

Gleanings of Grace

Isaiah 1

Lesson 28

Isaiah prophesied during the reign of four kings of Israel. His message was primarily one of denouncing the personal sins of the people, moving towards exposing the sins of the nation. In the final third of the book, beginning with Isaiah 40, Isaiah pronounces comfort to those who received his earlier denouncements and repented. Thus we find in Isaiah both warnings and comfort for the people of Israel and for God's people today. In Isaiah 1, God states His case and offers a cure. May we find ourselves rejoicing in the fact that God has a cure for our failures.

OBSERVATION: Isaiah 1

1. Read Isaiah 1 using the Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework). After reading through the chapter, what would you say to someone if they asked you what it is about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. The key word for this chapter is *God*. Mark the key word each time it is used, along with any personal pronouns / titles that refer to *God*.
Key Word: *God*
3. The contrasting word *but* is used four times in Isaiah 1. Mark the word. Choose one instance of its use and record what is being contrasted.
4. The term of conclusion *therefore* is used in verse 24. Mark the word. Record the conclusion and what it was based upon.
5. Scan through the chapter and list the names God chose to identify Himself.

Background:

1. We find the greatest calling on Isaiah's life in Isaiah 6, *in the year that King Uzziah died*. Using Isaiah 6:1-4, describe what Isaiah saw.
 - a. What was Isaiah's reaction? verse 5.
 - 1.) Why is the response to an understanding of God's *holiness* an awareness of our own failures?
 - a.) How have you experienced an understanding of your sinfulness as a good thing?
2. What was God's response to Isaiah's confession? verses 6,7
 - a. Write the glorious discovery David made about *confession* in Psalm 32:5.
 - b. John wrote of the same sure promise in 1 John 1:9. What did he write?
 - c. What are your thoughts as you ponder the awesome fact that we can count on God to *cleanse us from all sin*?
 - 1.) Describe your understanding of what God does when He *cleanses us from our sin*.
3. Describe the conversation Isaiah had with the LORD, after he was *cleansed*. Isaiah 6:8
 - a. Why do you think it was necessary that Isaiah understand his frailties and failures and that he confess them before God called Him?

Read Isaiah 1:1-9

1. It is believed that the prophecy of this chapter took place in the time of Ahaz, king of Judah. Ahaz was an evil king and many of his subjects adopted his evil ways. What statement did the LORD make to the people through Isaiah in verse 2?

2. Note and circle the two-word phrases in verse 2: *I have* and *they have*. Consider your own life in a time (or even a moment) of rebellion. How would you complete the sentences:

I have (referring to the LORD):

You have (referring to you):

3. In what way might Isaiah 1:2 be an encouragement to parents who feel they have failed because they have *rebellious* children?

4. Ponder the words of Isaiah 1:3. What was the LORD saying about His *people*?

- a. The word *consider*, as it is used in this verse, means to understand. What are some attributes that you think are important to God for you to *consider* about Him?

5. Scan the sins mentioned in verse 4 and list them.

6. Notice God's question in verse 5. How does this reveal His heart of compassion to you?

7. We see the effects of their rebellion in verses 5-8. The people had been besieged many times by their enemy and left the worse for it. Yet, they were not learning their lesson. Parallel this to the consequences of rebellion today by writing or summarizing these verses (5-8) in modern vernacular.

8. As bad as their condition was because of their sin, Isaiah reminds them in verse 9 that it could have been a lot worse. God had not totally destroyed them. He had left a remnant to carry on. That is evidence of God's mercy, not giving them what they deserved. Read the words of Psalm 130:7. What comfort have you found in *hoping in God's mercy* in times when you felt you were doomed to destruction or devastation?

Read Isaiah 1:10-17

1. As God associated the rulers of Judah with the two cities synonymous with sin and judgment (Sodom and Gomorrah), He addressed His viewpoint of their religious ceremonies. In spite of their sins, in addition to offering *sacrifices*, they continued to celebrate *New Moons*, *Sabbaths*, and *assembling* together as God's people (verses 11,13). Scan through verses 11-14 and record some of the words or phrases used to describe God's disgust.

a. Why do you think God took no pleasure in *sacrifices* and *feasts* that He had instituted?

