

Isaiah

When the Holy One Speaks
Isaiah 1

1



Introduction

Last week we introduced the book of Isaiah. Isaiah lived in a difficult time for Israel. The nation had turned its back on God and turned to worship false gods. Instead of depending on the True God for their needs and protection, they put their trust in themselves and in alliances with other nations.

2



Introduction

God loves His people, and like a loving parent, must bring consequences to bear on bad choices. Isaiah was given the message to:

- Warn the wicked of God's coming judgment
- To reassure the righteous that God remembers His promises and will show grace to those who repent.

3



Isaiah 1:1

The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

In addition to learning that the Lord gave Isaiah very special visions, we glean two other significant facts from the opening verse of Isaiah:

1. Isaiah's ministry focused on Judah and Jerusalem, and he preached and proclaimed the prophecies given by God. But in truth, Isaiah ministry is to the whole world. As the above outline shows, God gave him visions that concerned the future of the nations and of world history itself.

4



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2. Isaiah's visions and ministry touched the reigns of four kings.

Uzziah lived a righteous life but later fell into sin and was cursed with leprosy.

Jotham was a Godly King and friends with Isaiah

Ahaz was a wicked king offering his own sons as sacrifices

Hezekiah was a righteous king, but the people had turned from God.

5



Isaiah 1:2

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: "I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me."

REBELLION

God's first charge against His people was rebellion. God chose Israel, to proclaim that the Lord is the only true and living God to the world. He gave them His Word, which they were to share with the world, and the promise of Messiah who was to rescue the world from the bondage of sin and death.

6



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REBELLION

The picture is that of a court trial. The judge is the Lord Himself. He sits upon His throne of judgment, ready to indict the accused and to execute justice. The defendants are God's own people, the very ones He had chosen to be His special witnesses.

7



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REBELLION

God calls upon heaven and earth to witness the charges against His people. Heaven and earth had witnessed the birth of Israel, and their rebellion against God. All creation would agree with the charges God was now leveling against them.

8



Isaiah 1:3
"The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master's crib; *But* Israel does not know, My people do not consider."

IGNORANT

Israel had less knowledge and understanding than an ox or donkey. These animals know their owners. They know the person who feeds them and looks after them. But not God's people. Their rebellion proved they did not really know the Lord or His purpose for them.

9



Isaiah 1:4
Alas, sinful nation, A people laden with iniquity, A brood of evildoers, Children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, They have provoked to anger The Holy One of Israel, They have turned away backward.

EVILDOERS

The nation had sinful hearts. God's people had become loaded down with a heavy burden of sin. They had become evil children, not only corrupt themselves, but corruptors who led others to imitate their evil behavior.

10



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FORSAKEN GOD

Israel had forsaken the Lord and turned their backs on Him. The title "The Holy One of Israel" is used 25 times in the book of Isaiah. The word holy emphasizes the character of God and contrasts His righteous acts with the sins of Israel. God had a very special claim on the nation, but Israel totally rejected Him and His claims on their lives.

11



Isaiah 1:5-6
Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, And the whole heart faints. ⁶From the sole of the foot even to the head, *There is* no soundness in it, *But* wounds and bruises and putrefying sores: They have not been closed or bound up or soothed with ointment.

CHASTENED

The rebellion of God's people led to continued chastisement by God. Other nations had been allowed to attack, conquer, and devastate them. In addition to war, the nation had suffered all the consequences that sin brings upon a people. It had become an immoral, lawless, and violent society. As long as Judah persisted in its rebellion, it would continue to feel the hand of God's discipline.

12



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CORRUPTED

The people and the nation were entirely sick from their heads to their feet.

Isaiah's wording warns that if they do not recognize the sickness of their hearts, God will allow the disease of their hearts to be manifest in their bodies.

13



Isaiah 1:7-8
Your country *is* desolate, Your cities *are* burned with fire; Strangers devour your land in your presence; And *it is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers. ⁸So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, As a hut in a garden of cucumbers, As a besieged city.

DESOLATE

Isaiah warns that if they did not repent that the nation would be ravaged. Cities would be burned, and the people's farms plundered and destroyed.

Jerusalem would be besieged, destroyed, and abandoned. The capital would look like a crumbling hut that had been left to deteriorate in a field long after harvest had taken place.

14



Isaiah 1:9
Unless the Lord of hosts Had left to us a very small remnant, We would have become like Sodom, We would have been made like Gomorrah.

HOPE

The nation would suffer the same fate as Sodom and Gomorrah. In His mercy, God would save some people, but they would be few—just a small remnant. In each generation, there would be a few genuine believers who would obey God's commandments and live righteously.

15



Isaiah 1:10-15

The Second Charge

God's second charge against His people was that their worship was insincere unacceptable to God. The people of Judah and Jerusalem were worshipping, but their worship was false and empty.

16



Isaiah 1:11-12
To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" Says the Lord. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats. ¹²When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts?

FALSE WORSHIP

God charged His people with false, empty, ritualistic worship. Outwardly the people were performing sacrifices to God, but in their hearts, they were rebelling against God.

17



Isaiah 1:13-15
Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. ¹⁴Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing *them*. ¹⁵When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.

FALSE WORSHIP

God issued a strong warning through Isaiah: His people must immediately stop their false worship (vv.13-15).

- They must stop making insincere offerings.
- They must stop bringing detestable incense (prayer).
- They must stop going through the motions of the feasts while ignoring their true meaning.
- They must stop their formal prayers. God did not hear their prayers because their hands were as murderers.

18



Isaiah 1:16-17
 "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.

PARDON

God promised forgiveness if they would turn from their sin. But three steps were necessary:

1. They must first repent, turn from their evil ways, and learn to do right (vv.16-17). They must...
 - seek justice
 - help the oppressed
 - defend the fatherless and orphans
 - plead and fight for the rights of widows.

19



Isaiah 1:18
 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

PARDON

2. They must come to the Lord and reason with Him. They must admit that their sins were as scarlet. That they had sinned against the One True God and those whom He loves.

20



Isaiah 1:18
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PARDON

3. They must come to the Lord for forgiveness. Believing the promise of God, they must confess their sins and ask God to forgive them. Though their sins have stained them as red as scarlet, the Lord can make them as white as snow, and as white as wool.

21



Isaiah 1:19-20
 If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; ²⁰But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword"; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

CONSEQUENCES

If people were willing to repent, God would restore them, and they would receive His care and provision.

However,

If they refused, God's judgment was certain.

22



So What ...

When we look at our nation, are we really that different. People have turned their backs on God and pursued wickedness of every form.

Many people profess to follow god, but it is just a facade because their heart and actions reject the True God and pursue sin.

What about you? Though your sins be as scarlet, they also can be washed white as snow!

23