

A Nation Sick with Sin: Isaiah 1's Urgent Call to Wake Up Scriptures for Today: Isaiah 1:1-9

***Isaiah 1:1-9** 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 hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. 3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. 4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. 5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. 6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. 7 Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. 8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. 9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.*

Introduction:

We are opening the book of Isaiah this morning. Isaiah is the 23rd book in the Bible. It has 66 chapters.

The book of Isaiah was written during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, who were kings of Israel. This is approximately 200 years after king Solomon. Remember, because of King Solomon's sin the nation of Israel was split into two kingdoms. The northern kingdom of Israel, and the southern kingdom of Judah.

From that point forward, both kingdoms spiraled downward into idolatry and rebellion. The northern kingdom quickly plunged into spiritual corruption, worshiping false gods and rejecting the prophets God sent to warn them. Eventually, they were conquered by the Assyrians and carried away captive. The southern kingdom of Judah lasted a little longer, but they too began to follow in the same sins as their northern brothers — outwardly religious, yet inwardly far from God.

It's in this setting that God raises up Isaiah — a prophet to confront a comfortable, complacent, and corrupt people. He was called to speak truth to a nation that no longer wanted to hear it. Judah was prosperous under King Uzziah, but prosperity had led to pride, and pride had led to sin. The people thought they were strong, but spiritually they were dying. Through Isaiah, God sounded an urgent alarm — a call to wake up before it was too late.

The book of Isaiah opens with a shocking diagnosis...

Imagine if you woke up tomorrow and you were feeling really bad. So bad that you decided to go see a doctor. After the doctor runs some tests, he comes back with a diagnosis. He tells you that you have a horrible disease that will be fatal if untreated.

But he goes on to tell you there is still hope for you. If you follow his recommended daily routine, and you do exactly what he says to do, then you can fully recover from this disease.

Imagine if you heard there was hope, you heard the recommendations from the doctor, you heard that you can fully recover from this disease, BUT you decide not to listen. You decide not to do the daily recommended routine; you decide to refuse the advice from the doctor that is telling you your life can be saved. Not only do you refuse to listen, but you laugh in his face and mock him.

That would be an incredibly foolish thing to do, but that's exactly what the kingdoms of Israel and Judah did.

Isaiah chapter 1 starts with God's divine doctor's report — His diagnosis of a nation that was once strong but now is sick with sin. And what God reveals about Judah is the same sickness that plagues nations today, and even hearts sitting in churches. As we look at this passage (diagnosis), I want you to see three symptoms of Israel's condition:

1. ***They forgot their Creator.***
2. ***They were laden with sin.*** The disease had spread deep.
3. ***They still had hope for healing.***

Exposition: Isaiah 1:1-9

1. They Forgot Their Creator (vv. 1–3)

Isaiah 1:1-3 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 hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

Isaiah opens this book like a courtroom scene. God is calling witnesses to the stand — not men, but heaven and earth themselves. This isn't the first time we've seen this language...

Deuteronomy 31:28-30 Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and **call heaven and earth to record against them.** **29** For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt *yourselves*, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands. **30** And Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended.

Deuteronomy 32:1 Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

Hundreds of years before Isaiah, Moses warned them this day would come. He said, “When you forget God, heaven and earth themselves will testify against you.” Now here we are — that prophecy has come to pass.

That same courtroom has reconvened here in Isaiah 1. God is saying, “I kept My covenant. I nourished you, protected you, and provided for you. But you have rebelled against Me.”

Isaiah 1:2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

Israel had forgotten their Creator. They had forgotten the One who had delivered them from Egypt, who parted the Red Sea, who gave them manna from heaven, and gave them victory after victory. They loved the gifts and the blessing from God, but they despised His presence.

And to make the point crystal clear, God uses a humiliating comparison in verse 3

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

Understand what's being said here. Farm animals and stubborn donkeys are smarter than God's people when they are in rebellion.

The ox knows it's owner, the donkey knows the hand that feeds it...
But God's own people — the ones made in His image — they had forgotten Him.

Let that sink in. Animals show more loyalty to their masters than people often do to their Maker.