1.) While in sin, what attempts to be godly might a believer participate in?

2. According to Isaiah 1:15, what did God say He would do?

a. Record the words from the following verses that confirm God's words in Isaiah 1:15:

Psalm 66:18

Isaiah 59:2

1.) Do you think these verses apply to the believer today? Why or why not?

b. '*When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,*' says the LORD Almighty (Zechariah 7:13 NIV). Record the words of this verse from the New King James Version, underlining the phrase *just as He proclaimed*.

1.) God executes both judgment and grace *just as He proclaimed*. What are your thoughts about this certainty?

3. Using Isaiah 1:16-17, list the good works that the LORD expressed were important to Him.

a. Notice the bulk of these good works related to their treatment of others. In what ways does this personally challenge you?

Read Isaiah 1:18-20

1. Considering the disgust God feels for the commission of sin, we are not doomed to the rejections of Isaiah 1:15. Rather, God has provided a remedy. He begins this section not with words of rejection, such as “go away”, but with two words of invitation. What are they?
 - a. What thoughts flood your mind when you consider that, even in your sin, the God of the universe calls you to *come* to Him?

2. What does He call us to do?
 - a. What do you think God is calling you to do when He invites you to *reason* with Him?

3. What promise follows His invitation to *come* and *reason*?
 - a. Though our *sins be as scarlet*, God will meet us as we are. Celebrate as you write the promises of:
Isaiah 44:22

Psalm 51:17

Micah 7:18
 - 1.) What are your thoughts as you reflect upon the darkness of your sins and God’s guarantee to make them as *white as snow*?

4. Isaiah 1:19,20 follow with conditional promises. What are they?
 - a. How would you explain these promises as they apply today?

Read Isaiah 1:21-31

1. In the final eleven verses of Isaiah 1, the LORD addresses the leaders of the people as His adversaries. They would have claimed to be His representatives. Scan the verses and record the charges that had occurred in Jerusalem.
 - a. In what ways might this apply to our nation today?
2. Although these verses are much about necessary judgment, with the promise of judgment, God always presents His ultimate plan for His people. What does He declare in verse 26?
3. What are your thoughts when you bask in the fact that God's desire is always to restore and forgive?

REVIEW: Isaiah 1

1. What have you learned about the heart of God as revealed in Isaiah 1?
2. How should you view your sin?
3. In what ways have you been challenged to accept God's determinations above your own by allowing Him to *reason* with you?

*to the praise of the glory of His grace,
by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.
In Him we have redemption through His blood,
the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace
which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,
- Ephesians 1:6-8*

Observation Worksheet

Isaiah 1

¹ The 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. ² Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me; ³ the ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider." ⁴ Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked to anger The Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward. ⁵ Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. ⁶ From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment. ⁷ Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; strangers devour your land in your presence; and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. ⁸ So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, as a hut in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. ⁹ Unless the LORD of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Gomorrah. ¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah: ¹¹ "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. ¹² "When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? ¹³ Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. ¹⁴ Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵ When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. ¹⁶ "Wash yourselves, make yourselves

clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil,¹⁷ learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.¹⁸ "Come now, and 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 be as wool."¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;²⁰ but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword"; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.²¹ How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers.²² Your silver has become dross, your wine mixed with water.²³ Your princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; everyone loves bribes, and follows after rewards. They do not defend the fatherless, nor does the cause of the widow come before them.²⁴ Therefore the Lord says, the LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, "Ah, I will rid Myself of My adversaries, and take vengeance on My enemies.²⁵ I will turn My hand against you, and thoroughly purge away your dross, and take away all your alloy.²⁶ 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."²⁷ Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her penitents with righteousness.²⁸ The destruction of transgressors and of sinners shall be together, and those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed.²⁹ For they shall be ashamed of the terebinth trees which you have desired; and you shall be embarrassed because of the gardens which you have chosen.³⁰ For you shall be as a terebinth whose leaf fades, and as a garden that has no water.³¹ The strong shall be as tinder, and the work of it as a spark; both will burn together, and no one shall quench them.