

Behold Our God
Ah, Sinful Nation!
May 29, 2011

Text - Isaiah 1:2-31

Scripture Reading - Isaiah 1:1-31

Last week - Isaiah 1:1

- **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.

This week - Isaiah's first oracle/sermon (intro to the rest)

- Different thoughts on when it was written and how to interpret it
 - o Early / predictive
 - o Later / direct *
 - Out of order chronologically (Gospels)

Judah (God's people) on the verge of destruction (1:2-9)

- The trial
 - o **Isaiah 1:2 (ESV)**

²Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken: "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me.

 - Jury - The whole creation
 - Prosecutor - Yahweh, the eternal, self existent, God of Israel
 - Defendant - God's children (Judah)
 - Charge - Rebellion
- The stupidity
 - o **Isaiah 1:3 (ESV)**

³The ox knows its *owner*, and the donkey its *master's* crib, but Israel does not know, *my people* do not understand."
- The severity
 - o **Isaiah 1:4-9 (ESV)**

⁴Ah, sinful *nation*, a people *laden* with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have *forsaken* the Lord, they have *despised* the *Holy*

One of Israel, they are utterly estranged. (made themselves strangers, cut themselves off relationally, divorced themselves from God due to their adultery) ⁵

Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. ⁶ From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds; they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil. ⁷ Your country lies desolate; your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence foreigners devour your land; it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners. ⁸ And the *daughter of Zion* is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, *like a besieged city. (picture of two cities on a hill)* ⁹ If the Lord of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we should have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah.

Religious rituals not enough (1:10-20)

- Listen up!
 - **Isaiah 1:10 (ESV)**
¹⁰ Hear the word of the Lord, you *rulers* of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you *people* of Gomorrah!
- I hate what you're doing
 - **Isaiah 1:11-14 (ESV)**
¹¹ "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. ¹² "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this *trampling* of my courts? ¹³ Bring no more *vain (empty, false, useless, evil)* offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. ¹⁴ Your new moons and your appointed feasts *my soul hates; (God's WHOLE being)* they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. *(what should have been a blessing has become a curse)*
- Here's what *I'm* going to do

- o **Isaiah 1:15 (ESV)**
¹⁵ When you spread out your hands, *I will hide my eyes from you*; even though you make many prayers, *I will not listen*; your hands are full of blood.
- Here's what *you* need to do
 - o **Isaiah 1:16-17 (ESV)**
¹⁶ Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, ¹⁷ learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.
- Here's what will happen if you do it
 - o **Isaiah 1:18-19 (ESV)**
¹⁸ "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 like crimson, they shall become like wool.* ¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, *you shall eat the good of the land*;
- Here's what will happen if you don't
 - o **Isaiah 1:20 (ESV)**
²⁰ but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; *for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*"

God will purify a people for himself one way or another (1:21-31)

- From where Judah has fallen
 - o **Isaiah 1:21-23 (ESV)**
²¹ How the faithful city has become a whore (**opposite**), she who was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. ²² Your silver has become dross (**what had been precious has become impure waste, worthless scum**), your best wine mixed with water. (**what had been rich and sweet and expensive has become watered down and worthless**) ²³ Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. (**those who should be the best have become the worst**) Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. (**everyone does what God hates**) They do not bring justice to the fatherless, and the widow's cause does not come to them. (**no one does what God loves**)
- What God is going to do about it

o **Isaiah 1:24-31 (ESV)**

²⁴Therefore the Lord declares, the Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel: (who can do whatever He pleases) "Ah, I will get relief from *my enemies* and avenge myself on *my foes*. ²⁵I will turn my hand against you and will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy. (sinful elements will be removed) ²⁶And 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." (righteous elements restored / Who are they?...) ²⁷Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and *those in her who repent*, by righteousness. ²⁸But rebels and sinners shall be broken together, and those who forsake the Lord shall be consumed. ²⁹For they shall be ashamed of the oaks that you desired; and you shall blush for the gardens that you have chosen. ³⁰For you shall be like an oak whose leaf withers, and like a garden without water. ³¹And the strong shall become tinder, and his work a spark, and both of them shall burn together, with none to quench them.

In summary

- God's people had completely turned their backs on Him
 - o "utterly estranged"
 - o They were sinful from head to toe
 - o Everyone was doing what He hated, no one was doing what He loved
- God's people were going through the religious motions and God HATED it
 - o They were doing what they thought was just enough to secure God's blessing and avoid God's curse.
 - o They were trying to use and manipulate their Creator, Savior, and King, *The Holy One of Israel*, for their own personal gain, just like they did with the false gods of the people around them.
- Despite ALL THIS, God offered them hope
 - o He did not *completely* destroy them as He did Sodom and Gomorrah, though they *completely* deserved to be destroyed.

- o Instead, He promised to purify and restore them by redeeming those who were willing and obedient and by destroying those who refused and rebelled.

Application

- Have you turned your back on the Holy One of Israel?
 - o Have you made yourself a stranger to Him, have you cut yourself off from Him relationally, have you divorced yourself from Him through your spiritual adultery and sin?
 - o If you have, do you realize how foolish that is?
 - It's your Creator, Sustainer, and King that you are despising, forsaking, and rebelling against.
 - o This is especially true for believers. Not only are you rebelling against your Creator, Sustainer, and King, you are rebelling against your Savior and Father as well.
- Are you going through the religious motions?
 - o Are you doing what you believe to be the bare minimum in order to secure God's blessing and avoid His curse?
 - o Are you worshipping God because you love Him, or because you want to get something from Him?
 - o Is God just one of many avenues you pursue for contentment and satisfaction in life, or is He the only avenue?
 - o If you are going through the religious motions know this: God knows it, God hates it, and God deserves better.
- Do you know that there is hope?
 - o **Isaiah 1:18-19 (ESV)**
¹⁸ "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 like crimson, they shall become like wool. ¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;

