Motivation: How do we become closer to God? Isaiah gives us several insights in this study: Recognize sin, repent, and realize that God wants to use you. Recognizing His enduring kingdom will motivate us to kingdom work.

Examination:

I. Calling for Purity (1:1-31)

A. Introduction (1)


2. Date: “The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem... during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” (1) Believer’s Study Bible, 922: 1:1 “This is the list of kings whose reign Isaiah’s public ministry spanned. This list allows us to date his ministry and, therefore, gives us an idea of when he began writing this book. Uzziah reigned independently (after his father’s death) from 767 -740 B.C. Jotham reigned from 740 – 731 B.C. Ahaz reigned from 731 – 715 B.C., Hezekiah from 715 – 686 B.C.”
3. **Themes:** This was a time of great prosperity which fostered a sense of independence from God resulting in idolatry, false prophets and immorality.

Of all the books in the Old Testament, only the Psalms contain a larger number of messianic predictions than Isaiah. Isaiah sets forth every aspect of the glory and ministry of Christ: (1) His incarnation (7:14; 9:6), (2) His youth (7:15; 11:1; 53:2), (3) His mild manner (42:2), (4) His obedience (50:5), (5) His message (61: 1, 2), (6) His miracles (35:5, 6), (7) His sufferings (50:6), (8) His rejection (53:1-3), (9) His shame (53:4-6), (10) His vicarious death (53:10), and (11) His resurrection and ascension (52:13).” Phil 3:10

**B. Rebellious People (2-9)** “Listen heavens, and pay attention, earth, for the Lord has spoken: ‘I have raised children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against Me’”

1. **Ignorance** “The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master’s feeding trough, but Israel does not know; My people do not understand.” (3) Even “dumb” animals know their masters and can find their way home; Israel was truly lost. The cycle of discipline included rebellion, retribution, repentance, restoration and reward.

2. **Apathy** “Oh sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, brood of evildoers, depraved children. They have abandoned the Lord; they have despised the Holy One of Israel. (4) Could Judah have been presented a starker portrait of the consequences of forsaking the Lord than the ruin of the Northern kingdom in 722 B.C.? In spite of “*cities burned with fire*” (7) on their border, God’s people continued to sin. (Judges 21:25) Even though judgment was certain, God promised to spare a remnant (9). (Rom. 11:6)

**II. Empty Rituals (10-15)**
“Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah! 11“What are all your sacrifices to Me?” asks the Lord. I have had enough of burnt offerings and rams and the fat of well-fed cattle; I have no desire for the blood of bulls, lambs, or male goats. 12When you come to appear before Me, who requires this from you—this trampling of My courts? Stop bringing useless offerings. Your incense is detestable to Me. New Moons and Sabbaths, and the calling of solemn assemblies—I cannot stand iniquity with a festival. 14I hate your New Moons and prescribed festivals. They have become a burden to Me; I am tired of putting up with them. 15When you lift up your hands in prayer, I will refuse to look at you; even if you offer countless prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.

A. Leaders Rejected “rulers of Sodom” (10) Isaiah addressed the so-called religious Jews as acting no better than the pagans of Sodom and Gomorrah.

B. Sacrifices rejected “What are your sacrifices to Me?” (11) (I Sam. 8:7) God commanded His people to offer sacrifices (Lv 1-7; burnt offerings are specifically described in Lv 1), but the sacrifices of His people were reprehensible to Him. They were not offered with pure motives of sincere repentance. Rather, they were offered with hands covered with blood (Is 1:15).
C. Incense rejected “Your incense is detestable to Me” (13). HCSB, p. 1129, 1:13-14

“God also commanded that Israel consecrate holy times on a weekly (Sabbaths) and yearly (New Moons...solemn assemblies...festivals) cycle, but they were loathsome to God because of the hypocrisy of His people.”

D. Religious meetings rejected “New Moons and Sabbaths, and the calling of solemn assemblies-I cannot stand iniquity with a festival.” (13b). (Col. 2:13-23)

E. Feasts rejected “I hate your New Moons and prescribed festivals...” (14a).

F. Prayers rejected “When you lift up your hands in prayer, I will refuse to look at you. Even if you offer countless prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.” (15). HCSB, p. 1129, 1:15 “This oracle has delayed the problem with the people’s ritual practice until the very last line. Their sacrifices, times of worship, and even prayers were not acceptable because their hands were covered with blood. That is, they sinned and did not repent but still participated in worship. God did not tolerate such hypocritical behavior.”

