

Isaiah 1

Introduction to the book of Isaiah:

- Miniature Bible
 - 66 chapter
 - 1st 39 chapters deals with the Law and man's transgression of the Law (OT theme, 39 books)
 - 2nd 27 chapters focuses on the hope of God for repentant sinners (NT theme, 27 books)
- Isaiah means "Yahweh is salvation"
- This is a prophecy from God to Israel about Israel, yet its warnings and instruction are helpful to people of today.
- **Isaiah 1:1 NKJV 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.**
 - Authorship is accredited to Isaiah (son of Amoz)
 - Audience is Israel (Judah in particular)
 - Date is the days of:
 - Uzziah ~783-742 BC
 - Jotham ~742-716 BC
 - Ahaz ~732-716 BC
 - Hezekiah ~716-687 (Coregent with Manasseh ~697-687 BC)
 - So around 700 years before Christ
- Historical Context:
 - 931 Secession of Northern Kingdom (Israel) from Southern Kingdom (Judah)
 - 931-913 Rehoboam rules Judah
 - 931-910 Jeroboam I rules Israel, choses Shechem as his first capital, later moves it to Tirzah
 - 913-911 Abijah rules Judah
 - 911-870 Asa rules Juda
 - 910-909 Nadab (son of Jeroboam) rules Israel
 - 909-886 Baasha kills Nadab and rules Israel
 - 900-612 Neo-Assyrian period
 - 886-885 Elah, son of Baasha, rules Israel
 - 885 Zimri kills Elah, but reigns just seven days before committing suicide, Omri chosen as King of Israel
 - 885-880(?) War between Omri and Tibni
 - 885-874 Omri kills Tibni, rules Israel
 - 879 Omri moves capital of Israel from Tirzah to Samaria

- 874-853 Ahab, Omri's son, is killed in battle, Jezebel reigns as Queen. Athaliah, Ahab and Jezebel's daughter, marries Jehoram, crown prince of Judah
- 870-848 Jehoshapha rules Judah
- 853-851 Ahaziah, son of Ahab, rules Israel, dies in accident
- 776 First Olympics Ever
- 753 Founding of Rome
- 750-725 Israelite Prophets Amos, Hosea, Isaiah
- 722/721 Northern Kingdom (Israel) destroyed by Assyrians; 10 tribes exiled (10 lost tribes)
- 720 Ahaz, King of Judah dismantles Solomon's bronze vessels and places a private Syrian altar in the Temple
- 716 Hezekiah, King of Jerusalem, with help of God and the prophet Isaiah resists Assyrian attempt to capture Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 32). Wells and springs leading to the city are stopped
- 701 Assyrian ruler Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem

Isaiah 1:2-15 NKJV

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; [3] The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master's crib; But Israel does not know, My people do not consider." [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. [5] Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, And the whole heart faints. [6] From 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. [7] 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. [8] So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, As a hut in a garden of cucumbers, As a besieged city. [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. [10] Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the law of our God, You people of Gomorrah: [11] "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. [12] "When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts? [13] 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. [14] Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. [15] When 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.

- Much of Chapter 1 is a lawsuit brought by God (The Holy One of Israel, the Righteous Judge) against Israel.
 - (v 2) “nourished and brought up”
 - Brought up from slavery out of Egypt
 - Sustained them in the wilderness
 - Given them the Law to govern
 - Given them possession of the promised land
 - Provided the Temple for Worship
 - Their response to these blessings: Rebellion
 - Immorality (examples: golden calf, sin of Balaam)
 - The time of the judges (chastisement, rebellion)
 - Idolatry (Solomon’s many wives and their religions → the sins of Rehoboam)
 - Prophets sent to warn
 - They did not listen
 - They murdered them (including Isaiah whom they sawed in half)
 - (v 3) Their utter rebellious nature compared with animals who even know better.
 - Ox and donkey were considered unintelligent animals
 - The ox knew its owner (God had redeemed Israel, they were His possession)
 - The donkey while stubborn, knew who fed and took care of it.
 - But, God’s children did not **know** Him.
 - What about the church today? What could we learn from this passage? (God is not a respecter of person!)
 - (v 4) “Alas, sinful nation” “**laden** with iniquity” “brood of evildoers” “children who are corruptors”
 - These are very blunt and serious charges brought against Judah
 - “Sinful” (goy) used to describe a pagan nation vs (‘am) used to describe God’s people
 - Laden (or greatly weighed down) with sin (not occasional)

- Paul described the last days for us in similar fashion to the phrases used in (v 3)
- 2 Timothy 3:1-5 NKJV **But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: [2] For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, [3] unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, [4] traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, [5] having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!**
 - Israel has forsaken the Lord, provoked Him to anger, and turned their backs on God!
- (v 5, 6) expresses the depth to which their evil, hard hearts have progressed.
 - It wouldn't do any good to correct you anymore
 - You're case is terminal (the whole body is sick from head to foot)
 - You have lost all reason (good is evil, and evil is good)
 - Likened to someone who is covered in putrefying, pus oozing sores that have not been treated.
- (vv 7-15) describes the judgment that had come upon them but did no good.
 - They were surrounded on all sides by hostile forces because of their spiritual condition (Deuteronomy 6)
 - God's words spoken in present tense emphasizes the certainty
 - (v 8) booth and hut are temporary structures (vulnerable and easy to overrun)
 - (v 9) Unless God has mercy and preserves a remnant they will be utterly destroyed! (Deuteronomy 29)
 - (vv 10-15) "You rulers of Sodom" "You people of Gomorrah"
 - Denoted the seriousness and extent of their sin
 - Immorality had reached unimaginable levels
 - (all while claiming a "religious life" (v 11))
 - God will not accept filthy sacrifice
 - They are useless without a clean, obedient heart (1 Samuel 15:22, John 14:15, Psalm 51:16-17, 1 John 2:3-4, 2 Timothy 3:5)

Isaiah 1:16-20 NKJV

"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, [17] Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the

oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow. [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. [19] If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; [20] But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword”; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

- “Let us reason together”
 - They had lost all reason.
 - Their world was upside down.
 - Parallel to our society today→ argument about “gender identity”
 - Claims of thousands of genders
 - God's word→ God created male and female (2)
- God's message: It doesn't have to be that way! Come to your senses!
 - You're sins are great (“scarlet”)
 - Grieve and repent (just feeling sorry isn't enough)
 - God will forgive and make them “white as snow”
- They are given a choice:
 - Willing and obedient=the good of the land
 - rebellion=devoured by the sword (conquered)
- “For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Isaiah 1:21-31 NKJV

How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, But now murderers. [22] Your silver has become dross, Your wine mixed with water. [23] Your princes are rebellious, And companions of thieves; Everyone loves bribes, And follows after rewards. They do not defend the fatherless, Nor does the cause of the widow come before them. [24] Therefore the Lord says, The LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, “Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries, And take vengeance on My enemies. [25] I will turn My hand against you, And thoroughly purge away your dross, And take away all your alloy. [26] I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.” [27] Zion shall be redeemed with justice, And her penitents with righteousness. [28] The destruction of transgressors and of sinners shall be together, And those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed. [29] For they shall be ashamed of the terebinth trees Which you have desired; And you shall be embarrassed because of the gardens Which you have chosen. [30] For you shall be as a terebinth whose leaf fades, And as a garden that has no water. [31] The

strong shall be as tinder, And the work of it as a spark; Both will burn together, And no one shall quench them.

- (vv 21-23) gives us the Lord's lament over this degenerate city of Jerusalem
 - Things may seem good on the outside but without the Lord at the center all is fool's gold (Mark Twain- the Gilded Age)
 - Psalm 127:1 NKJV **Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.**
- The contrast between the original condition of Jerusalem under David and the early years of Solomon's reign with the condition of the people in Isaiah's day is detailed.
 - At one time Jerusalem was considered faithful like a devoted wife.
 - Now, however, the city was a harlot.
 - In marriage, as in the relationship between God and Israel, a covenant was made.
 - When a person becomes a prostitute he or she mars the marriage covenant.
 - In the same way when a nation leaves the true God for idols it has marred its covenant with the Lord.
- Jerusalem had been known for executive justice and upholding righteousness, but now instead of righteousness "living," murderers were present.
- Like worthless dross, the nation would be "thrown away." (The people would be exiled if they would not repent and turn to the Lord).
- The rebellious rulers in the city were leading the people into ruin by theft, bribery, and injustice to the helpless.
 - The fatherless and widows could not even get hearings because they had no money for bribing the rulers.
 - It is not hard to imagine a situation where only the wealthy could defend their rights in court or run for office.
- God pronounces judgment:
 - Rid Himself of adversaries (dross)
 - Restore righteous judges and officials
 - Destruction of transgressors (sinners)
 - Shame and reproach upon the judged

Questions for Thought

- What can we learn from this passage that we can apply to ourselves?
- Because God's standards DO NOT change, how does this passage influence how we proceed: individually and as the church?

