

## Lesson 1

## Isaiah 1

## The Sinfulness of Judah

**Note:** Isaiah (which means *the Lord saves*) was a prophet and a man of God. As a theologian and poet of the highest caliber, he has been called the Fifth Evangelist and the Shakespeare of ancient Israel. Little is known of his life except what filters through the book that bears his name. He lived in Jerusalem, the capital city of Judah in the southern kingdom, and was probably a member of the Jerusalem nobility due to his close association with the royal court. According to ancient Jewish tradition, Isaiah's father was the brother of King Amaziah, who was Uzziah's father. This made Isaiah a first cousin of King Uzziah, though Uzziah was about 40 years older than Isaiah. Isaiah grew up with King Jothan, son of Uzziah..

1. From the introductory line: (Is 1:1)
  - a. Who was the father of Isaiah?
  - b. Name the kings who ruled Jerusalem during the time of Isaiah.
2. What wrongs does the prophet accuse the people of doing in Isaiah? (Is 1:2-3)
3. In Isaiah 1:2-3, do you think the Lord is saying that animals are smarter or less rebellious than the sons of Jacob, the children the Lord himself reared? Why or why not?
4. When God says through Isaiah that Israel's "head is hurt and heart is sick," He is speaking to the condition of their faith. What behaviors of the people brought on this spiritual sickness? (Is 1:4-6)
5. Isaiah compares Israel to Sodom and Gomorrah (see Genesis 18:16-19, 29).
  - a. How are the cities of Judah like Sodom and Gomorrah? (Is 1:4-7)
  - b. How did the outcomes of the cities of Judah differ from that of Sodom and Gomorrah? (Is 1:9)
6. God is not pleased with the religious rituals of those who perform them only for "show," as Jesus said in Matt 15: 7-9: "Hypocrites: This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts." What images and/or metaphors does Isaiah use to show similar divine displeasure? (Is 1:11-16)
7. How does God always want his people to act, whether in the time of Isaiah or today? (Is 1:16-20)
8. Isaiah criticizes the rulers and leaders of Israel for their corruption and oppression of the vulnerable. (Is 1:11-16) Give examples of how we show justice and concern for the poor and oppressed today.
9. Isaiah uses the imagery describing the people of Israel as a "faithful city" that has sold itself like a prostitute.
  - a. What does it mean to "prostitute oneself"?
  - b. Choose one of Isaiah's images to show how the "faithful city" has sold itself. (Is 1:21-23)
10. What is God's ultimate goal for his people in Is 1:24-25?