



"Rebellion or Redemption?" (Isaiah 1)

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INTRO:

* The OT is divided into four major sections. The first is the law (Genesis - Deuteronomy). The second is history (Joshua, Judges, I & II Samuel, I & II Kings, I & II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah). The third is poetry (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon). The fourth is prophecy. Did you know that the Bible is the only book that foretells the future accurately? If you ever question the inspiration & infallibility of this book, you must be ignoring the prophecies contained in it. The prophetic books in our Bible have been divided into two, one called the major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel) and the other the minor prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. The major prophets are not called "major" because they are more important, but simply because the books are longer.

* Isaiah is one of the foremost prophetic books for a number of reasons. Mentioned in the N.T. more than any other book; second most quoted after Psalms. Paul quoted or alluded to Isaiah some eighty times in his epistles & in at least three of his recorded messages (Acts 13:22-23, 34, 47; 17:24-29; 28:26-28). Ch.53 quoted or alluded to more than 85 times in N.T.; Speaks more than any other prophet of the coming kingdom. Chs. 1-39 deal with sin and judgment, while chs. 40-66 deal with blessing and restoration (OT 39 books, NT 27 books!). Events took place around 700 B.C.; Isaiah ministered at least 58 years. His ministry is to a religious yet rebellious people...God had already judged the northern kingdom of Israel. They fell to the Assyrians in 722 B.C. Now the southern kingdom (Judah) is being threatened...

I. THE TEXT

v.1 Uzziah reigned for fifty-two years (II Chron.26). He was sixteen years old when he took the throne. Jotham (Uzziah's son) reigned for sixteen years, and was twenty-five yrs old when he took the throne. Ahaz (Jotham's son) was also twenty-five yrs. old when he began his reign, and he reigned for 16 years as well. Hezekiah, Ahaz's son, was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years. Total of 116 years combined? Tradition says that Manasseh, Hezekiah's successor, killed Isaiah by having him sawn in half (Heb.11:37). Justin Martyr said the same (A.D.100-165).

Isaiah's vision begins with the historical Jerusalem of his own day, corrupt and under God's hand of judgment, and ends with the end time city of God, the new Jerusalem, the joy and delight of the whole earth (65:17-19). First Assyria looms large, then Babylon. Many other nations vie for our

attention. But the text beckons us to keep our eyes fixed on Judah and Jerusalem, for as nations rise & fall, and as Israel goes through one purging after another, suddenly a figure appears before our eyes. He has royal titles which link him in the most intimate way with God himself (9:6). He is a shoot from the stump of Jesse, an ideal king from the line of David (11:1). He is endowed with the Spirit and rules with perfect justice, and under him all that God has purposed for his people and his world is fully realized (11:2-9).

We glimpse the end many times before we finally arrive and rest there. Again and again, after terrible suffering, at the very point when final judgment is expected, grace intervenes.

Isaiah lived through four presidential terms of office...what were those days like?

v.2 This is a call for heaven and earth to take note that God has reared children, and He is a perfect parent. Despite bringing His children up right, they have rebelled against Him.

v.3 This is satire. These two animals do not have a reputation of being very intelligent. Have you ever heard the phrase "dumb as an ox" or "stubborn as a jack ass?"

v.8 These were temporary structures built to shade from the sun. They were very vulnerable to enemy attack and destruction.

v.10 This is quite a slam! What was the sin of Sodom?

* Ezekiel 16: 49 "Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. 50 They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.

vv.11-14 They are extremely religious, yet blatantly selfish.

v.15 Despite their religious routines, their prayers were not heard...

* Psalm 66: 18 If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;

vv.16-17 Sounds like becoming involved in mentoring a child, or becoming a foster parent, or being involved in Men of Arms or Women of Heart, or taking a vacation and going on a short term missions trip to a needy country. On a national level it means government and business leaders who are willing to repent of greed and self-indulgence, and who look to serve rather than be served. It means for nations like America to consider the principles upon which our nation was founded, and go back to our roots.

v.18 The word for reason is a term used in a court of law

vv.19-20 Your future will be determined by the choice you make

v.22 Dross is the residue left in the smelting process after pure silver is removed.

v.23 Greed rules now. The fatherless and widows had no money to bribe the rulers, so they got no hearings...

v.25 This is prophetic of the awful calamities that God will bring upon them in order to purge them. It will not be pretty. They would have been much better off to repent!

II. LESSONS

A. The Situation

- * How could they have fallen so far away from the Lord?
- * Why would they continue in sin despite the terrible consequences?

B. The Sin

* Despite their religious observances, their hearts were not right. They needed to repent. They are very religious, yet very rebellious...see II Kings 17:32-33. See 17:10 (sexual sin was a major part of their lives).

C. The Remedy

* No matter how far I have strayed from the Lord, His offer of grace extends farther still, and I can once again experience his blessings, if I am willing to repent.

D. The Choice

* Matthew 23: 37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

* II Kings 17:13-14

E. The Consequences

* True prophets are like good doctors. They diagnose the case, prescribe a remedy, and warn the patient what will happen if the prescription is ignored (Jer.6:14; 8:11).

* II Kings 7:7; 28:4-6, 22-23; 29:8-10

* The people of Judah did not listen to Isaiah, and in time they fell to Assyria. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. Mosul in Iraq is ancient Nineveh, and its people are still bitter enemies of Israel.

* God is ultimately behind national calamities, and His purpose for the historical calamities that Israel has repeatedly faced is to purge His people from idolatry and sin and in order to bless them once again, and again make them a blessing and witness to the world.

* Even in the N.T., God is at work "judging" His people in order that they might not be condemned with the world (see I Cor.11:27-32).

* I do not believe Katrina hitting New Orleans so hard was caused by the devil (as people like Jesse Duplantis suggest). Why would Satan want to disrupt Mardi Gras? I believe 9/11 was a post card from God for America.

* Isaiah 45: 7 I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.

* This is a message for any nation (including Israel), but for nations like America as well. America, like Israel, was founded upon belief in the God of the Bible. And as we see America moving further away from our Judeo-Christian heritage, we can only expect that God will seek to purge us, just as He has done with the nation of Israel.

* Read from Isaiah 1 Addendum

CONCLUSION

* Isaiah was called to speak to an inattentive age that for the most part mocked him and refused to repent...but for those who did repent, God blessed them, even in the midst of a carnal crisis. See II Chron.29:29-30; 30:1, 6-11, 18-20 (that's grace!), 26; 31:1a.

* We need to pray for our country, and no matter which direction we go as a people, make sure you remain with the remnant...

Isaiah 1 Addendum

John Adams

SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE; JUDGE; DIPLOMAT; ONE OF TWO SIGNERS OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS; SECOND PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES</CENTER< A>

The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity. I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God.¹

John Quincy Adams

SIXTH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES; DIPLOMAT; SECRETARY OF STATE; U. S. SENATOR; U. S. REPRESENTATIVE; "OLD MAN ELOQUENT"; "HELL-HOUND OF ABOLITION" </CENTER< A>

The hope of a Christian is inseparable from his faith. Whoever believes in the Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures must hope that the religion of Jesus shall prevail throughout the earth. Never since the foundation of the world have the prospects of mankind been more encouraging to that hope than they appear to be at the present time. And may the associated distribution of the Bible proceed and prosper till the Lord shall have made "bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" [Isaiah 52:10].⁸

Samuel Adams

SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE; "FATHER OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION"; RATIFIER OF THE U. S. CONSTITUTION; GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS</CENTER< A>

I . . . [rely] upon the merits of Jesus Christ for a pardon of all my sins.¹⁰
He also called on the State of Massachusetts to pray that . . .

- the peaceful and glorious reign of our Divine Redeemer may be known and enjoyed throughout the whole family of mankind.¹³
- with true contrition of heart to confess their sins to God and implore forgiveness through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior.¹⁵

Josiah Bartlett

MILITARY OFFICER; SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE; JUDGE; GOVERNOR OF NEW HAMPSHIRE</CENTER< A>

*Called on the people of New Hampshire . . . to confess before God their aggravated transgressions and to implore His pardon and forgiveness through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ . . . [t]hat the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be made known to all nations, pure and undefiled religion universally prevail, and the earth be fill with the glory of the Lord.*¹⁶

John Dickinson

SIGNER OF THE CONSTITUTION; GOVERNOR OF PENNSYLVANIA; GOVERNOR OF DELAWARE; GENERAL IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION</CENTER< A>

Rendering thanks to my Creator for my existence and station among His works, for my birth in a country enlightened by the Gospel and enjoying freedom, and for all His other kindnesses, to Him I resign myself, humbly confiding in His goodness and in His mercy through Jesus Christ for the events of eternity.²⁷

[Governments] could not give the rights essential to happiness... We claim them from a higher source: from the King of kings, and Lord of all the earth.²⁸

John Hancock

SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE; PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS; REVOLUTIONARY GENERAL; GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS</CENTER< A>

He called on the entire state to pray "that universal happiness may be established in the world [and] that all may bow to the scepter of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the whole earth be filled with His glory."³⁹

