

The Prophecies of Isaiah ¹⁰ Lesson 2

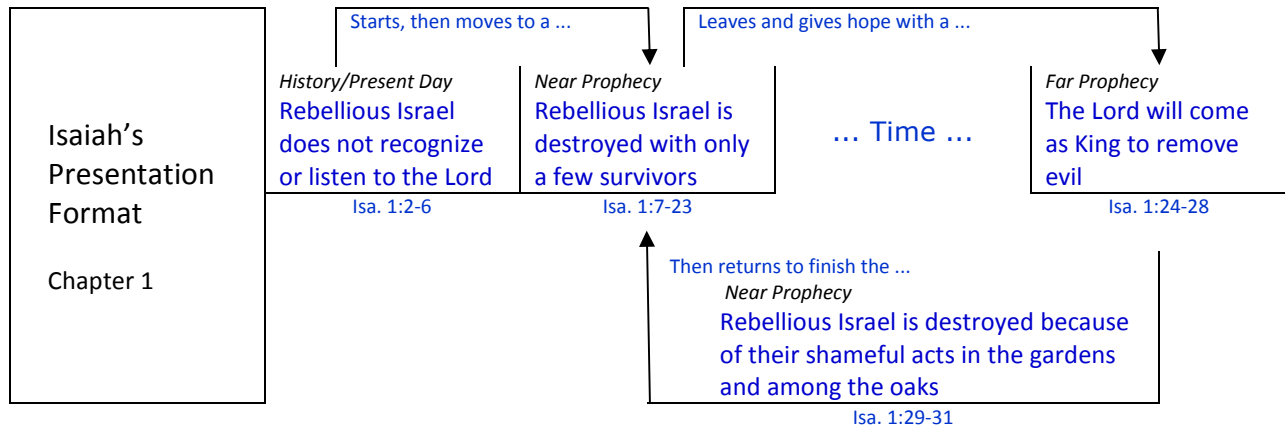


Figure 5: First Vision - Israel Doomed - Chapter 1

Lord's Opening Vision

History/Present Day

REBELLIONS SONS

Isaiah 1:2 Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the LORD speaks, "Sons I have reared and brought up, but they have revolted against Me. ³"An ox knows its owner, and a donkey its master's manger, *but* Israel does not know, My people do not understand."

The Lord, tired of the sins of His chosen people, calls for the entire universe He created, the heavens and the earth, to listen to His complaint about Israel, the Northern Kingdom and bear witness to His plea in this first vision. Will the heavens and the earth listen to Him? Israel will not! Even animals listen to their masters, but Israel will not listen to hers. Even the terrestrial and the celestial creatures can testify to the justice of the Lord's plea. Micah records a similar message.

Micah 6:1-2 Hear now what the LORD is saying, "Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. "Listen, you mountains, to the indictment of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth, because the LORD has a case against His people; even with Israel He will dispute.

The case is set against the Northern Kingdom and they cannot understand why the Lord is so upset with their rebellious idolatry. How can that be? Even the stupid animals know their masters! Jeremiah will later record the following words of the Lord:

Jeremiah 8:7 "Even the stork in the sky knows her seasons; and the turtledove and the swift and the thrush observe the time of their migration; but My people do not know the ordinance of the LORD.

¹⁰ All Scriptures in this lesson entitled "The Prophecies of Isaiah" are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE, Copyright (C) 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1988, by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

SINFUL NATION

ISAIAH 1:4 ALAS, SINFUL NATION, PEOPLE WEIGHED DOWN WITH INIQUITY, OFFSPRING OF EVILDOERS, SONS WHO ACT CORRUPTLY! THEY HAVE ABANDONED THE LORD, THEY HAVE DESPISED THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL, THEY HAVE TURNED AWAY FROM HIM.

The sinful Northern Kingdom of Israel, the degenerate nation, has turned its back on the Lord. Intentionally, it has abandoned the Lord. Intentionally, it has despised the Holy One. The weight of its sin crushes the Lord's people with corrupt sons, the offspring of evildoers repeating their parent's mistakes by doing evil.

SICK HEAD

Isaiah 1:5 Where will you be stricken again, as you continue in *your* rebellion? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. ⁶ From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, *only* bruises, welts, and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil.

The sinful nation is stricken. Is there one part of the body that can withstand another wound? The heads, the kings and the leadership, are sick. The heart of the entire nation of people is faint, from top to bottom, covered with wounds and sores from the damage already inflicted. Yet, the Northern Kingdom continues to rebel.

Near Prophecy

DESOLATE LAND

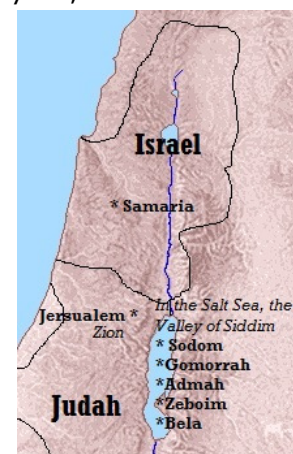
Isaiah 1:7 Your land is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your fields-- strangers are devouring them in your presence; it is desolation, as overthrown by strangers.

