

TEXT

Isaiah 1:2–9 (ESV) ¹

2 Hear, **O heavens, and give ear, O earth**²;

for Yahweh has spoken:

“**Children** have I reared and **brought**³ up,
but **they**⁴ have rebelled against me.

3 The ox knows its owner,
and the donkey its master’s **crib**⁵,
but Israel does not know,
my people do not understand.”

4 Ah⁶, **sinful nation**,
a **people** laden with iniquity,
offspring of evildoers,
children who deal corruptly!

They have forsaken Yahweh,
they have despised the Holy One of Israel,
they are utterly **estranged**⁷.

5 Why will you still be struck down?
Why will you continue to rebel?
The whole head is sick,
and the whole heart faint.

6 From the sole of the foot even to the head,
there is no soundness in it,
but bruises and sores
and raw wounds;
they are not pressed out or bound up
or softened with oil.

7 Your country lies desolate;
your cities are burned with fire;
in your very presence
foreigners devour your **land**⁸;
it is desolate, as **overthrown**⁹ by foreigners.

8 And the daughter of Zion is left
like a booth in a vineyard,
like a lodge in a cucumber field,
like a besieged city.

9 If Yahweh Almighty
had not left us a few survivors,
we should have been like Sodom,
and become like Gomorrah.

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 In verses 2-3 God is speaking, and in 4-9 Isaiah is amplifying

² Calling heaven and earth to witness. They were the primary witnesses called during the giving of the law.

³ “Exalted” (cf. 52:13) – Israel’s guilt is amplified by her privilege.

⁴ Emphatic they – “they – even they!”

⁵ “crib” – feeding trough

⁶ Literally, “woe” – a funeral lament, “Alas!”

⁷ Literally, “they have be-stranged themselves backwards”

⁸ Specifically, farmland – “they eat up your crops”

⁹ Every other use of this word in the OT is connected with Sodom and Gomorrah (cf. v9-10)

DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

Isaiah 1 is an introduction to the introduction, and in many ways serves as a preview or introduction of the whole book. Many of the themes touched on in this chapter will be picked up and expanded throughout the rest of the book.

- (a) The _____ of Judah and Jerusalem (vv.3-8)
- (b) Appeals for _____ (vv16-19)
- (c) The coming of _____ (vv. 24, 25, 29-31)
- (d) The blessings of _____ to come (vv. 26-27)¹⁰

V.2-3 THE COURTROOM SCENE

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Yahweh has spoken: “Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master’s crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.”

YHWH’s charge against his people is that they have _____ his _____.

- **Deuteronomy 4:25–31**
- **Deuteronomy 30:15–20**
- **Deuteronomy 31:26–29**

V.4 THE FUNERAL LAMENT

Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken Yahweh, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.

In this verse, Isaiah uses four words describing Israel’s privilege contrasted with four words for sin:

Privilege	Sin

¹⁰ Green Book Bible Study Series, Isaiah Vol. I, 72

V.5-6 BRUISED AND BATTERED

Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds; they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil.

- Psalm 38

V. 7-9 THE BESIEGED CITY

Your country lies desolate; your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence foreigners devour your land; it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners. And the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. If the LORD of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we should have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah.



“A nation that you have not known shall eat up the fruit of your ground and of all your labors, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually,”
(Deuteronomy 28:33, ESV)

“It shall eat the offspring of your cattle and the fruit of your ground, until you are destroyed; it also shall not leave you grain, wine, or oil, the increase of your herds or the young of your flock, until they have caused you to perish. “They shall besiege you in all your towns, until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout all your land. And they shall besiege you in all your towns throughout all your land, which the LORD your God has given you.”
(Deuteronomy 28:51–52, ESV)

“Whereas you were as numerous as the stars of heaven, you shall be left few in number, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God.”
(Deuteronomy 28:62, ESV)

PARALLELS WITH DEUTERONOMY 32

Chapter 1 has some striking parallels with the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32. So much so, in fact, that there is a clear relationship between the two:

Isaiah 1	Deuteronomy 32
Isaiah 1:2 (ESV) — 2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken...	Deuteronomy 32:1 (ESV) — 1 “Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.
Isaiah 1:2 (ESV) — 2 ... “Children [‘sons’] have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me.	Deuteronomy 32:20 (ESV) — 20 ... for they are a perverse generation, children [‘sons’] in whom is no faithfulness.
Isaiah 1:3 (ESV) — 3 The ox knows its owner [heb. <i>qā·nā(h)</i>], and the donkey its master’s crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.”	Deuteronomy 32:6 (ESV) — 6 ... Is not he your father, who created [heb. <i>qā·nā(h)</i>] you, who made you and established you?
Isaiah 1:4 (ESV) — 4 ... children who deal corruptly...	Deuteronomy 32:5 (ESV) — 5 They have dealt corruptly with him; they are no longer his children...
Isaiah 1:4 (ESV) — 4 ... children ...They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised [heb. <i>nā·’āš</i>] the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.	Deuteronomy 32:19 (ESV) — 19 “The LORD saw it and spurned [heb. <i>nā·’āš</i>] them, because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters.
Isaiah 1:9 (ESV) — 9 If the LORD of hosts had not [heb. <i>lû·lē(’)</i>] left us a few survivors...	Deuteronomy 32:27 (ESV) — 27 [I would have wiped them from memory] ... had I not [heb. <i>lû·lē(’)</i>] feared provocation by the enemy...
Isaiah 1:10 (ESV) — 10 Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah!	Deuteronomy 32:1 (ESV) — 1 “Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. Deuteronomy 32:32 (ESV) — 32 For their vine comes from the vine of Sodom and from the fields of Gomorrah...
Isaiah 1:20 (ESV) — 20 but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword...	Deuteronomy 32:42 (ESV) — 42 ...my sword shall devour flesh...’
Isaiah 1:21 (ESV) — 21 How the faithful city has become a whore, she who was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. Isaiah 1:26 (ESV) — 26 ...Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.”	Deuteronomy 32:4 (ESV) — 4 “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.
Isaiah 1:24 (ESV) — 24 ...“Ah, I will get relief from my enemies and avenge myself on my foes.	Deuteronomy 32:27 (ESV) — 27 had I not feared provocation by the enemy, lest their adversaries should misunderstand... Deuteronomy 32:43 (ESV) — 43 ... for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries...