

HISTORY'S MOST UNUSUAL COURTROOM SCENE  
Isaiah 1

Intro: Chapter 1 is not only the beginning chapter, but it is the introductory chapter. It summarizes for us the main teachings of Isaiah, and puts it in the setting of a courtroom scene.

Jehovah has brought His people to trial.

Judah and Jerusalem are on trial before the entire universe: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth" (Isa. 1:2a).

Although the nation has been divided for many years, the mention of Israel in v. 3 indicates that this charge applies to the whole nation--to Israel as well as to Judah. But Isaiah was a prophet in Judah.

The divisions are easy to detect, and the outcome at the end is very unexpected.

Let us note first . . .

I. THE CHARGE (Isa. 1:1-4). **NOTE THE TENDERNESS.**

It is to be seen in the following expressions:

- 1) "They have rebelled against Me." Cf. v. 2.
- 2) "They have forsaken the Lord" (v. 4).

Even the animal creation shows more intelligence than the people of God have shown (v. 3).

They are not only sinners (v. 4), but they are producing sinners. And all of the progress of Judah has been "backward."

All of this is prefaced with, "for the Lord hath spoken." We are permitted to see the condition of Judah through the eyes of the Lord.

The basic sin of Judah goes back to her relationship to the Lord. Nothing can be right if that is wrong.

II. THE EVIDENCE OF GUILT (Isa. 1:5-15).

It falls into three categories:

- A. The people themselves (Isa. 1:5, 6). They are sick from head to foot. The Lord singles out:
  - 1) The head.
  - 2) The heart.
  - 3) The foot.

Nothing has been done, according to v. 6b, to correct the many problems.

B. Their country (Isa. 1:7-9).

We have abundant evidence in this chapter of the blinding effect of sin. Take these words literally. Judah had suffered at the hand of the nations, but did not see any connection with what they were in their relationship with God, and the conditions that prevailed.

CF. REV. 11:4.

Isaiah even sees a connection between Jerusalem, and Sodom and Gomorrah. Cf. v. 9. For the one who has eyes there is amazement that things are not worse than they are.

The third has special emphasis because it is at the root of all of their trouble. Note: The way in which the people of God are addressed: the "rulers" and the "people" of Sodom and Gomorrah!

It all has to do with . . .

C. The temple (Isa. 10-15). *IT SEEMS THAT WE ARE TO SENSE HERE HOW THE PEOPLE WOULD DEFEND THEMSELVES.*

JENNINGS SAYS THAT JUDAH'S WORST IS SEEN IN HER BEST.

This passage contains one of the most needed of warnings for the people of God in any generation because the last thing that we give up is the outward form. We can do such a good job of covering up what is really going on that other people may never see what is really going on.

From the standpoint of outward performance we could feel that Isaiah was being very unjust in what he was saying about the people.

Note what they were doing:

- 1) They were bringing their sacrifices (v. 11).
- 2) They were coming as to the Lord (v. 12).
- 3) They were offering incense (v. 13a).
- 4) They were observing the congregational gatherings (v. 13b).
- 5) They were observing the annual feast days, and the weekly and monthly days (v. 14).
- 6) They were continuing to pray--at least publicly (v. 15).

But all of it was nullified with the words, "Your hands are full of blood." Cf. Isa. 59:1-3. It goes back to the picture in 1:5, 6.

Isaiah not only gives us an amazing picture of human depravity, but he also knows that the people of God can sin!  
(cf. v. 2b)

## III. THE APPEAL TO THE ACCUSED (Isa. 1:16-20).

The word, "reason," in v. 18 carries with it the idea of a trial. This gives us a picture of a courtroom scene.

But this is a trial of a different kind. That Judah is guilty, is obvious. What the Judge of all the earth offers is cleansing and forgiveness.

THE HUMAN  
SIDE OF  
CLEANSING,  
CAPABLE ONLY  
THROUGH THE  
GRACE ENABLING  
OF GOD.

But Judah must clearly understand that there are only two alternatives. See vv. 19, 20.

## IV. THE RECAPITULATION, WITH THE TWOFOLD VERDICT (Isa. 1:21-31).

- A. The condition of Jerusalem reviewed (Isa. 1:21-23).  
There can only be amazement that a city like Jerusalem could ever become like it is.
- B. The two possibilities (Isa. 1:24-31).
  1. Cleansing and redemption (vv. 24-27).
  2. Destruction and judgment (vv. 28-31).

Concl: From this chapter we come away with some very definite principles which Isaiah has established through the Word of God:

- 1) God hates sin, and will surely judge it.
- 2) Nothing that man can do will compensate for his sin.
- 3) God graciously offers forgiveness and cleansing to the man who confesses and forsakes his sin.
- 4) NOTHING THAT EVEN THE PEOPLE OF GOD CAN DO WILL EVER MAKE THE LORD TURN FROM HIS ETERNAL PURPOSES--whether with Israel, or with the Church!

HERE - A GUILTY PEOPLE, ABLE TO BE FORGIVEN  
WITH CHRIST - NOT GUILTY, BUT UNABLE TO  
ESCAPE DEATH.