- that with true contrition of heart we may confess our sins, resolve to forsake them, and implore the Divine forgiveness, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, our Savior. . . . And finally to overrule all the commotions in the world to the spreading the true religion of our Lord Jesus Christ in its purity and power among all the people of the earth.⁴⁷

Patrick Henry

REVOLUTIONARY GENERAL; LEGISLATOR; "THE VOICE OF LIBERTY"; RATIFIER OF THE U. S. CONSTITUTION; GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA</CENTER< A>

Being a Christian... is a character which I prize far above all this world has or can boast.⁴⁹
The Bible... is a book worth more than all the other books that were ever printed.⁵⁰

Righteousness alone can exalt America as a nation. Whoever thou art, remember this; and in thy sphere practice virtue thyself, and encourage it in others.⁵¹
The great pillars of all government and of social life [are] virtue, morality, and religion. This is the armor, my friend, and this alone, that renders us invincible.⁵²

John Jay

PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS; DIPLOMAT; AUTHOR OF THE FEDERALIST PAPERS; ORIGINAL CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE U. S. SUPREME COURT; GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK</CENTER< A>
Condescend, merciful Father! to grant as far as proper these imperfect petitions, to accept these inadequate thanksgivings, and to pardon whatever of sin hath mingled in them for the sake of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Savior; unto Whom, with Thee, and the blessed Spirit, ever one God, be rendered all honor and glory, now and forever.⁵⁶

George Mason

DELEGATE AT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION; "FATHER OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS"
</CENTER< A>

I give and bequeath my soul to Almighty God that gave it me, hoping that through the meritorious death and passion of our Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ to receive absolution and remission for all my sins.⁷⁶

Benjamin Rush

SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE; SURGEON GENERAL OF THE CONTINENTAL ARMY; RATIFIER OF THE U. S. CONSTITUTION; "FATHER OF AMERICAN MEDICINE"; TREASURER OF THE U. S. MINT; "FATHER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS UNDER THE CONSTITUTION" </CENTER< A>

My only hope of salvation is in the infinite tran-scendent love of God manifested to the world by the death of His Son upon the Cross. Noth-ing but His blood will wash away my sins [Acts 22:16]. I rely exclusively upon it. Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly! [Revelation 22:20]⁹⁸[T]he only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government is the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by means of the Bible.¹⁰²
The great enemy of the salvation of man, in my opinion, never invented a more effective means of limiting Christianity from the world than by persuading mankind that it was improper to read the Bible at schools.¹⁰³
The Bible, when not read in schools, is seldom read in any subsequent period of life... [T]he Bible... should be read in our schools in preference to all other books because it contains the greatest portion of that kind of knowledge which is calculated to produce private and public happiness.¹⁰⁶

George Washington

JUDGE; MEMBER OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS; COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE CONTINENTAL ARMY; PRESIDENT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION; FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES; "FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY" </CENTER< A>
You do well to wish to learn our arts and ways of life, and above all, the religion of Jesus Christ. These will make you a greater and happier people than you are.¹²²

Daniel Webster

U. S. SENATOR; SECRETARY OF STATE; "DEFENDER OF THE CONSTITUTION" </CENTER< A>

[T]he Christian religion – its general principles – must ever be regarded among us as the foundation of civil society.¹²⁶

Noah Webster

REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER; JUDGE; LEGISLATOR; EDUCATOR; “SCHOOLMASTER TO AMERICA” </CENTER< A>

[T]he religion which has introduced civil liberty is the religion of Christ and His apostles... This is genuine Christianity and to this we owe our free constitutions of government.¹³⁰

The moral principles and precepts found in the Scriptures ought to form the basis of all our civil constitutions and laws.¹³¹

[T]he Christian religion... is the basis, or rather the source, of all genuine freedom in government... I am persuaded that no civil government of a republican form can exist and be durable in which the principles of Christianity have not a controlling influence.¹³⁶

John Witherspoon

SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE; RATIFIER OF THE U. S. CONSTITUTION; PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON</CENTER< A>

[C]hrist Jesus – the promise of old made unto the fathers, the hope of Israel [Acts 28:20], the light of the world [John 8:12], and the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth [Romans 10:4] – is the only Savior of sinners, in opposition to all false religions and every un instituted rite; as He Himself says (John 14:6): “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.”¹³⁷

[N]o man, whatever be his character or whatever be his hope, shall enter into rest unless he be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.¹³⁸

[T]here is no salvation in any other than in Jesus Christ of Nazareth.¹³⁹