

IV. MISPLACED TRUST -- [Read] Isaiah 30:1-3; 31:1

Isaiah's woe expresses both grief and a threat. Israel followed the Lord when it suited her, but when it was not followed the Lord when it suited her, but when it was not convenient she did as he pleased forfeiting God's approval.

Isaiah tried to persuade Jerusalem to trust God for her safety. Leaders, like Hezekiah, were constantly being advised by politicians and false prophets to seek alliances and treaties with Egypt. Egypt, however, was a "paper tiger" and such comrades would be to her shame to Judah.

The church like Israel is not to be friends with the world, if we are we've lost our distinctiveness (2 Cor. 6).

Q-4 What did James have to say about this? (James 4:4)

Q-5 Thought Question: In what way(s) do you think Christians today are in danger of misplacing their trust?

[Read] Isaiah 31:1. Chariots could be used in flat terrain but were useless in the hill country of Judea. But there was another reason thy Egyptian chariots are condemned. They were a symbol of Judah's attempt to deliver herself from her enemies by her own hand and to forget the power and availability of God. But to have God's help meant she would have to do some repenting, and this is what hindered Jerusalem from turning to the Lord. She wanted "deliverance" but she also loved her own evil ways.

Q-6 Thought Question: God can surely bless us and heal our problems with drugs, alcohol, aids, broken homes, sexual permissiveness, etc., but what would it require?

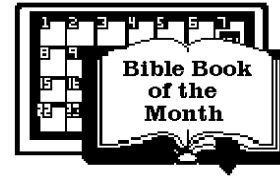
Q-7 Thought Question: What might it require to bring us to the point we would be read to do this?

Jerusalem thought the sole answer to everything was to have a strong military and political strategy.

V. ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS -- [Read] Isa. 34:1-4

Isaiah singles out and announces God's coming wrath upon the nations around Jerusalem. Ch. 34 stands as a king of summary of what he had to say against all the nations rolled up into one sermon.

Remember the prophets presented God's revelation of coming judgment and blessings with poetic visual language. God's sword is pictured as bathed in blood with the fat of those animals sacrificed still clinging to his sword (Verse 6). This is not literal, but we can certainly get the picture of what is going to happen.



ISAIAH

Lesson # 2

Text: Isaiah 1:1-4; 10:1-12; 34:1-17

“Visions of Judgment”

Plan: The next three studies from the book of Isaiah

Lesson 2: The Visions of Judgment (ch. 1-35)

Lesson 3: The Historical Narrative - Hezekiah (ch. 36-39)

Lesson 4: The Visions of Comfort (chs. 40-66)

Today's Text:

1. God's Indictment of a Rebellious People -- Isa. 1:1-4
2. Example of Social Injustice -- Isa. 10:1-4
3. Judgment on Assyria prophesied -- Isa. 10:5-12
4. Woe for Misplacing One's Trust -- Isa. 30:13; 31:1ff
5. Summary of Oracles Against the Nations -- Isa. 34:1-17

Introduction:

In his Visions of Judgment Isaiah issues God's condemnation and coming judgment upon Jerusalem for straying from God, for social injustices, and for putting their trust in the wrong place.

Like most of the other prophets Isaiah also had a message for the nations around Judah. In chapters 13 thru 23 he has a word for the Lord of Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus (Syria), Ethiopia, Egypt, etc.

In this lesson we want to get a sample of Isaiah's Visions of Coming Judgment, sometimes referred to as "the day of the Lord" (2:12; 13:6, 9; 34:8; 58:5; 61:2). It stood as a time of reckoning with them, and foresees the final "Day of the Lord" that is in our future yet.

Q-1 What is pictured as *our* ultimate "Day of the Lord" in the New Testament? (2 Peter 3:10; 2 Cor. 5:10).

I. GOD INDICTS A REBELLIOUS PEOPLE -- Isa. 1:1-4

THE vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, concerning Judah and Jerusalem which he saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.
 2 Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth;
 For the LORD speaks, "Sons I have reared and brought up,
 But they have revolted against Me.

3 "An ox knows its owner,
 And a donkey its master's manger,
 But Israel does not know,
 My people do not understand."
 4 Alas, sinful nation,
 People weighed down with iniquity,
 Offspring of evildoers,

Sons who act corruptly!
 They have abandoned the LORD,
 They have despised the Holy One of
 Israel,
 They have turned away from Him.

