. The people are buying, selling, celebrating, and rejoicing.
5. People seem to be placid and happy as they pursue their work and worship in their own way.
6. There is indeed great national prosperity throughout the land:

Isaiah 2:7 Their land is also full of silver and gold, And there is no end to their treasures; Their land is also full of horses, And there is no end to their chariots.

In the midst of national pride and prosperity, however, Isaiah comes along and hurls bitter words of divine anguish. He cannot bear the sight of the people's "normal" crimes:

1. The poor are exploited, 3:3-15.
2. Men are full of pride, 2:11.
3. Judges are corrupt, acquitting the guilty for a bribe and depriving the innocent of his rights, 5:23.
4. Fatherless and widows are not defended, 1:23.
5. People are being crushed by the elders and princes, while the mansions of the wealthy contain the spoils of the poor, 3:14.
6. Jerusalem became a harlot, 1:21.
7. Jerusalem was no longer full of justice, 1:21.
8. Jerusalem was full of idols, 2:8; 10:10-11.

However, since the economy was going so well, many (especially those with power and wealth) were very pleased with their nation. Little did they know that the Lord's anger was kindled against His own people (5:25). They did not know their own God (1:3)—they were blinded by their own pride, prosperity, and doing things their own way.