III. True Followers (1:16-17)


HCSB, p. 1129, 1:16-17 “The oracle gives a prescription for change-repent. The metaphor for transformation here is a good washing. Transformation involves a cessation of evil activities as well as the requirement of good deeds. The good deeds are defined as social justice, particularly resisting oppressors and promoting the interests of the vulnerable (the fatherless)
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and the widow).”

A. Repent “Stop doing evil” (16) – Repentance involves a change of attitude with a resultant change in actions.

B. Change “Learn” (17) – We are not by nature doers of good things. The repentance of verse 16 is evidenced by the actions of verse 17. (James 1:22-25; Romans 12:9-21)

IV. Repentance Required (1:18-19)

“The Lord presented two options to the people. One was to repent and obey. A remarkable transformation would result. Now they were blood red as a result of their sin, but repentance would turn them a glorious white. They could be cleansed (v.16) with the result that life would be good. The second option was continued rebellion, a course of action that would end with their destruction.”

A. Cleansing “They will be as white as snow” (18) If we repent God will be faithful to cleanse us. (I John 1:9-10)

B. Obedience “willing and obedient” (19) Obedience will bring blessing. Believer's Study Bible, p. 923:

1:16, 17

“These verses describe the difference between true and false righteousness. The word ‘wash’ is not a reference to ceremonial washing, but refers to the cleansing of the heart which issues in repentance (cf. James 4:8) and, therefore, is a plea for a thorough reformation of heart, rather than a call for acts of penance. Repentance is clearly defined in this passage by the terms ‘put
away’ (i.e., turn aside) and ‘cease to do evil’ (i.e., stop doing evil and go God’s way). True righteousness is expressed in five positive exhortations: (1) ‘learn to do good,” which implies the need for someone to teach God’s way; (2) ‘seek justice,’ i.e., divine justice; (3) ‘rebuke the oppressor,’ i.e., correct and punish the one who does evil; (4) ‘defend the fatherless,’ and (5) ‘plead for the widow.’ Both orphans and widows need help and justice and are the most likely members of society to be mistreated.” (James 1:27)

V. Coming Peace & Penalty (1:21- 4:1)

A. Redemption “Zion will be redeemed by justice, her repentant ones by righteousness.” (27) What God calls for individually in the previous verses, he now calls for corporately. Redemption (27) is available if God’s people will repent. The process of redemption calls for God to “remove your impurities.” (25b) (Matt. 5:20.)

B. Prophecy of Hope for a New Jerusalem (2:1-5)

“In the last days…” (2:2) This prophecy obviously concerns a period in human history when God’s rule is absolute. Contrast this exaltation of God’s House to the end of chapter 1 and chapters 2 & 3. For another description of the Millennial reign of Christ see Micah 4:1-5.

Kind of city God wants:

1. Jerusalem as the acknowledged center of God’s government, will be set upon God’s Mountain. (2)

2. Spreading of true religion is brought about, not by conquest, but by the influence of Israel. (3a) Micah 6:8

3. Nations of the world spontaneously respond to God and eagerly seek to learn his ways. The curse of the Tower of Babel is reversed. (3) (Zeph. 3:9)
4. Nations of the world are not a part of the Hebrew nation but they retain their independence. (4)

5. Ideal world is ruled by God not by Israel; rules by word not by sword. (4)

6. Because God is ruler, war ends, peace reigns. (4) (Isa. 11:11; Heb. 9:28)

C. Proclamation of the Day of the Lord (2:6-22) “For a day belonging to the Lord of Hosts is coming…” (2:12)

1. Reasons for Judgment: eastern religions (6), greed (7), idol worship (8), false worship (9).

2. Results of Judgment: fear (10), humility (11), exaltation of the Lord (11, 17, 19).

D. Punishment of God’s People (3:1-4:1)

1. Era of Anarchy (3:1-7) (2 Tim. 3:1-5)

   a. People will be deprived of food (1)

   b. All people in positions of honor will be removed (2-3)

   c. The young and inexperienced will rule over people (4)
d. People will oppress people, no respect for authority (5)

e. No one will want to take the reins of government (6-7)

