

*Is. 1:12 "When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts?"*

God views their traveling to the annual feasts in Jerusalem as nothing more than a *trampling of His courts*.

*Is. 1:13 "Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly."*

God calls their *offerings worthless* and desires that they offer no more.

*Is. 1:14 "I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me. I am weary of bearing them."*

The manner in which the nation observed the *festivals* and *feasts* on the Jewish calendar had become a burden to the Lord. Leviticus 23 lists seven holy seasons (events) that God ordained for His people to observe: Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Pentecost, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles. The observance of these feasts possessed no spiritual significance for the participant unless they were observed with a humble and repentant heart.

Note: It is interesting that the seven holy seasons (feasts) give us the chronology of the major events from the cross to the Messianic Kingdom—Passover (Jesus death—1Corinthians 5:7); Unleavened Bread (Jesus was the sinless sacrifice—2Corinthians 5:21); First Fruits (Jesus was the *first* to experience a bodily resurrection—1Corinthians 15:20); Pentecost (the church was born on *Pentecost* in Acts 2); Trumpets (the Rapture of the church—1Thessalonians 4:16); Day of Atonement (a day of national repentance for the Jews according to Leviticus 23:27, thus pointing to the Tribulation, the purpose of which is to bring the Jewish nation to repentance); Tabernacles (a day in which *branches* were to be waved and huts (*booths*) were to be built according to Leviticus 23:39-43, pointing to that time when the Jews would live in the Messianic Kingdom—confirmed by Peter in Matthew 17:1-4 as well as the masses in Matthew 21:1-9).

*Is. 1:15 "So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you, Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood."*

As a result of their sin, and their *hands* being *covered with blood*, God would *hide* His eyes and refuse to *listen* to their *prayers*. The redeemed are to lift up *holy hands* to the Lord (1Timothy 2:8); *hands* which are *clean* (Psalm 24:4).

These passages confirm that sacrifices alone do not please God, for He desired that the sacrifices be coupled with faith. In fact, the sacrifices brought about atonement for sin only in those cases where faith was present. God has always required *faith* to accompany worship (Hebrews 11:6).

Keep in mind that the Old Testament sacrifices only covered sin, never removing it (Hebrews 10:4 and 11). It took Jesus' blood to remove the Old Testament believers' sins, for His blood was shed *for sins for all time* (Hebrews 10:12). Therefore, Old Testament believers' souls and spirits went to *Abraham's bosom* (or Paradise) at the point of physical death (Luke 16:19-31) and remained there until Christ's ascension, at which time they were taken to heaven. The church, on the other hand, was birthed in Acts 2. Since that time the believer's soul and spirit have automatically been taken to heaven at the point of physical death (2Corinthians 5:8). Why? The cross of Christ was an event that took place in the past. We can conclude, therefore, that Old Testament believers were declared righteous through faith because the cross was yet future, while church saints are made righteous through faith because the cross occurred in the past.

*Is. 1:16 ¶ "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil,*

God desired that His people *make* themselves *clean* by offering to Him a heart of repentance and faith. Once repentance and faith are activated by the believer, God's grace is supplied and a change of behavior results. Those addressed by Isaiah were to see to it that their conduct was free of anything that could be characterized as *evil*. This verse does not teach that good *works* result in salvation (read Titus 3:5; Romans 3:20).

*Is. 1:17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless; Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.*

Isaiah encourages the Jews to *Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless; Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow*. A person who walks by faith, led by the Spirit of God, will find his lifestyle lining up with what is described here (read Micah 6:6-8).

Obviously, verses 16 and 17 portray the character of those who live by faith. Such individuals could offer the animal sacrifices in faith, realizing that they only covered (and never removed) sin. They could also understand that the sacrifices served as a picture of what the *seed* of Genesis 3:15, who is *Christ* (Galatians 3:16), would later accomplish on the cross.

*Is. 1:18 ¶ "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.*

God desires that He and the nation might *reason together* so her *sins* might be dealt with through repentance and faith. If the Hebrew people would but stop and consider (*reason* through) the cost of their sinful lifestyle, it was a no-brainer for them to repent and obey.

This verse does not teach that the nation's sins would have been forgiven had she repented. They certainly would have been covered (atoned for), but they would not have been forgiven until the cross. Only through the death of God's flawless Son could forgiveness occur (Romans 3:25-26; Hebrews 10:4, 11, and 12).

