

Isaiah 1:1-18

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.

- **"Vision"** The meaning here of vision is a revelation from God. It is the same as what we find in the book of Revelation when we are told "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him..."
- The target audience of this book is Judah and Jerusalem.
- Four kings spanned the time period of this prophecy

Uzziah (Azariah)	790 - 739 BC good king 2 Kings 14:21 - 15:7 2 Chron. 26:1-23	His weakness was pride and rashness (2 Chron. 26:16-21). Under his rule the nation declined spiritually and morally. The last years of his life he was a leper and lived separately cut off from the house of the Lord.
Jotham	750 - 735 BC good king 2 Kings 15:32-38 2 Chron. 27:1-9	"Howbeit the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places." "And the people did yet corruptly."
Ahaz	735 - 715 BC bad king 2 Kings 16:1-20 2 Chron. 28:1 -27	The most wicked of Judah's kings. Practiced human sacrifice; idolatry; and aligned with God's enemies.
Hezekiah	715 - 686 BC good king 2 Kings 18:1 - 20:21 2 Chron. 29:1 - 32:33	Followed the Lord; destroyed the idols in the nation; trusted in God

It is believed that Isaiah would have begun his ministry around 740BC and finished it around 685 BC a total of about 55 years.

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

The appeal to the heavens is not uncommon in the Old Testament.

It is made when the sin of the people is so overt in light of their position.

Deut. 32:1-6;
Jeremiah 2:11-13

At times the appeal to heaven is when God has done something great.

Isaiah 44:23; Isaiah 49:13

Israel are children in a covenantal sense not in a redemptive sense. God often refers to Israel in a familial way because of the covenantal relationship he had with them

Israel rebelled against God their father.

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

Dumb animals know who supplies their needs. These two animals are among the dumbest and stubbornest of all animals.

Israel (here the prophet speaks to both the northern and southern kingdom because ultimately they are one) does not know nor even consider.

Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."

4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

There is a seven fold condemnation of Israel. Isaiah often uses "sevens" in his book.

- 1) Sinful nation - instead of being holy, Ex. 19:6, they were sinful
- 2) People laden with iniquity - instead of being righteous, Deut. 16:20, they were sinful
- 3) Seed of evildoers - instead of doing good, Deut. 6:18, they did evil
- 4) Children that are corrupters - instead of worshiping, Ex. 20:2-5, God they became corrupt, Deut. 4:14-16
- 5) They have forsaken the Lord - instead of following God, 1 Kings 18:21, they forsook him
- 6) They have provoked the Holy One of Israel - instead of not provoking God, Ex. 23:21, Israel regularly provoked him by following after false gods, Deut. 31:20
- 7) They are gone away backward - instead of moving ahead with God, Deut. 12:32; 13:4, they turned away

5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

Israel did not receive correction - Jer. 2:30; 5:3 - and received judgment.

There is no need for further warning as the entire body is corrupt and sick.

God will warn nations for only so long and then they are suddenly cut off.

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is* no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

Everything God has tried to do to heal the nation has failed. It is a hopeless case. Nothing works. The inference is that there is no cure and so destruction is coming.

- 7 Your country *is* desolate, your cities *are* burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and *it is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers.**
- 8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.**
- 9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah.**

The Biblical concept of the remnant is an important theme woven throughout the Bible. The term remnant can apply to:

1. A historical remnant such as those few who survive a battle or a catastrophe.
2. The providentially preserved portion of the Jewish people.
3. The eschatological remnant who survive times of great judgments in history culminating finally in the second coming of Messiah.

The Hebrew words *yether*, יֶתֶר *yether* {yeh'-ther} ("what is left") (Deuteronomy 3:11, 28:54) and *she'ar*, שְׂאֵר *she'ar* {sheh-awr'} ("the remainder") (Ezra 3:8, Isa. 10:20, 11:16), *she'erith* שְׂאֵרִית *she'erith* {sheh-ay-reeth'} ("residue") (2 Kings 19:31, Isa. 14:30) all denote that which is left over after a war, after a time of testing, a disaster, or a period of apostasy.

Jehovah's Remnant

"In the history of Israel a remnant may be discerned, a spiritual Israel within the national Israel. In Elijah's time 7000 had not bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19:13). In Isaiah's time it was the "very small remnant" for whose sake God still forebore to destroy the nation (Isaiah 1:9). During the captivities the remnant appears in Jews like Esther, Mordecai, Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.... At the time of our Lord, John the Baptist, Simeon, Anna, and "those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38) were the remnant. During the Church Age the remnant is composed of believing Jews (Romans 11:4-5)." Notes from the Scofield Bible on the "remnant"

10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

- "Hear"; "Give ear"

Often times the scripture calls upon us to listen to what God has to say.

