

Behold Our God

Introduction to Isaiah - Four Kings One Lesson

May 22, 2011

Text - Isaiah 1:1

Scripture Reading - Luke 12:13-21

Two things I want to accomplish this morning

- Historical context for Isaiah
- Ask you one important application question

Isaiah 1:1 (ESV)

¹The 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.

4 Kings

Background of kingship in Israel

- It wasn't God's original intent
- **Judges 21:25 (ESV)**
²⁵In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
- After Samuel God relents
- Saul (1020 B.C.), David, Solomon
- Rehoboam /Jeroboam (930 B.C.)
- Israel no good kings
- Judah a couple - Asa and Jehosaphat

Uzziah

- **Isaiah 6:1 (ESV)**

¹In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.

- Appointed king at 16 when father Amaziah was conspired against and killed because he had turned from following the Lord (767 B.C.)
- Ruled 52 years (though inactive for part)
- **2 Kings 15:3-4 (ESV)**

³And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. ⁴Nevertheless, the

high places were not taken away. The people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places.

- **2 Chronicles 26:4-5 (ESV)**

⁴ And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. ⁵ He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God, and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper.

- Defeated the Philistines, expanded territory, and built cities. Ammonites paid tribute to him. Built up Jerusalem, had large herds, and fertile land (loved the soil). Large army (307,500 men) well equipped and built engines to shoot arrow and great stones from towers and corners of the wall surrounding Jerusalem

- **2 Chronicles 26:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ ...And his fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong.

- **2 Chronicles 26:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the Lord his God and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense.

- Azariah the priest and 80 other priests rushed in to stop him, he became angry, and God struck him with leprosy on the spot

- **2 Chronicles 26:21 (ESV)**

²¹ And King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death, and being a leper lived in a separate house, for he was excluded from the house of the Lord. And Jotham his son was over the king's household, governing the people of the land.

Israel during Uzziah

- 6 kings
- Menahem (39 yr. Uz) paid Pul king of Assyria not to attack and to help confirm hold on royal power

Jotham

- Began to reign when he was 25 and reigned for 16 years

- **2 Kings 15:34-35 (ESV)**

³⁴ And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah had done. ³⁵ Nevertheless, the

high places were not removed. The people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places.

- **2 Chronicles 27:2 (ESV)**

² And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord according to all that his father Uzziah had done, except he did not enter the temple of the Lord. But the people still followed corrupt practices.

- Built upper gate of the House of the Lord, much building on the wall, built cities, forts, and towers outside Jer, prevailed against Ammonites

- **2 Chronicles 27:6 (ESV)**

⁶ So Jotham became mighty, because he ordered his ways before the Lord his God.

- **2 Kings 15:37 (ESV)**

³⁷ In those days the Lord began to send Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah.

Israel during Jotham

- Assyria under Tiglath-pelisar captures several cities and all the land of Naphtali carries people captive to Assyria

Ahaz

- Began to reign at 20 and reigned 16 years

- **2 Chronicles 28:1-4 (ESV)**

¹ ... And he did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as his father David had done, ² but he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. He even made metal images for the Baals, ³ and he made offerings in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom and burned his sons as an offering, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel. ⁴ And he sacrificed and made offerings on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.

- **2 Chronicles 28:5-8 (ESV)**

⁵ Therefore the Lord his God gave him into the hand of the king of Syria, who defeated him and took captive a great number of his people and brought them to Damascus. He was also given into the hand of the king of Israel, who struck him with great force. ⁶ For Pekah the son of Remaliah killed 120,000 from Judah in one day, all of them men of valor, because they had forsaken the Lord, the God of their fathers. ⁷ And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, killed Maaseiah the

king's son and Azrikam the commander of the palace and Elkanah the next in authority to the king. ⁸The men of Israel took captive 200,000 of their relatives, women, sons, and daughters. They also took much spoil from them and brought the spoil to Samaria.

- **2 Chronicles 28:16-21 (ESV)**

¹⁶At that time King Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria for help. ¹⁷For the Edomites had again invaded and defeated Judah and carried away captives. ¹⁸And the Philistines had made raids on the cities in the Shephelah and the Negeb of Judah, (taken several of them, and settled there) ¹⁹For the Lord humbled Judah because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had made Judah act sinfully and had been very unfaithful to the Lord. ²⁰So Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came against him and afflicted him instead of strengthening him. ²¹For Ahaz took a portion from the house of the Lord and the house of the king and of the princes, and gave tribute to the king of Assyria, but it did not help him.