*Is. 1:19 "If you consent and obey, You will eat the best of the land;*

This verse describes what will happen if the nation repents and walks in faith. Israel has always eaten *the best of the land* when she has obeyed (Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

*Is. 1:20 "But if you refuse and rebel, You will be devoured by the sword." Truly, the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*

When the nation refuses to obey, she is *devoured by the sword* (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). This literally came to fruition in 2Kings 25 when *Nebuchadnezzar* of *Babylon* took the southern kingdom of *Judah* into captivity.

*Is. 1:21 ¶ How the faithful city has become a harlot, She who was full of justice! Righteousness once lodged in her, But now murderers.*

God's offer recorded in verses 18-20 was rejected, so judgment is pronounced upon the people (vv. 21-23). Here we see that God's wife, the nation of Israel, had *become a harlot* through worshipping foreign deities (Jeremiah 2:20 fits well here). The book of Hosea, where the prophet

was instructed to marry a *harlot*, validates that the worship of a manmade god, an idol, is the sin of *harlotry*.

*Is. 1:22 Your silver has become dross, Your drink diluted with water.*

Israel's compromise and disobedience has caused her to become polluted.

*Is. 1:23 Your rulers are rebels, And companions of thieves; Everyone loves a bribe, And chases after rewards. They do not defend the orphan, Nor does the widow's plea come before them.*

When sin runs rampant, *rulers* become *rebels* and, therefore, ineffective, bringing anarchy to the land. Isaiah will describe this in more detail in Isaiah 3. Notice how many times the Scriptures warn against the mistreatment of orphans and widows. It is often, for such things carry huge consequences.

*Is. 1:24 ¶ Therefore the Lord God of hosts, The Mighty One of Israel declares, "Ah, I will be relieved of My adversaries, And avenge Myself on My foes.*

Things are in such disarray that God must bring judgment before the Jews can experience healing. Their leaders, who are addressed here as God's *adversaries* and *foes* (for leading the people into corruption), will be removed and destroyed. Verses such as this explain why the judgments of the Tribulation are necessary for the nation to come to repentance.

*Is. 1:25 "I will also turn My hand against you, And will smelt away your dross as with lye, And will remove all your alloy.*

God's judgment will cleanse Israel (also read Ezekiel 22:17-22).

*Is. 1:26 "Then I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning; After that you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful city."*

After the Tribulation, God will *restore* the type of *judges* and *counselors* (leaders) that led Israel in the day of blessing. As a result, Millennial Jerusalem will be called "*the city of righteousness, A faithful city.*" In fact, the resurrected *David*, a righteous leader, will be second in line under Jesus during the Millennium (Hosea 3:4-5; Jeremiah 30:8-9). It is amazing how a nation takes on

the personality and mindset of its leadership. There is no better example than in 1Samuel 17, where Israel had taken on the mindset of *Saul*, who was weak and unfaithful to the core.

*Is. 1:27 ¶ Zion will be redeemed with justice, And her repentant ones with righteousness.*

“*Redeemed*” means to “be bought with a price.” Jesus would pay this price through the *justice* of the cross as well as His own personal *righteousness*. It is through His *righteousness* that the people of faith obtain righteousness (2Corinthians 5:21). Isaiah deals with this in much depth in Isaiah 53, so those verses and notes would add much flavor here if time permits.

*Is. 1:28 But transgressors and sinners will be crushed together, And those who forsake the Lord shall come to an end.*

The wicked will be destroyed.

*Is. 1:29 Surely, you will be ashamed of the oaks which you have desired, And you will be embarrassed at the gardens which you have chosen.*

The people will be *ashamed* and *embarrassed* when they repent of their idolatry (this will occur to the greatest degree among the Jews at the end of the Tribulation). The redeemed are always *ashamed* and *embarrassed* over how they have lived as unbelievers (also read Romans 6:21).

*Is. 1:30 For you will be like an oak whose leaf fades away, Or as a garden that has no water.*

As the *leaf* of the *oak* tree eventually *fades*, as well as the *garden* which *has no water*, the people will become weak as a result of worshipping that which is incapable of supplying strength.

*Is. 1:31 And the strong man will become tinder, His work also a spark. Thus they shall both burn together, And there will be none to quench them.*

This verse speaks of the removal of the idols along with those who fashioned them. They will both *burn together*, nothing being capable of quenching the fire. Isaiah will deal with this in much detail beginning with Isaiah 40.