That is a very sad reality, but this is not just a problem that Israel had, this is a problem that all nations have today, especially our nation, the United States of America.

We live in a country that has forgotten its Creator. We've been blessed like no other nation in history — peace, freedom, wealth, opportunity, comfort — and we've turned it into pride. We've taken God's blessings and used them to build idols to ourselves.

Deuteronomy 32:15-18 But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered *with fatness*; then he forsook God *which* made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. **16** They provoked him to jealousy with strange *gods*, with abominations provoked they him to anger. **17** They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new *gods that* came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. **18** Of the Rock *that* begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.

When we receive blessings in this life, when we get a little bit of money, when things get a little easier, when you start to get a little more comfortable, Don't become unmindful of the Rock. Don't forget the God who formed you in your mother's womb.

This nation is on a path to certain destruction because we have forgotten the God who us brought us here.

And this isn't just about the nation as a whole; this is about you as an individual.

Have you forgotten your Creator?

You might not say it with your mouth, but you might be saying it with your life.

When you stop praying, you're saying, "I don't need God."

When you stop reading your Bible, you're saying, "I don't need His wisdom."

When you stop obeying His Word, you're saying, "I'll do things my way."

Deuteronomy 8:11-20 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: **12** Lest *when* thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt *therein*; **13** And *when* thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; **14** Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; **15** Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, *wherein* were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where *there was* no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; **16** Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; **17** And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of *mine* hand hath gotten me this wealth. **18** But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as *it is* this day. **19** And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. **20** As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

It's about time we remember our Creator. It starts with you (all of us here). Teach your children to remember THEIR God. Remember Him in the morning, remember Him throughout the day. Remember Him in the evening, at night. At all times. Pray to the Lord. Give thanks to Him. Remember everything He has done for you!

Israel and Judah did not remember, they forgot. They rebelled. They went against their Creator.

2. They Were Laden with Sin (vv. 4–8)

Isaiah 1:4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

Isaiah 1:5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

Isaiah 1:6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is* no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

We are looking at Judah's divine diagnosis from God. When a doctor runs a test, he doesn't just simply say "you're sick" and then sends you on your way. He tells you *how bad* the infection is. He tells you to what extent the disease has spread, how serious your condition is.

This is exactly what God is doing. He tells them you're not just sinful, you are laden with iniquity. **Laden** means to be weighed down with a heavy load. You're being crushed under the weight of sin.

He calls them a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters. Sin was being passed down like a family heirloom. From generation to generation. Sin never stays contained. It spreads. It multiplies. It infects.

You let a little bit of sin live in your life, and it'll start breeding spiritual disease before you even realize it.

We're living in a society that can't tell right from wrong, male from female, truth from lies.
We celebrate sin, and we call it progress.
We're watching the slow decay of morality, and most people are too numb to notice.

Sin always kills — it kills peace, it kills purity, it kills marriages, it kills nations.

Isaiah 1:6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is* no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

This is a sort of a spiritual autopsy. God is describing a body covered with untreated wounds. Not only was Judah wounded, but they were comfortable living wounded.

Instead of seeking healing, they got used to the pain. They learned how to walk with a limp. They learned how to hide the rot under a robe of religion. But God saw it all.

For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest... Luke 8:17

Isaiah 1:7-8 Your country *is* desolate, your cities *are* burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and *it is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers. 8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

Judah's rebellion didn't just affect them spiritually — it destroyed their land. It ruined their homes. It weakened their defenses.

Look at our own nation.

Our cities are burning — not just with fire, but with hate, greed, and violence.

Our homes are collapsing — from broken families.

Our youth are being devoured — violence, pride, drugs, fornication, sexual sin.

It's all destroying our nation.

The moral immune system of America has failed because we have forgotten God and are laden with iniquity. The infection of sin has spread to every part of society.

And remember this all starts with us on a personal level. We are the people that make up this nation.

Maybe sin has taken more from you than you ever expected. You start out thinking you are in control, but now it controls you. It's time to put those things aside.

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

So ask yourself — what are the untreated wounds in your life?

