

## Isaiah 1B

- Last week we saw two of Isaiah's major themes on display
  - First the theme of Israel's sin
    - Their idolatry, their rejection of the Lord, their rebellion
  - And Isaiah began to allude to another favorite theme
    - The inevitability of God's judgment for sin
  - Tonight we are going to see Isaiah continue to advance those two themes
    - But we are also going to see Isaiah introduce his two remaining themes
      - God's sovereignty
      - And the coming salvation and redemption for Israel
  - Remembering that chapter 1 is a mini summary of the book and that chapters 1-5 are a more complete summary, we're going to press quite a way tonight
    - Including a fascinating and tantalizing look into the future with a detailed description of the Millennial Kingdom
- To start, let's pick up where we were last time, at the conclusion of God's great indictment of Israel, in keeping with the covenant they entered at Sinai
  - God called heavens and earth to witness against Israel that they had failed to keep the covenant
    - Worse, God compared them to Sodom and Gomorrah
    - They offered a false form of ritualistic worship rather than true religion, as James calls it
      - True worship born out of a faithful and grateful heart
  - So Isaiah moved to the theme of judgment declaring that God despised their worship and hid Himself from their prayers

- The hands they lifted up to God in prayer were covered in blood (unclean)
  - God then extends a call to be true in verse 16
    - Repentance, faith, righteous living, justice, mercy
- Now we start the next section of Isaiah's mini overview, in verses 18-20

[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.

[Is. 1:19](#) " If you consent and obey,  
 You will eat the best of the land;

[Is. 1:20](#) "But if you refuse and rebel,  
 You will be devoured by the sword."  
 Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

- We remember that the form of this opening chapter is that of an indictment, charges against the accused
  - Here we see God calling the accused to work with the judge to arrive at a better outcome than judgment
    - In Hebrew the opening phrase in verse 18 is let us judge or adjudicate together
  - Using the image of red turning to white, God says your sins can be forgiven
    - Verse 19 gives the condition
    - If you consent or (abah) are willing
    - And if you obey (shama) hear (1000 times in the OT and the vast majority of the times it is translated hear in the sense of heed)
  - God offers to excuse their sin if they are willing to hear or heed
    - If they do, they will eat the best of the land

- If they don't, they are will be rebels and will be devoured by sword
  - God calls them to hear and heed. Hear and heed what? Isaiah hasn't explained that yet
    - At first glance, you might think it's a call to obey the Covenant,
      - But we know from New Testament scripture that they couldn't hope to keep that Covenant perfectly
      - And furthermore, the Old Covenant wasn't given to produce righteousness
    - So it must be some other call to hear that Isaiah is referencing
  - This gives us a good chance to see the circular manner of teaching at work
    - We will eventually get the answer to this question and others, but we wait until Isaiah's next iteration on this point of redemption
    - For now, Isaiah just introduces the idea of a way for redemption
- OK, so far we have a theme of man's sin, God's judgment and redemption
  - Now Isaiah brings these three together with the fourth theme, God's sovereignty
    - And he weaves them together in a nice little chiasm
    - In and out structure...vs. 21-26

[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.

[Is. 1:22](#) Your silver has become dross,  
 Your drink diluted with water.

[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.

- Isaiah returns to his theme of sin in Israel
  - The city was once faithful and full of justice is now a harlot
    - In Scripture, God frequently using the comparison of an adulterous relationship with a prostitute to describe Israel's willingness to worship idols
  - Once they were righteous and now they are murderers
    - Their good things, like silver and fine drinks (alcoholic) have become the opposite (dross and watered down)
  - Finally, they are rotten from the head down
    - Their leaders are the chief rebels, companions of thieves
    - Everyone loves a bribe and chases after rewards
      - Good example of Isaiah's play on words (Fruchtenbaum's quote)
  - Finally another reference to formalistic, false religion
    - Failing to defend and protect the orphans and widow
      - Because they can't pay a bribe or make it worthwhile for the religious leader
- So look at the descent
  - A righteous city → a people polluted with sin → a corrupt leadership
  - Then the accent

[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.

[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.

[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."

- Isaiah reverses the order in declaring the judgment and redemption themes
  - Punish the corrupt leaders → remove the polluted sins of the people → Then restore the city to righteousness
- Who initiates this turn around?
  - The Lord (His sovereignty)
- When is this time?
  - Not defined yet, but it's clearly future to Isaiah's day
    - And as we'll soon see it's future to us as well
- Also notice that God's plan of redemption for Israel is intimately connected to the fate of His city
  - Jerusalem is not just another city
  - It is the city of God and remains that way eternally
- Notice that His city will have judges again
  - These are not judges in courts but judges like the judges in the time of judges
  - Who will these judges be?

[1Cor. 6:2](#) Or do you not know that the saints will **judge** the world? If the world is **judged** by you, are you not competent *to constitute* the smallest law courts?

- Isaiah continues to juxtapose the two themes of judgment and redemption
  - But he begins to make numerous references to a future day
    - Building exchatology

[Is. 1:27](#) ¶ Zion will be redeemed with justice  
And her repentant ones with righteousness.

[Is. 1:28](#) But transgressors and sinners will be crushed together,  
And those who forsake the LORD will come to an end.

[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.

[Is. 1:30](#) For you will be like an oak whose leaf fades away  
Or as a garden that has no water.

[Is. 1:31](#) 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*.

- Zion will be redeemed
  - The word literally means a price paid to redeem
    - But no details on what the price is or who pays it
  - Repentant ones will be with righteousness
  - In contrast, the sinners will be crushed together
    - Coming to an “end”
    - So Isaiah sets a stark choice of following God into righteousness
    - Or rebelling and coming to an end of sorts
  - They will look back with embarrassment at their idols (oaks) and their places of sin (gardens)
    - These idols will wither and die and these sinful pursuits will dry up
  - Look at verse 31
    - The strong man will become tinder
    - His work is the spark for the flame
    - They shall burn together
      - The strong man and his work
      - Nothing will quench them

[Rev. 20:10](#) And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

[Rev. 21:7](#) “He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

[Rev. 21:8](#) “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

- So in Chap 1, Isaiah has already raised issues of Israel’s sin, their unfaithfulness to the Covenant and to their God
  - God’s justice to bring judgment against them
  - His promise to bring a full pardon and redemption for some but not all along with a complete restoration of the nation (i.e., not all redeemed, but all sinners gone)
  - Finally, the process will be by God’s sovereign authority
    - That’s our mini overview

[Is. 2:1](#) ¶ The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

[Is. 2:2](#) ¶ Now it will come about that

In the last days

The mountain of the house of the LORD

Will be established as the chief of the mountains,

And will be raised above the hills;

And all the nations will stream to it.

[Is. 2:3](#) And many peoples will come and say,

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,

To the house of the God of Jacob;

That He may teach us concerning His ways

And that we may walk in His paths.”

For the law will go forth from Zion

And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

[Is. 2:4](#) And He will judge between the nations,

And will render decisions for many peoples;

And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not lift up sword against nation,

And never again will they learn war.

- Isaiah’s opening description here of the last days is so iconic, that one of Isaiah’s contemporaries, Micah, quotes these verses word for word.

- Perhaps God gave Micah the very same words, but if so then it only underscores how important it is to God that Israel and we understand and look forward to this day
- In the last days
  - This phrase it used a multiple places in both the OT and NT and it begs more question than it answers at least until we study it
    - From a prophet's perspective, the last days was a future day when God's work among and for men culminates according to His plan
    - In Hebrew culture, history is simply a matter of days
    - In fact, the name of the book Chronicles literally means "the words of the days"
  - The more interesting part of that phrase, of course, is the word last
    - Last in terms of what?
    - For example, elsewhere God uses the term eternity or forever to describe certain events or situations
    - We will dwell with God forever according to Revelation
  - So last days must refer to a period of time that has an end, which then leads to some new state that has no end
    - Or there could be a chain of beginnings and ends leading ultimately to an eternal state
- From the OT perspective, the last days was the final state of the world we have and know today
  - The NT confirms this view but extends by giving us greater understanding of how these last days play out
  - And then it explains what follows the last days in the new heavens and earth, something the OT prophets were never shown
- Isaiah begins describing a mountain of the house of the Lord that will become the chief mountain of the world

- And the Gentile people of the world will stream to it
  - The picture is rivers of people coming to honor God in His house which sits on top of a mountain higher than any other
  - The reference to height could be literal or it could be a metaphor for importance or honor
    - The most important place on earth
- The description here is of the kingdom the Lord establishes upon His return
  - We learn this most clearly later through later prophets

[Zech. 14:6](#) ¶ In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle.

[Zech. 14:7](#) For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.

[Zech. 14:8](#) ¶ And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter.

[Zech. 14:9](#) ¶ And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be *the only* one, and His name *the only* one.

[Zech. 14:10](#) ¶ All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses.

[Zech. 14:11](#) People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security.

- So the rest of the world is made virtually flat so that the mountain in Israel is visible from everywhere in Israel
  - This comes in the day with the Lord is king over all the earth
  - In that day He is the only one and His name the only one (not yet)
- Ezek 40-48 give a detailed description of this mountain and what's on top of it
  - The fourth Temple