

TEXT

Isaiah 1:10–20 (ESV)

10 Hear the word of Yahweh,
you rulers of **Sodom**¹!

Give ear to the **teaching**² of our God,
you people of Gomorrah!

11 “What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?
says Yahweh;

I have had enough³ of burnt offerings of rams
and the fat of well-fed beasts;

I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
or of lambs, or of goats.

12 “When you come to **appear before me**⁴,
who has required of you
this **trampling**⁵ of my courts?

13 Bring no more vain offerings;
incense is an abomination⁶ to me.

New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly⁷.

14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts
my soul hates;

they have become a burden to me;
I am weary of bearing them.

15 When you **spread out your hands**⁸,

I will hide my eyes from you;

even though you make many prayers,

I will not listen;

your hands are full of blood.

16 Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;

remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes;

cease to do evil,

17 learn to do good;

seek justice,

correct oppression⁹;

bring justice¹⁰ to the fatherless,

plead the widow’s cause.

18 “Come now, let us reason together, says Yahweh:

though your sins are like scarlet,

they shall be as white as snow;

though they are red like crimson,

they shall become like 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 eaten by the sword;

for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

CONTEXT

Introduction (1:1-5:30)

Israel’s present condition summed up (1:2-31)

One nation under judgment of God (1:2-9)

With religious hypocrisy (1:10-20)

Oppression and injustice for all (1:21-31)

Contrasting Israel Present vs. Israel Future (2:1-4:6)

A Harvest of Wild Grapes (5:1-30)

Isaiah’s Call (6:1-13)

¹ The analogy of v.9 becomes a direct address

² Lit. “law”, or “rebuke”

³ Lit. “I am full” NET: “They have piled food on his table that he doesn’t want.”

⁴ Or “enter my presence”

⁵ By both people and animals

⁶ an object which is loathsome and abhorrent, detestable

⁷ Lit. “sin and assembly” – i.e. wickedness with religious duty

⁸ As in prayer

⁹ Could either mean “rebuke the oppressor” or “give happiness to the oppressed”

¹⁰ Or “judge”, “defend”

INTRODUCTION

A new section begins in verse 10 and appears to be a new oracle. It is linked to verse 9 by the common reference of Sodom and Gomorrah. However, the focus has shifted, and we are no longer looking at the result of God's judgment but the attitudes and actions that led to it in the first place. While vv2-9 very clearly appear to be situated at the height of Sennacharib's invasion in 701BC, the timing of this section up until the end of chapter 5 seems very different.

There are several indications that the setting for these chapters is during the reign of King Uzziah and prior to Isaiah's commission in chapter 6¹¹. Consider the description of Uzziah's reign in 2 Chronicles 26. Of note:

- The assumption of _____ without apparent impending _____.
- _____ (2:7)
- _____ power
- _____ program
- Possible _____ reference in 5:25
- Other factors:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

This section makes it clear that the remedy to Judah's guilt will not be found in the _____, but only in _____ and _____.

- Jeremiah 7:2-11
- Malachi 3:1-4
- Psalm 51:16-19

V10-15 WICKEDNESS WITH RELIGIOUS DUTY

"Hear the word of Yahweh, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says Yahweh; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood."

V.11-15 are a sustained tirade against _____ while maintaining a lifestyle of _____ and _____.

¹¹ Milgrom, Jacob. "Did Isaiah Prophecy during the Reign of Uzziah?" *Vetus Testamentum* 14, no. 2 (1964): 164-82. Accessed March 8, 2020. doi:10.2307/1516379.

The Lord is “not pleased” (heb. *hā·pēš*) by the blood of bulls, or lambs, or goats. Where does Isaiah describe a sacrifice that did please him?

Some have tried to argue based on these and similar verses that the prophets were opposed to the cultic rituals prescribed in the Pentateuch and that they advocated a religion of the heart instead. Does this sound correct to you? What evidence in the Old Testament would you use support or contradict this?

How can we fall into the same patterns of sin described here? What’s so dangerous about this particular sin?

Are there prayers that God refuses to hear?

“The law was given so that those who were already the Lord’s people by redemption might know how to behave in ways acceptable to him who redeemed them. The cultus was given so that those who were committed to the life of obedience might remain in the Lord’s presence notwithstanding their failures and have recourse to mercy and forgiveness for their lapses from obedience.” – Moyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah

V16-17 THE CALL TO REPENTANCE

“Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.”

How are the people to “wash” and make themselves clean?

What does repentance look like for Israel? The pattern of repentance:

- _____
- _____
- _____

“Repentance is a pilgrimage from the mind of the flesh to the mind of Christ.” – Chamberlain, The Meaning of Repentance

The two things that consistently drive coming judgment in the OT - _____ and _____

V18-20 CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS

““Come now, let us reason together, says Yahweh: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.””

The Lord presents them with two options (cf. Matt. 7:24-27):

Option 1: _____ Promise: _____

Option 2: _____ Promise: _____

HOMEWORK FOR NEXT LESSON

Read the following passages:

- Samuel’s description of what life will be like under a king:
 - 1 Samuel 8:10-18
- God’s commands regarding the widows and fatherless:
 - Exodus 22:21-24
 - Deut. 10:17-20
 - Deut. 24:17-22
- God’s description of where Israel’s tithe money was to be spent:
 - Deut. 14:28-29
 - Deut. 16:11
 - Deut. 26:12-13
- Judgment:
 - Deut. 27:19
 - Lam. 5:3
- Ruth 1-4

Consider:

- What 3 words are a repeated refrain in the 1 Samuel passage?
- What is God’s heart for the widows and orphans, and what is in store for those who abuse them?
- How does Ruth demonstrate faithfulness to God’s intentions as well as present an anti-pattern of life in much of Israel?