Verse 1. The prophets were preachers to the people of their own times. From the opening verse we learn the historical time frame of Isaiah's prophecies. The prophets often assured the people that God was not forgetting His promises of a Redeemer by giving a revelation about Him and His work.

The kings mentioned parallel the time of Israel's fall to Assyria. Uzziah was a fairly good king but still allowed idolatry to exist in Judah. He was the king who developed leprosy and his son Jotham ruled his house. During this period almost every king brought his son who was to reign after him to the throne to co-reign with him and thus assure peaceful succession.

Q-2. How had God "reared and brought up Israel?"

Verse 3. Even dumb animals show better recognition of who their Provider is than Judah.

Verse 4. The prophet piles up descriptions of the evil of the people. Sinful, guilt ridden, evil, corrupt, forsook God, despised Him, backsliders.

Notice in vs. 2 and vs. 4 that "LORD" is all caps, meaning the personal name of God. They had not spurned **religion** but had turned to the pagan idols of the land and forgot who it was that had brought them into Canaan and given them the land.

The title "**Holy One of Israel**" is one of Isaiah's favorite designations for God in his book. This title recognizes God's character and who His people are.

Lesson: How quick we are to forget! How ungrateful we tend to be! God despises sin, evil, and corruption.

II. AN EXAMPLE OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE -- Isaiah 10:1-4

"Woe to those who decree unrighteous
 decrees,
 1 Who write misfortune,
Which they have prescribed
 2 To rob the needy of justice,
 And to take what is right from the poor
 of My people,
 That widows may be their prey,
 And *that* they may rob the fatherless.
 3 What will you do in the day of

punishment,
 And in the desolation *which* will come
 from afar?
 To whom will you flee for help?
 And where will you leave your glory?
 4 Without Me they shall bow down
 among the prisoners,
 And they shall fall among the slain."
 For all this His anger is not turned
 away,
 But His hand *is* stretched out still.

Verses 1-2. Those who most needed the protection of the courts were being exploited. God doesn't like it when justice is prevented by the rich and influential paying bribes. When a nation's courts and political officials become corrupt it is in deep trouble.

Verses 2-4. A Holy God will not allow such injustice to go uncorrected for long. He will bring about an upheaval to that society. The question then is, Where can the wicked turn in the day of trouble?

This lesson applies not only to a nation like Israel, but to individuals.

Q-3 What does this passage serve to do for the oppressed and the oppressor?

III. JUDGMENT ON ASSYRIA -- Israel 10:5-12

5 "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My
 anger
 And the staff in whose hand is My
 indignation.
 6 I will send him against an ungodly
 nation,
 And against the people of My wrath
 I will give him charge,
 To seize the spoil, to take the prey,
 And to tread them down like the mire
 of the streets.
 7 Yet he does not mean so,
 Nor does his heart think so;
 But *it is* in his heart to destroy,
 And cut off not a few nations.
 8 For he says,
 'Are not my princes altogether kings?
 9 *Is* not Calno like Carchemish?

Is not Hamath like Arpad?
Is not Samaria like Damascus?
 10 As my hand has found the kingdoms
 of the idols,
 Whose carved images excelled those of
 Jerusalem and Samaria,
 11 As I have done to Samaria and her
 idols,
 Shall I not do also to Jerusalem and her
 idols?"
 12 Therefore it shall come to pass,
 when the LORD has performed all His
 work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem,
that He will say, "I will punish the fruit
 of the arrogant heart of the king of
 Assyria, and the glory of his haughty
 looks."

Verse 5-6. This passage shows the rule of God among the nations of the world. What a God is GOD who controls and uses men and nations to carry out his purposes!

The Lord was using Assyria as his instrument of wrath against a godless nation. He was the Lord's Judgment upon a people to plunder and destroy them. But the Lord wants them to know they will also be judged for their wickedness.

Perhaps this helps us to see why the Lord permits some wicked and cruel nations to exist.

Verse 7-11. The Assyrian king didn't realize he was God's agent. He thought he just went forth conquering because he was so powerful! We see the thinking of a worldly minded dictator, he thought no one was able to stop him. He reasoned that Jerusalem's God was no greater than those of other nations he had subdued (2 Kings 18:33-35).

Verse 12. When the Lord finished His use of the bragging bully from Assyria he also would be punished. The Lord permits rulers to be "a terror to the evil doer and a rewarder of those who do good" (cf. Romans 13:1-7). He even permits evil rulers to exercise tyranny- but only so far!

Lesson: God is the sovereign Ruler of the universe and has the whole world in His hands.