

(Isa. 1:1) - In Old Testament prophecy, a “*vision*” is God’s Word revealed to His prophets. Isaiah’s prophecy was a “*vision*” that God revealed to him. He foresaw and he foretold (2 *Pet. 1:20-21*; 2 *Tim. 3:16*; 1 *Pet. 1:10-11*). Isaiah prophesied in Judah and Jerusalem through the reign of four kings. What follows in the next verses is not only the Lord’s indictment against Judah and Jerusalem but also a graphic description of the state of all people by nature as fallen in Adam and born into a state of sin, spiritual death, and depravity (*Rom. 3:9-20*).

(Isa. 1:2-3) - Isaiah calls upon the whole creation to hear the Lord’s charge against Judah and Jerusalem. The Lord said, “I have made them My people (*Deut. 7:6-8*), I blessed and sustained them above all nations, I gave them the law and the prophets, and they have rebelled against Me.” Even the animals know their owner’s and masters. They know who leads and feeds them. But man who was originally created in the image of God has rebelled against his Creator and Master. God chose Israel, delivered them from bondage, formed them into a nation, sustained them throughout their journeys, but Israel rebelled against Him. The people of Israel had degenerated into a state of depravity and ignorance. They did not know the true and living God, and they did not even think upon Him, nor worship and obey Him. Again, these are statements that apply to all people by nature (*Rom. 3:23*).

(Isa. 1:4) - “*Ah sinful nation*” - The majority of these people were religious, but they were still “*laden with iniquity*.” The word “*laden*” means heavy, full and thick, as full of sin. God’s Word tells us that without Christ and His righteousness imputed, without spiritual life given by the Holy Spirit from Christ, all that we are and all that we do is sin. Sin can only be measured by the standard of the perfection of righteousness that can only be found in Christ and bestowed upon us by the grace of God. “*A seed of evildoers*” - Their history and their heritage were evil. They were children of rebels (*Rom. 5:12*) who had forsaken the Lord and gone their own way (*Isa. 53:6*). They “*provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger*” - This is metaphorical language describing God’s displeasure with them (*Psalms 7:11*; *Heb. 10:30-31*). “*They are gone away backward*” - Instead of making progress, they grew worse.

(Isa. 1:5-6) - They were so depraved and rebellious that even afflictions and the judgments of God had no effect upon them (*Amos 4:6,9-11*). “*Why should I chasten and correct you? You are so mentally depraved (head is sick) and spiritually dead (heart is faint) that even correction brings out rebellion. Judgment will not produce repentance in a depraved sinner (Rev. 16:9; Rom. 2:4). This is the result of Adam’s fall, a description of total depravity! From the very sole of our feet to the top of our heads there is no life, no truth, no light, no goodness in us (Rom. 7:18, 8:8; Eph. 2:1-3). These wounds and sores of sin are open and ugly and have no remedy by the power of men.*

(Isa. 1:7-8) - Because of your rebellion and disobedience you lie desolate, destroyed by the enemy, bruised, broken, and afflicted. You have no true peace, rest, nor happiness. Men without God are without hope in this world or in the world to come (*Eph. 2:12*).

(Isa. 1:9) - If the Lord of hosts, by His infinite grace and goodness, had not chosen a people, defeated our enemies in the Person and work of His Son to redeem us from our sins and work righteousness whereby God justifies us, and called us effectually by His Spirit, no one would be saved. We would have all been cut off as were the people of Sodom (*Rom. 9:27-29*). Salvation is of the Lord in its origination (2 *Thess. 2:13*), in its execution (*Gal. 4:4-5*), in its

application (*Gal. 1:15*), in its sustaining power (*Jude 24-25*), and in its ultimate perfection (*Rev. 21:3-6*).

(Isa. 1:10-15) - Religious rituals and activity, no matter how sincere, will not save us from sin. These people were religious (*Matt. 23:25-28*). They kept the outward forms, ceremonies, and holy days; yet they did not love, obey, nor worship God in truth and heart. It is so often true that the less a man knows of God and the farther he departs from the true and living God, the more of the outward form of religion he adopts. The less internal devotion, the more emphasis is placed on the external ceremony and the outward rules and regulations. Their outward show of piety, prayer, sacrifice, and sabbaths were an abomination to God (*Luke 16:15*).

(Isa. 1:16) - “*Wash ye, make you clean.*” Notwithstanding their sacrifices and ceremonies, they were unclean (as all men are). God had established from the beginning that the only way sinners can be washed and cleansed from all sins is by the blood of the Lamb. Like all of us, these people needed to be washed in the blood of Christ (*Psalms 51:7; 1 John 1:7*). The blood of animals cannot put away sin, nor can the deeds of the law nor religious works. “Put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes.” Not only put away the doing of evil, but also the evil of doing, which is an attempt to be justified before the eyes of God by our works (*Matt. 7:21-23; Rom. 10:1-4*).

(1:17) - “*Learn to do well*” - Doing well is, first, to come before God, not pleading our works for salvation, but pleading the righteousness of Christ for all salvation. This is all of God’s grace and not by our works which contribute absolutely nothing to the righteousness by which God justifies us, the imputed righteousness of Christ. But grace does not relieve us from our responsibility to follow and obey God’s Word. The Spirit gives us spiritual life from Christ and inspires and motivates us to seek justice and help those who are oppressed (*Gal. 5:22*).

(1:18) - This is the call and command of the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ. It is not a leap in the dark. It is the result of God’s power, goodness, and truth revealed to His people as He teaches us of the only way of salvation by His grace based on the blood of Christ (*John 6:44-45*). It is reasoning, not based on the logic and intellect of men, but on God’s logic in Christ. It states that though our sins are evident and blatantly manifest in God’s sight, “*they shall be as white as snow,*” and “*shall be as wool.*” This means that by God’s power and grace, the sins of His chosen people will be washed away, and they shall be righteous before God. That way is the way of God’s grace through the blood and the righteousness of Christ. We are sinners and our sins are double-dyed, as scarlet and red like crimson. Only Christ can put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself (*Heb. 9:26; Heb. 10:12-14*). Only Christ can accomplish a righteousness by which God can justify us and from which He can give spiritual life (*Rom. 3:21-26; 10:4*).

(1:19-20) - “*If ye be willing*” - No sinner by nature is willing to believe and bow to God’s way in Christ (*1 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 3:10-12*). But God makes some willing in the day of His power. A willingness to believe in and follow Christ is an evidence of the power of God’s will and grace, not our wills. So, if you are made willing to come to Christ in repentance and faith, you shall eat the good of God’s great land; if you refuse him, you shall be devoured, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.