Here, the Lord pronounces the coming damage to the land, cities, and fields of the Northern Kingdom. It has not happened yet in the story, but it will. When the Lord speaks, His words bring forth action in the proper time. In regard to the desolate land, burned cities and devoured fields, is this history or prophecy? If the Lord is speaking during the days of Uzziah and Jotham, then it is prophecy. If the Lord is speaking during the reign of Ahaz, it is probably history. During that time, Assyria is slowly marching through the Northern Kingdom, leaving the land in waste, the cities in rubbish and the fields stripped of their produce. Either way, his words have been fulfilled or what was prophecy is now history.

BESIEGED CITY

Isaiah 1:8 And the daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a watchman's hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city.

Zion, which means sunny, is one of the hills on which Jerusalem is built, surrounded on all sides except the north by deep valleys. Only surpassed by Mount Moriah on the northeast portions of Jerusalem, it sits in the sunny place of being able to see all foes that may attack. The king who possesses Zion controls all the political clout in the Southern Kingdom. The man who controls Mount Moriah possesses all the religious power in the kingdom. Unless something changes, Jerusalem, specifically the stronghold of Zion, is not safe from destruction. Rather, she is like the temporary makeshift houses set in the field of grapes or down by the melon field. They give shelter from the elements of nature but they give no shelter from the onslaught of an attacking war-driven alien nation.



Map 3: Zion, Samaria, as well as the destroyed cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim & Bela

MULTIPLIED SACRIFICES

Isaiah 1:9 Unless the LORD of hosts had left us a few survivors, we would be like Sodom, we would be like Gomorrah. ¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah. ¹¹ "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats.

The Lord is still speaking to the South about their cousins in the north. Almost 800 years later, Paul uses the words when he says:

Romans 9:29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "EXCEPT THE LORD OF SABAOTH HAD LEFT TO US A POSTERITY, WE WOULD HAVE BECOME AS SODOM, AND WOULD HAVE RESEMBLED GOMORRAH."

Ezekiel clarifies that the survival of the South when he says:

Ezekiel 16:46 "Now your older sister is Samaria, who lives north of you with her daughters; and your younger sister, who lives south of you, is Sodom with her daughters. ... ⁴⁸ "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "Sodom, your sister, and her daughters, have not done as you and your daughters have done. ⁴⁹ "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. ... ⁵⁵ "And your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to their former state, and you with your daughters will *also* return to your former state. ⁵⁶ "As *the name of* your sister Sodom was not heard from your lips in your day of pride ..."

Hebrew Names	
Their Meanings	
Zion	Sunny
Moriah	The chosen of Jehovah
Sodom	Burning
Gomorrah	Submersion
Samaria	Watch-mountain/watch-tower
Sabaoth	Host or army

Figure 6: Hebrew Names – Zion, Moriah, Sodom, Gomorrah, Samaria & Sabaoth

Samaria is the capital of Israel and it should be the place of leadership to protect its people, but it has failed. Jerusalem is not there yet, but the Southern Kingdom is beginning to follow in the footsteps of her sister, the Northern Kingdom of Israel. If not for the divine protection of the Lord at the time, Jerusalem would have been like the unprotected temporary houses in the vineyard or the melon field. The Aramian and Northern Kingdom kings could have run her over in their previous campaigns, but the Lord protected Judah. ¹¹ Her destruction is one hundred years away and for the time being, this passage is just a warning. The Lord compares the people of Jerusalem and Judah to Sodom and Gomorrah. The rulers are like Sodom and the people are like Gomorrah. Sodom means burning and Gomorrah means submerged. Sodom and Gomorrah were burned and submerged. If not for

¹¹ **2 Kings 16:5** Then Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to wage war; and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. ⁶ At that time Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath for Aram, and cleared the Judeans out of Elath entirely; and the Arameans came to Elath, and have lived there to this day. ⁷ So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son; come up and deliver me from the hand of the king of Aram, and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me." ⁸ And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent a present to the king of Assyria. ⁹ So the king of Assyria listened to him; and the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and captured it, and carried *the people of* it away into exile to Kir, and put Rezin to death. (Also see Amos 1:3-5)

the Lord of Sabaoth, that is the Lord of host, both cities and countries would be burned and submerged. In both cases, their sin against the Lord is growing and He will reject them soon. Why is the Lord displeased with the south at this time? Already, during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz, the people are keeping the requirements of the Lord for the wrong reasons and with the wrong motives. Just sacrificing the animals is not enough. A genuine repentance is required with the sacrifice. Even the number of offerings is not enough to please the Lord. The size or volume of an offering is not important to the Lord; rather, the heart behind the offering is what pleases Him.

WORTHLESS OFFERINGS

Isaiah 1:12 "When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts? ¹³ "Bring your worthless offerings no longer, incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. ¹⁴ "I hate your new moon *festivals* and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me. I am weary of bearing *them*.

The Southern Kingdom has it all wrong. The offerings are worthless. Their holidays and their rituals anger the Lord because they are performed with a wrong motive, a sinful purpose, a hypocritical heart.