What sin have you been tolerating, or justifying?

Understand God points out your sickness so you can be healed.

He is the one that can cleanse, he can bind up your wounds, he can make you whole, but you must be willing to admit you're sick. You must be willing to listen to the Physician.

That brings us to our last point...

3. There Is Still Hope for Healing (v. 9)

Isaiah 1:9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

The diagnosis is bad. We see a people that have forgotten God and are laden with sin from head to toe. Right when you think all is lost. There's no coming back from this. We see this glimmer of hope in verse nine.

"Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah."

After all the diagnosis — the infection, the wounds, the rebellion — God says, "There's still a remnant." If the LORD hadn't preserved that small group, Israel would have been completely wiped out like Sodom and Gomorrah.

That's mercy. That's grace. That's the Great Physician saying, "You're sick, but I haven't given up on you yet."

This verse reminds us that God always keeps a remnant — a group of people who still believe, who still care about the truth. Even when the majority reject Him, there's always a minority that remains faithful.

Elijah, a great prophet of the Lord, thought he was the last one standing for God. God told him, "*Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal.*"

Elijah thought he was alone, but God said, "You don't see them, but I've still got My people."

That's what we're seeing here in Isaiah. God preserved a small group that still feared Him, still obeyed His Word, and through that remnant, He would eventually bring healing and restoration — even the Messiah, Jesus Christ himself.

That's the hope of this verse — no matter how sick the nation becomes, God's plan cannot be destroyed.

You might look around at our world and think, "It's too far gone. There's no hope left." But as long as there's a remnant — as long as there's one family praying, one church standing on God's Word, one believer living in obedience — there's still hope for healing.

Maybe you feel like you're the only one in your family trying to stand for what's right. Maybe you feel like you're surrounded by compromise and wickedness. Hey, God doesn't need a majority to bring revival. He just needs a remnant.

Think about it:

God used one Joseph to save the entire world from starvation.

God used one Moses to lead an enslaved nation out of bondage.

God used one Esther to rescue her people from destruction.

You can go on and on with examples from the Bible how God used one person to make a huge impact on the course of history.

Understand He can use you to make a difference right where you are, right now.

Don't look at the numbers — look at the faithfulness of God.

Yes, Judah was diseased with sin. Yes, they forgot their Creator. Yes, they rebelled and rejected His Word. But the Lord of Hosts still left a remnant — still extended mercy — still offered healing.

And the same God who left a remnant then is leaving one now.

So the question I have for you this morning : Do you want to be part of the remnant, or do you want to be part of the problem?

Will you choose to blend in with the world, or will you choose to stand out in faithfulness?

Because the cure for a nation sick with sin starts with God's people remembering who He is, getting sin out of our lives, and going out and being a light in this dark world.

Conclusion

Isaiah chapter 1 is like a spiritual X-ray — it exposes the sickness, it shows the infection, and it reveals how far the people had fallen.

They forgot their Creator. They were weighed down with sin.

Their nation was decaying from the inside out.

God doesn't diagnose us to destroy us — He diagnoses us to deliver us.

And the cure isn't found in government, or culture, or the next big movement. The cure is found in the same place it's always been — at the feet of Jesus Christ, the Great Physician of the soul.

Isaiah 53:5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

There's the cure for the sickness of sin — it's not your religious lifestyle, it's not in good works, it's in the blood of Jesus Christ.

As we go from here today, Don't forget your creator. Don't be laden with sin. Remember that there will always be a remnant of God's people. That's what you want to be a part of. You can be a part of that by believing on Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Thank God everyday for who He is and what He has done in your life!

I want to close by reading Psalm 103

Psalm 103:1-22 *A Psalm of David.* Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, *ble*ss his holy name. **2** Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: **3** Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; **4** Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; **5** Who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things*; *so that* thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. **6** The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. **7** He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. **8** The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. **9** He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever. **10** He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. **11** For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. **12** As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. **13** Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. **14** For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust. **15** As *for* man, his days *are* as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. **16** For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. **17** But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; **18** To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. **19** The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. **20** Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. **21** Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. **22** Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

Let's Pray