"Who will believe our report?" - Isaiah 53:1

"Hear, O Israel..." - Deut. 6:4

"Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." - Matt. 13:9

"Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." James 1:22

- There is a parallelism of thought in this verse: "the word of the LORD" and "the law of our God" are equated. The "torah" used here is more than just the Pentateuch. It is the entire teaching of Moses and the prophets concerning the spiritual and moral requirements of God.
- First, the rulers are addressed and then the people. The order may imply that the rulers have the greatest responsibility but the people will also be held responsible before God for their choices.
- Sodom and Gomorrah are used here figuratively of the rulers and people of Judah and Jerusalem.

- 11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.**
- 12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?**
- 13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.**
- 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.**

Not only were the people very sinful in their actions but they were hypocrites.

vs. 11 - they were offering sacrifices

Sacrifice is foundational to God's worship system (Lev. 17:11) but God demands worship from the heart as part of our worship of Him.

1 Samuel 15:22

1 Chronicles 29:16-19

Joel 2:12-13

Deuteronomy 10:12-16 (Deuteronomy 5:22-29)

Jeremiah 17:9

vs. 12 - the Israelites came to the temple to appear before God. Their actions profaned the worship of God and his Holy Temple.

Isaiah questions who has asked them to do this. The question requires a negative answer. No one has.

vs. 13-14 - God commands the religious activities of the people to cease. The worship proscribed by God had become an abomination to the Lord.

- 15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.**

Psalms 66:18

Isaiah 59:1-2

In verses 10-15, God exposes the sinful, hypocrisy of their worship. In the next 3 (16-18) verses he instructs them on what they need to do to cleanse themselves. In verse 18 we have a poignant expression of the prophet's heart for God.

- 16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;**

Four demands are made of the people:

1) Wash - this speaks of outward filth but is used here metaphorically speaking of the sinful practices that are being done.

2) Make clean - this speaks of the internal filth we have.

Matt. 15:18,19

"But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies"

3) Put away evil doings - they are to stop their sinful practices they are now practicing.

- 4) Cease to do evil - they are to no longer commit these sinful acts in the days ahead. The prophet calls the people to a life of true holiness and practice. Not the hypocritical religiosity and sinful lives they were leading.

The problem is this type of life is impossible (Jeremiah 17:9; Deut. 5:27-29; Deut. 10:12-16; Deut. 30:6)

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow

Five additional demands are made:

- 1) Learn to do well - the people needed to be taught right from wrong.
- 2) Seek judgment - the people are committed to seek justice in all things

Three specific deeds are mentioned

- 3) Relieve the oppressed -

The thought is to make the oppressor take a right or straight way so the oppressed will be delivered from their oppression.

- 4) Judge the fatherless - Ex. 22:22-25; Deut. 10:17-18 - the Mosaic law commanded that orphans be treated well and justly.
- 5) Plead for the widow - Ex. 22:22-25; Deut. 10:17-18 - the Mosaic law commanded that widows be treated well and justly.

All of these things are contrary to human nature. The history of society and nations show how impossible these requirements are for nations and individuals to carry out.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

The challenge is an imperative: you must do this.

- 1) The problem

- Your sins are like scarlet and crimson - they are indelible. There is nothing you can do to get rid of them.
- Keeping the Mosaic Law can never cleanse sins.

Deut. 27:26; Lev. 16:34

- 2) The promise

- Your sins can be cleansed and be forgiven.
- Only the implementation of the New Covenant can bring cleansing of sins.

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Lev. 17:11

- 3) The provision

God's promise of forgiveness of sins is one of the major themes of the Bible. The consistent teaching of the Word of God is that only He can provide the cleansing we need.

Isaiah 45:22-25; Isaiah 53:10-12

The promise of God in Isaiah 1:18 finds its fulfillment in the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34. Although only in Jeremiah 31 is this Covenant referred to as "New" there are as many as 17 references in the Jewish Bible that refer to this covenant which promises forgiveness of sins. They are grouped under four phrases - "a covenant" or "my covenant"; "Covenant of peace"; "New heart," "circumcised heart"*, or "new spirit"; "Everlasting covenant."