

# Isaiah

## I See the Lord

Isaiah 6:1  
February 29, 2020

### Today

**Author:** Isaiah "The Lord Saves" – His father was Amoz. Some scholars believe Isaiah to be the greatest biblical prophet.

**Audience:** Judah and Israel

**Family:** Isaiah had a family and at least 2 sons:

- Shear-Jashub - "Remnant Shall Return"
- Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz - "Speed the Spoil and Hasten the Booty"

**Ministry:** During the reigns of Uzziah {792-740 BC} – Jotham {750-732 BC} – Ahaz {735-716 BC} – Hezekiah {716-687 BC}. Isaiah died sometime after 681 BC during the reign of Manasseh. His ministry lasted approximately 60 years.

**Themes:** The Holiness of God {"Holy One of Israel" stated 26 times}, The Sovereignty of God, God's right to judge and His power to save, Promises of a Redeemer and a Remnant.

**Holiness:** "To be separate, set apart, unique, uncommon, in a category of its own – to be elevated out of the sphere of the ordinary." Holiness is the quality that describes God's absolute purity, glory and power.

- **Isaiah 55:8-9** - "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. <sup>9</sup> "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

**Isaiah's message is relatively simple:**

- God's people have sinned – rebelling against the One who created them and redeemed them.
- God calls His people to repentance and obedience.
- God judges His people because of sin.
- God promises future restoration of a remnant people.

**2 major national crises provide a backdrop for the book. Each crisis centers on one thing – to trust God or not:**

- 734 BC – Judah was threatened by an alliance between Israel and Syria {Ahaz will not trust God and will seek an alliance with Assyria}.
- 701 BC – The siege of Jerusalem by Assyria's King Sennacherib {Hezekiah will trust God and the Assyrian army will be destroyed}.

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Uzziah's reign marked the height of Judah's power. He fought successfully against other nations and exacted tribute from the Ammonites. Judah expanded westward with settlements in Philistia. During this period Judah prospered and desert areas were reclaimed by water conservation. Jerusalem's walls were reconstructed, towers were added and a large army was maintained.

But trouble was coming. The nation of Assyria was on the rise. Tiglath-pileser III came to power in 745 BC. He would terrorize and conquer much of western Asia. Uzziah was a leader in the resistance..... It was during this time that Isaiah was called into ministry:

- **Isaiah 1:2-20** <sup>2</sup> Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. <sup>3</sup> The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand." <sup>4</sup> Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the **Holy One of Israel** and turned their backs on him..... <sup>11</sup> "The multitude of your sacrifices-- what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. <sup>12</sup> When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? <sup>13</sup> Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations-- I cannot bear your evil assemblies. <sup>14</sup> Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. <sup>15</sup> When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; <sup>16</sup> wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, <sup>17</sup> learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. <sup>18</sup> "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. <sup>19</sup> If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; <sup>20</sup> but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

- The faithful city has become a harlot
- Its rulers are rebels
- Everyone loves a bribe
- They do not defend the orphan or the widow

The Lord continues by saying that a day will come when Jerusalem will be highly exalted

- **Isaiah 2:2-5** - In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. <sup>3</sup> Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. <sup>5</sup> Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

But in the meantime, judgment is coming! Why? ... ***their words and deeds are against the LORD, defying his glorious presence. {Isaiah 3:8}***

To the leaders –

- **Isaiah 3:15** - What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?" declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

To the people who are acting like prostitutes with the surrounding nations {and their gods} -

- **Isaiah 3:18-26** - In that day the Lord will snatch away their finery: the bangles and headbands and crescent necklaces, <sup>19</sup> the earrings and bracelets and veils, <sup>20</sup> the headdresses and ankle chains and sashes, the perfume bottles and charms, <sup>21</sup> the signet rings and nose rings, <sup>22</sup> the fine robes and the capes and cloaks, the purses <sup>23</sup> and mirrors, and the linen garments and tiaras and shawls. <sup>24</sup> Instead of fragrance there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-dressed hair, baldness; instead of fine clothing, sackcloth; instead of beauty, branding. <sup>25</sup> Your men will fall by the sword, your warriors in battle. <sup>26</sup> The gates of Zion will lament and mourn; destitute, she will sit on the ground.

Now Isaiah asks his readers for their opinion – which will lead to a logical conclusion, one the people cannot ignore:

- **Isaiah 5:1-5** - I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. <sup>2</sup> He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. <sup>3</sup> "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. <sup>4</sup> What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad? <sup>5</sup> Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled.

The problem does not lay with the Owner of the Vineyard. He has done everything that could be done. This is an introduction to God's legal case against His people.

## 6 Woes:

- To those who expanded their real estate holdings – homes and land – for profit at the expense of other people! {see 1 Kings 21} = You will experience empty houses and poor harvests
- To those who indulge in excess – specifically getting drunk – at the expense of recognizing the action of God. = You will go into exile because you lack this knowledge.

They will go down to the realm of the dead but The Lord of hosts will be exalted in judgment and will show Himself holy in righteousness!!

- To those whose sins are so heavy its like they are dragging a cart behind them {willful and cherished sin}. They say, "***Let God hurry, let him hasten his work so we may see it. Let it approach, let the plan of the Holy One of Israel come, so we may know it.***" {Isaiah 5:19}
- To those who are confused ethically = calling evil good and good evil or darkness light and light darkness or bitter sweet and sweet bitter!
- To those who are wise in their own eyes and think they are clever {proud heart}!
- To those who are masters at mixing drinks and justify wickedness for a bribe and take away justice from the innocent!

God rests His case. The foundational charge is that the people have rejected God's Law.

## THEREFORE {the verdict}

**The Lord's anger is aroused against His people! He will stretch out His hand and strike them! He will whistle for a nation that is far away and they will come running..... They don't get tired. They don't sleep. They're arrows are sharp. They're horses are fast. They are like young roaring lions who lay hold of their prey and devour it. Behold darkness and sorrow is coming!**

That is quite a message. Let's be reminded that this vision comes when times are good!!

Then..... King Uzziah dies!

The situation might have seemed hopeless to Isaiah. Why waste your time on people who aren't listening anyway?

Then one day Isaiah was walking in the Portico of the Temple:

- **Isaiah 6:1-8** - In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." <sup>4</sup> At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." <sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." <sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

## Take Aways

Times were good in Judah. A good king sat on the throne and the nation prospered under his rule. Sure, there were some outside threats – but why worry?

Looks can be deceiving, however. Judah was complacent and lazy. Their king might have worshipped God, but her leadership did not. The people practiced witchcraft, worshipped idols and exploited the poor. They still considered themselves to be “God’s chosen people”, but were that in name only, because they had, in fact, rejected both God and the Covenant.

If God did not care He would have walked away and left them to the consequences of their choices. But He desperately loves them and will do anything and everything in His attempt to save them. He was looking for someone who share His burden:

- "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"

He found Isaiah:

- "Here am I. Send me!"