2. Sorry state of Judah (3:8-12)

a. Men bring judgment upon themselves, judgment by sin (8-9)

b. They do not respect the needs of the poor (10-12)


4. Sins of Women (3:16-4:1)

a. aloof, snobbery, seductive (16)

b. 21 points of feminine finery (18-23) (Prov. 6:12-19)

i. Judgment for cultivating beauty for beauty’s sake (24) (2 Pet. 3:1-3)

i. A stench instead of perfume
ii. A rope instead of a sash

iii. A brand instead of beauty

d. No man left for which to be pretty after judgment (3:25-4:1) Believer’s Study Bible, p. 926:

3:16-4:1
“This passage contains a double reference: to the arrogant and immodest women of Jerusalem, and to the nation as a whole. In view of the context, Isaiah is just continuing his efforts at condemning pride and self-sufficiency and announcing the coming judgment for such sinful attitudes. This passage is not saying that it is improper for women to be well attired. Rather, it is saying that it is wrong for one to so trust in his material wealth that he becomes self-sufficient instead of dependent on God. Isaiah notes several sins of women: (1) vanity, (2) immodesty and shamelessness in conduct, and (3) pride and haughtiness in spirit. These are all corrupting influences which decay and ruin a nation. When women fall into corruption, the moral decay reaches the heart of the land.” (2 Cor. 3:5; Prov. 29:18, 24:33)

VI. Cleansing People (4:2-6)

A.Messianic Leadership “On that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of Israel’s survivors.” (2)

The “Branch” looks forward to Jesus’ return in glory while “survivors” may reference those redeemed Jews from the Great Tribulation.

HCSB, p. 1133, 4:2 “That day is a future day, a time that comes after the judgment described in 2:5-4:1. Indeed, the new restored state of Zion is a product of passing through the crucible of judgment. The remnant is here described as Israel’s survivors. The reference to the Branch of the Lord is provocative. After all, the branch has a messianic connotation in Jr 23:5; 33:18; Zch 3:8; 6:12. Many scholars have pointed out that the branch is this verse is parallel with the fruit of the land
and may indicate the rich abundance that Zion will enjoy in the future. But the two readings may not be mutually exclusive since in Hebrew parallelism the second idea is often not strictly synonymous but expands the thought of the first idea.

B. Godly Character “Whoever remains in Zion and whoever is left in Jerusalem will be called holy –” (3a)

C. Purity “...when the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodguilt from the heart of Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of burning.” (4)

1. Holy “will be called holy”.

2. Cleansed “washed away the filth”

D. Presence of God “Then the Lord will create a cloud of smoke by day and a glowing flame of fire by night over the entire site of Mount Zion, and over its assemblies. For there will be a canopy over all the glory.” (5) HCSB, p. 1133, 4:5 “After the exodus from Egypt, God guided Israel through the desert by a cloud and flame (cp. Ex 40:38), which represented God’s mysterious and powerful presence with His people. Isaiah used this language to teach that the future remnant will again enjoy an intimate and assuring relationship with God after the judgment.”

E. Reestablished Tabernacle “and there will be a booth for shade from heat by day, and a refuge and shelter from storm and rain.” (6)

Application:
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1. God promises blessing for obedience and judgment for disobedience.

2. God provides redemption for those who respond in faith and repentance.

3. God’s power will establish His kingdom forever. (Jude 24-25; Rev. 5:11-13, 11:15, 19:1, 6)

Leader Pack - Item 1: Map: Prophets of the Eighth Century; Item 2: Outline of Isaiah: Item 3:
Poster:
Themes of Isaiah;
Item 8:
Handout:
Memory Verses Bookmark

Biblical Illustrator: InSites: Kings of Judah; QuickBites: Isaiah Foretold: Jesus Fulfilled

Notes: **You may access David’s Lesson Preview in MP3 format at: www.hfcbiblestudy.org

Dates: **In the midst of COVID, calendared events continue to be under review**