BLOODY HANDS

Isaiah 1:15 "So when you spread out your hands *in prayer*, I will hide My eyes from you, yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.

The Lord does not listen to prayers offered with unclean hands and an impure heart. He hears, but He does not pay attention to the request. He does not answer their prayers.

CEASE EVIL

Isaiah 1:16 " Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷ learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless; defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

Soap and water will not clean bloody, evil hands. How can the hands be cleaned? The Lord gives seven instructions: remove evil, cease evil, do good, seek justice, reprove ruthless, defend orphans and plead for widows. Do not think of this list as something new. In the wilderness, more than seven hundred years before, the Lord instructed the people as follows.

Deuteronomy 24:17 " You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow's garment in pledge. ... ¹⁹ " When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ "When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow. ²¹ "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not go over it again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow.

Deuteronomy 26:12 " When you have finished paying all the tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in your towns, and be satisfied.

Deuteronomy 27:19 ' Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

The list provides a good indication as to why the Lord is unhappy with the Southern Kingdom.

REASON TOGETHER

Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, " Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.

Never think that this passage is a call to negotiate with the Lord. Here, the word "reason" means to be convinced that the one making the call is right. The Lord is right and the people are wrong. The people are stained with sin, red like crimson but they can be as pure as the driven snow if they will yield to the call of the Lord.

EAT BEST

Isaiah 1:19 "If you consent and obey, you will eat the best of the land;

If the people will yield to the Lord, they will eat the best of the best.

DEVOURING SWORD

Isaiah 1:20 "But if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

If the people do not yield, they will be devoured by the sword. It is the Lord's promise.

UNFAITHFUL CITY

Isaiah 1:21 How the faithful city has become a harlot, she *who* was full of justice! Righteousness once lodged in her, but now murderers. ²² your silver has become dross, your drink diluted with water.

The reputation of Jerusalem has been tainted. The once faithful city, in a right covenant with the Lord, has now strayed from the covenant and begun to worship idols. Human sacrifice is slipping into the worship with the followers of Molech. The righteousness, or silver, of the people is spoiled. The watered down wine is a worthless offering.

REBELLIONS RULERS

Isaiah 1:23 Your rulers are rebels, and companions of thieves; everyone loves a bribe, and chases after rewards. They do not defend the orphan, nor does the widow's plea come before them.

The leaders of the nation are corrupt. Money and reward tempt them and they have abandoned their main instructions from Moses to defend the orphans and hear the widow's plea.

Far Prophecy

REMOVED ADVERSARIES

Isaiah 1:24 Therefore the Lord GOD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel declares, "Ah, I will be relieved of My adversaries, and avenge Myself on My foes. ²⁵ "I will also turn My hand against you, and will smelt away your dross as with lye, and will remove all your alloy.

Whatever is good in the city and the kingdom is not good enough to save the people from the coming judgment of the Lord. Notice that in verse 24, the Lord is avenging Himself, which includes His action towards the unfaithful Jews.

RESTORED JUDGES

Isaiah 1:26 "Then I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning; after that you will be called the city of righteousness, a faithful city."

When will the Lord avenge Himself (v.24) and restore the "judges as at the first" and the "counselors as at the beginning" and the city to a faithful status? It can only be in the far future when the Lord comes to reign on earth. Then all wickedness will cease and all iniquity will be removed.

REDEEMED ZION

Isaiah 1:27 Zion will be redeemed with justice, and her repentant ones with righteousness. ²⁸ But transgressors and sinners will be crushed together, and those who forsake the LORD shall come to an end.

When the Lord establishes His kingdom in Zion, then, in judgment, He will exercise justice by crushing the sinners together for His sake.

Near Prophecy

DESIRED OAKS AND GARDENS

Isaiah 1:29 Surely, you will be ashamed of the oaks which you have desired, and you will be embarrassed at the gardens which you have chosen. ³⁰ For you will be like an oak whose leaf fades away, or as a garden that has no water. ³¹ And the strong man will become tinder, his work also a spark. Thus they shall both burn together, and there will be none to quench *them*.

In the last three verses of this passage, the Lord mentions the shame of oaks and the gardens. To understand the context, we must read what the Lord says about them later in the Scripture.

THE OAKS

Isaiah 57:5 *Who* inflame yourselves among the oaks, under every luxuriant tree, who slaughter the children in the ravines, under the clefts of the crags?

THE GARDENS

Isaiah 65:3 A people who continually provoke Me to My face, offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on bricks;

Isaiah 66:17 "Those who sanctify and purify themselves *to go* to the gardens, following one in the center, who eat swine's flesh, detestable things, and mice, shall come to an end altogether," declares the LORD.

Among the oaks, the Southern Kingdom will slaughter their children in sacrifice to the gods. In the gardens, they will continually sacrifice to idols and eat unclean food. The oaks and the gardens, where the idols stand, become the places where Jews exercise their shame. Though they believe that their so-called gods can defend them, the Lord will bring judgment on the maker of the idols and no one can save him, nor can the creation of his hand. The shameful human sacrifice among the oaks and the gardens is an abomination to the Lord.