

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Yahweh Is Salvation

II. God's Call To Repent From The Wickedness Of Mistreating The Vulnerable (Isaiah 1:1-20)

I. Introduction

- A. We all know folk who are vulnerable to being harmed in some way, those who need us to be helpful to them.
- B. If we then let them suffer or if we mistreat them, it angers God, and we must repent as Isaiah 1:1-20 teaches:

II. God's Call To Repent From The Wickedness Of Mistreating The Vulnerable, Isaiah 1:1-20.

- A. The book of Isaiah begins with a lawsuit by God brought against Judah for her failure to heed the suzerain treaty arrangement Judah had as God's vassal in the Mosaic Covenant, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1034.
- B. The Lord's lawsuit, leveled in Isaiah 1:2-31, involves a call for Israel to repent of acting as if she were upright in her temple ritual practices while living in loveless unrighteousness toward the weak, Isaiah 1:1-15; *Ibid.*:
 - 1. Isaiah's ministry began after the Northern Kingdom of Israel had already fallen to the Assyrians in 722 B. C. and a little more than 100 years before Judah fell to Babylon in 586 B. C., *Ibid.* Thus, the time was ripe for Judah to consider the Lord's interests lest she also fall in judgment.
 - 2. However, from God's view, Judah was in trouble, for He called heaven and earth as witnesses in His lawsuit against His vassal people of Judah, Isaiah 1:2a. Typical of such lawsuits, God established His innocence, saying He had nourished and reared children who had rebelled against Him, Isaiah 1:2b; *Ibid.*
 - 3. Though the ox knew his owner and the donkey his master's manger, Judah did not know or consider the Lord as her Provider Who needed to be obeyed for her to enjoy His continued blessing, Isaiah 1:3; *Ibid.*
 - 4. Indeed, Judah's sinful condition was so bad that, in accord with the early warnings in the Mosaic Covenant for covenant disobedience of the vassal, God had already brought a number of judgments upon the nation, leaving her dreadfully afflicted, likened to a man who had been disciplined by flogging, Isaiah 1:4-7; *Ibid.*
 - 5. Judah was now like a fragile shelter from the sun in a vineyard or in a vegetable patch, a shelter that could easily be destroyed by an invading foe if the Lord would ever permit it, Isaiah 1:8.
 - 6. Indeed, had God had not left a small remnant, Judah would be like Sodom and Gomorrah He overthrew with fire and brimstone for their gross sin of homosexuality, Isaiah 1:9 with Gen. 19:4-10, 24-25; Jude 7.
 - 7. Then, astoundingly, God addressed Judah as "Sodom" and "Gomorrah" (Isaiah 1:10), a nation as wicked as the homosexuals of those cities He had destroyed, and He detailed Judah's sins in Isaiah 1:11-15:
 - a. The Lord objected to the people of Judah's many sacrifices that they brought to His temple, Isaiah 1:11.
 - b. He objected to their trampling with their feet into His holy temple courts to bring their sacrifices and to gather there on various holy days, Isaiah 1:12-14!
 - c. God objected to Judah's people then spreading out their hands to pray to Him in His temple, so much so that He said He would even hide His eyes from them even if they offered many prayers, Isaiah 1:15a,b!
 - 8. God's reason for His objecting to Judah's worship was her hypocrisy of performing such worship rituals while sinning in her walk, Isaiah 1:15c, 17: Judah's people were full of blood, mistreating the vulnerable orphans and widows, thus acting like murderers and as bad as homosexuals in His eyes. (cf. 1 John 3:15)
- C. The Lord called Judah then to repent, Isaiah 1:16-18: she was to put away her evil and meet and reason with Him. Though her sins were as "blood-colored stains on their souls," by God's grace He would make them white like snow and wool, Isaiah 1:18. (Romans 3:20-28 for the lost; 1 John 1:9 for believers today)
- D. Judah had an unavoidable decision to make, one with greatly contrasting consequences, Isaiah 1:19-20:
 - 1. Were the people to repent and heed the Lord, they would eat the good of the land, Isaiah 1:19.
 - 2. However, if they refused and rebelled against Him, they would be destroyed by the sword, Isaiah 1:20a.
 - 3. Judah's decision was unavoidable, for the mouth of the Lord had spoken the ultimatum, Isaiah 1:20b.

Lesson: *The Lord views pretentious worship practiced by those who mistreat the weak and vulnerable as the intolerable sin of murder (cf. 1 John 3:15) equal in vileness to homosexuality. Thus, if we are guilty of it, we must repent before God will accept our gifts, our prayers and our attendance in Church worship services or we will be repulsive to Him. For unbelievers, this means trusting in Christ for salvation (Romans 3:20-28), and for believers, confessing their sin unto the Lord (1 John 1:9) and relying on the Holy Spirit to support the vulnerable.*

Application: *If guilty of hypocrisy in worship, may we repent to obtain God's forgiveness and blessing, especially if we commit loveless acts toward the weak and vulnerable, a sin that is as evil as murder or homosexuality to God!*