

Isaiah - Study 1

Student Outline

Notes prepared by Dr. Ian A. H. Bond



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This study is part of a full college-level course on the Book of Isaiah taught by Dr. Ian Bond. The complete Teacher's Guide, Student Notes, illustrative Power Point, the lectures in MP3 format, and Dr. Bond's book *Insights into Isaiah*, Revised 2nd Edition, are available for purchase and download from Teach the Nations, Inc. For more information go to www.free-online-bible-study.org

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“Come Now, Let Us Reason Together.”

“Come now, let us reason together,”
says the LORD.
“Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool.”
Isaiah 1:18

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Isaiah is addressing the people of Judah, that is, people of praise.
 - 1. The name *Judah* is derived from the Hebrew term *yadah*, meaning “praise” or “give thanks.”

- B. In its immediate context, this opening vision of the prophecy of Isaiah concerns a specific city and nation in the eighth century BCE.

II. REBELLIOUS IN KNOWLEDGE (**Isaiah 1:3-4**)

- A. The name of Yahweh that Isaiah employs here, “the Holy One of Israel,” is almost unique to Isaiah.

- B. Isaiah's contemporary, Hosea, declared that God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:1, 6)
1. What is it that destroys God's people?
 2. The Hebrew word that is translated "knowledge" is *yada*, which means knowledge in the sense of an intimate embrace.
 3. One of the greatest problems of Protestantism is that traditionally it has been more concerned with knowing more *about* God than intimately *knowing* God.

III. REBELLIOUS IN HEALING (Isaiah 1:5-6)

- A. The contemporary church has tended to emphasize just physical healing in its teaching about the healing ministry of our Lord.
- B. Divine healing flows essentially through two channels.
1. Healing flows as an evangelistic gift.
 2. Healing for the believer, which operates by a different set of parameters.
 - a. Healing for the unbeliever is often part of the evangelistic process to demonstrate the outflow of God's *mercy*.
 - b. Healing for the believer is an outflow of God's *covenant*.
 - c. Yahweh in his very nature is a physician and as a physician he declares that the root of mankind's sickness is disobedience.
 3. The Divine Physician comes to heal causes, not mere symptoms.
- C. Isaiah complains the people have failed to treat the wounds and sickness adequately.
1. They have "not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil" (1:6).

IV. REBELLIOUS IN IGNORING THEIR INHERITANCE (**Isaiah 1:7**)

- A. The prophet reminds Judah that their country is the land that Yahweh had promised to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- B. This is indicative of the historic cycle of every move of God through church history, which relates to the challenge of passing on the values and vitality of that movement to subsequent generations.
- C. Spiritual enemy number one is not the devil, but “self,”

V. REBELLIOUS IN WORSHIP (**Isaiah 1:10-15**)

- A. Sacrifice is recorded as a part of Old Testament worship from Abraham onward and is firmly anchored in the *Torah*.
 - 1. From Samuel onward, prophets insisted that sacrifice be considered secondary to obedience and faith (1 Sam. 15:22).
 - 2. The problem in eighth century Judah and in the contemporary church is that ritual so easily replaces reality and wherever this happens God calls it rebellion.

VI. THE REMEDY FOR REBELLION (**Isaiah 1:16-18**)

- A. Isaiah instructs repentant rebels to do three things:
 - 1. Wash and make yourselves clean.
 - 2. Take your evil deeds out of my sight.
 - 3. Learn to do right.
- B. Then Yahweh invites them to reason together with him.
 - 1. The verb *yakah* is a law term used of arguing, convincing, or deciding a case in court.
- C. The progressive steps of leprosy
 - 1. This terrible skin disease begins as a tiny red spot which is treatable, but if it is not treated at this early stage, the crimson spot will eventually progress to the final stage of leprosy, which is incurable when the whole body has become white as snow.

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- a. In the Old Testament the phrase “white as snow” is invariably used to describe the final incurable advanced stages of leprosy rather than used as a metaphor for righteousness or being washed from sin.
 - b. The historical background to the first six chapters of Isaiah adds further plausibility to this interpretation (2 Chronicles 26:16-21).
2. The remedy for dealing with the first red spot of leprosy that appeared on the hand, which was drastic but effective—cut the hand off!
 - a. Comp. Matthew 5:30
 3. The message: “Get rid of the sin while it is still small enough for you to deal with, before it becomes so big that you no longer control it and it starts to control you.”
 - a. Comp. 1 John 1:7, 9

II.