- **2 Chronicles 28:22-23 (ESV)**

²²In the time of his distress he became yet more faithless to the Lord—this same King Ahaz. ²³For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus that had defeated him and said, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria helped them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me." But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel.

- **2 Chronicles 28:24-25 (ESV)**

²⁴And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and he shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and he made himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem. ²⁵In every city of Judah he made high places to make offerings to other gods, provoking to anger the Lord, the God of his fathers.

Hezekiah

- Began to reign at 25 and reigned 29 yrs.

- **2 Kings 18:3-8 (ESV)**

³And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done. ⁴He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to

it (it was called Nehushtan). ⁵ He trusted in the Lord the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. ⁶ For he held fast to the Lord. He did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments that the Lord commanded Moses. ⁷ And the Lord was with him; wherever he went out, he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him. ⁸ He struck down the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.

- First year first month opened the House of the Lord His father had closed
- Gathered Levites together and encouraged them to consecrate themselves and cleanse the House of the Lord for worship (16 days)
- Reinstated temple worship as it was meant to be
 - **2 Chronicles 29:25-30 (ESV)**
²⁵ And he stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, harps, and lyres, according to the commandment of David and of Gad the king's seer and of Nathan the prophet, for the commandment was from the Lord through his prophets. ²⁶ The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. ²⁷ Then Hezekiah commanded that the burnt offering be offered on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song to the Lord began also, and the trumpets, accompanied by the instruments of David king of Israel. ²⁸ The whole assembly worshiped, and the singers sang and the trumpeters sounded. All this continued until the burnt offering was finished. ²⁹ When the offering was finished, the king and all who were present with him bowed themselves and worshiped. ³⁰ And Hezekiah the king and the officials commanded the Levites to sing praises to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed down and worshiped.
- In his second month he gathered not only Judah but Israel to keep the Passover in Jer and kept it an extra 7 days it was such a blessing
- In months 3-7 he organized the priests and gathered provisions for them to ensure that worship would continue

- **2 Chronicles 31:20-21 (ESV)**

²⁰Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God. ²¹And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God and in accordance with the law and the commandments, seeking his God, he did with all his heart, and prospered.

- After that he prayed and God added 15 yrs to his life when he was on the verge of death
- Lead his people boldly and prayerfully to take an AMAZING stand against the king of Assyria
- Humbled himself when he became proud and led his people to do the same
- Had very great riches and honor
- Wasn't perfect...
 - o Initially caves in to Sennacherib king of Assyria and agrees to pay him tribute if he will withdraw from Jerusalem
 - o Shows the king of Babylon all his treasures (which was probably both foolish and prideful) and then doesn't seem to care at all when Isaiah tells him that Babylon will eventually be Judah's downfall
- But he was pretty darn good

Israel during Hezekiah

- **2 Kings 18:9-12 (ESV)**

⁹In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it, ¹⁰and at the end of three years he took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. ¹¹The king of Assyria carried the Israelites away to Assyria and put them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, ¹²because they did not obey the voice of the Lord their God but transgressed his covenant, even all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded. They neither listened nor obeyed.

- **2 Kings 17:7-8 (ESV)**

⁷And this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of

Egypt, and had feared other gods ⁸ and walked in the customs of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced.

- **2 Kings 17:13-14 (ESV)**

¹³ Yet the Lord warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets." ¹⁴ But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the Lord their God.

- **2 Kings 17:18-20 (ESV)**

¹⁸ Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight. None was left but the tribe of Judah only. ¹⁹ Judah also did not keep the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the customs that Israel had introduced. ²⁰ And the Lord rejected all the descendants of Israel and afflicted them and gave them into the hand of plunderers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

So that was the lay of the land during the time of Isaiah's prophetic ministry

- Israel was falling, and eventually fell apart all together, due to their idolatry and unwillingness to repent and follow God
- Judah was in flux
 - o Prosperous and successful during Jotham's reign, like Uzziah's before him, but unwilling to remove the high places and worship of God on His terms alone
 - o Terribly wayward, broken, and unrepentant during Ahaz' reign, to the degree that they shut the doors of the temple
 - o Wonderfully restored, victorious, and blessed by God during Hezekiah's reign despite the very serious and looming threat of Assyrian invasion

Which of the kings are you?

- Are you like Ahaz, completely given over to the things and the ways of the world around you and unwillingly to trust in and follow God no matter how bad things get?

- Are you like Uzziah/Jotham, faithful and blessed for the most part, but unwilling to tear down the idols in your life that are keeping you from following God fully and on His terms alone?
- Or are you like Hezekiah, holding fast to the Lord, not departing from any of His ways, completely faithful, and completely trusting, even when facing the greatest of trials?