

*Is. 1:2 Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the Lord speaks, "Sons I have reared and brought up, But they have revolted against Me.*

The *heavens* and *earth* are called by God as witnesses against His people. The *heavens* and *earth* had served the same purpose earlier in the life of the nation when God had promised *blessing* for obedience *the curse* for disobedience (Deuteronomy 30:19). In verses 24-31 of this chapter, God will judge His people for their disobedience; so these witnesses (the *heavens* and *earth*) will serve their purpose when He does so. Israel, His *Sons*, had *revolted* (rebelled) *against* Him even though He had promoted and exalted them ("*reared*" means to "magnify, to promote" and "*brought up*" means "to be exalted"). Exodus 4:22-23 confirms that Israel was a nation that God viewed as His *son*; in fact, *Israel* was His *first-born*. Israel, therefore, will not only receive a *double* blessing (during the Millennium), but a *double* cursing as well (Isaiah 40:2; Jeremiah 16:18; 17:18—during all the years of her disobedience), the first-born receiving a *double* portion of everything. It is for this reason that they are called *sons of...God* (Deuteronomy 14:1). Ezekiel, much later in the nation's history, describes the general state of the Jews during this span of time while confirming that God's grace and mercy will be poured out upon them in the end (Ezekiel 16:1-29, 60-63).

*Is. 1:3 "An ox knows its owner, And a donkey its master's manger, But Israel does not know, My people do not understand."*

God contrasts Israel's lack of wisdom with that of dumb animals—the *ox* and the *donkey*. The dumb *ox* and *donkey* were wiser than *Israel* at this time, for they knew at least who their master was. Not so with Israel.

*Is. 1:4 ¶ 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.*

God lists the characteristics of the nation in Isaiah's day:

1. They were *sinful* to the core.
2. Their sin served as a weight, a burden—(read Psalm 38:4).
3. They were *Offspring of evildoers*—good for nothing.
4. They were corrupt sons—corrupt meaning evil.
5. They had *abandoned* (forsaken) *the Lord*—even closing the doors of the temple during Ahaz's reign (2Chronicles 28:24).
6. They *despised* (scorned and blasphemed) Jehovah, who is *the Holy One of Israel*; 7-they had *turned away from Him* (become foreigners; committed adultery).

Even though the people were not treating Jehovah as holy at this time, He will reveal Himself as such to Isaiah in Isaiah 6.

*Is. 1:5 ¶ Where will you be stricken again, As you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick, And the whole heart is faint.*

God is asking His people to consider the cost of their sin. Follow this theme as we continue in these verses.

*Is. 1:6 From the sole of the foot even to the head There is nothing sound in it, Only bruises, welts, and raw wounds, Not pressed out or bandaged, Nor softened with oil.*

Based on what verse 4 states concerning the condition of the nation, they were sick from *head to foot*.

*Is. 1:7 ¶ Your land is desolate, Your cities are burned with fire, Your fields-- strangers are devouring them in your presence; It is desolation, as overthrown by strangers.*

This verse makes reference to Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (2 Kings 18-19; 2 Chronicles 32) when he destroyed forty-six of Judah's fortified *cities* and carried thousands of Jews into captivity.

*Is. 1:8 And the daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, Like a watchman's hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city.*

Note that in Isaiah's day Jerusalem was left like a *hut* or booth. Jerusalem, as well as the throne of David (on which all the kings of Judah sat), had lost much of its glamour since the days of Solomon (1Kings 10:26-27). Obviously, there is a price to be paid for sin!

We will find that after Jerusalem survived Sennacherib's invasion that the Jews viewed Jerusalem was invincible—that no nation or kingdom could overthrow her. The last king of Judah, Zedekiah, believed this and paid an awful price for his foolishness. Even though the prophet Jeremiah warned him concerning his error, he paid the ultimate price when the Babylonians burned *Jerusalem* and *the temple* to the ground and led *King Zedekiah* and the southern kingdom *into captivity* (2Kings 25).

Lord, may we never incorrectly assume that the manner in which You handle a situation today will be the way You handle it tomorrow, especially if we are walking in sin.

*Is. 1:9 Unless the Lord of hosts Had left us a few survivors, We would be like Sodom, We would be like Gomorrah.*

The only thing that kept the land from becoming *like Sodom* and *Gomorrah* was the believing remnant of the Jews (the *survivors*) within the land. There was no one who survived the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. This passage, along with passages such as Isaiah 65:8, Amos 4:11, and Romans 9:27-29, confirms that it is the believing remnant of Jews within the nation that allows God to spare the nation. In other words, when you study Israel's history, and observe all the times she has been persecuted and victimized due to sin, it is only the remnant of believers that explains why she exists today.

*Is. 1:10 ¶ Hear the word of the Lord, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah.*

God encourages the leaders to consider the condition of their devotion. They thought they were committed to the Lord due to their outward observance of the sacrificial system. However, God desired that He be worshipped with their heart. He even associates them with *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* (also read Isaiah 3:9).

In verses 10-15, God refutes Israel's erroneous mindset that her many sacrifices made her right with God.

*Is. 1:11 "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says the Lord. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, And the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats.*

God took *no pleasure* in their *multiplied sacrifices* offered with an impure heart. Also read Psalm 50:8-15, Jeremiah 6:20-21, Hosea 6:6, Amos 5:21-24, and Micah 1:10.