Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

27 September 2015 Message 1 of 5

NLT 45 Minutes

**When God Takes His People to Court**

Title

***Isaiah 1***

**Topic:** Commitment

**Subject:** What would happen if God took you to court?

**Complement:** You choose the verdict.

**Purpose:** The listeners will choose relationship and repentance over ritual and judgment.

**Meditation:** Isaiah 1:18

**Reading:** Isaiah 1

**Song:** “Holy Spirit” (Keith & Kristyn Getty)

# Introduction

### Interest: [Sometimes we substitute ritual for relationship.]

#### Rituals are not bad in and of themselves.

Rituals

(3 slides)

#### But sometimes rituals are more important than relationship.

#### One of the blessings of living in Singapore is the fairly sensible court system.

Court Building

#### The justices see their responsibility to interpret rather than to make laws. There exists a resistance to legislating from the bench.

#### Still, I believe each of them would admit that they are limited by human knowledge. In fact, every legal system is flawed because no judge knows all the facts—so therefore there exists no truly just court of law.

Gavel

Red Justices

#### Would you agree? Would you like those judges to know everything about you?

US Supreme

### Need: How would you fair if the Judge knew your motives for rituals completely?

#### How would you fair if the Judge knew you completely?

#### Do you trust religious rituals more than a relationship with the Judge?

#### Are you involved in any injustice?

### Subject: How should we respond to an all-knowing Judge who takes us to court?

Subject

### Background & Text: Today we will look at one of the world’s most famous court cases. Please turn to Isaiah 1.

Isaiah 1

#### Isaiah’s prophecy took place when God was judging Israel’s idolatry—but would he judge Judah too?

Who was Isaiah?

#### Who was Isaiah (1:1a)?

##### The name “Isaiah” means “Yahweh is salvation.”

##### Isaiah married a prophetess (8:3) and had two sons: Shear-Jashub (7:3) and Shalal-Hash-Baz (8:3). Isaiah probably lived in Jerusalem as he had access to the royal court (7:3; 36:1–38:8; cf. 2 Kings 18:3–20:19; 2 Chron. 26:22).

##### Tradition says he was a cousin of King Uzziah (Talmud Meg. 10b), but no firm evidence supports this (Martin, BKC, 1:1029). The Assumption of Isaiah (cf. LaSor, 366) records that he was martyred in Manasseh's day by being sawn in two (cf. Heb. 11:37).

Title

Title

Title

#### How long was the time period when Isaiah preached that spanned four kings (1:1b)?

1

##### The kingdom of Israel split in 930 BC and existed as two nations—Israel in the north and Judah in the south.

Divided Map

##### Isaiah's long ministry stretched through the reigns of four kings of Judah (1:1), starting during the reign of King Uzziah (790-739 BC; 6:1), likely a few years before Uzziah's death (2 Chron. 26:22). His ministry then spanned the reigns of Jotham (739-731 BC), Ahaz (731-715 BC), and Hezekiah (715-686 BC) since Isaiah wrote Hezekiah's biography (cf. 2 Chron. 32:32).

Placing the Prophets

##### He also lived at least until Sennacherib's death in 681 BC (37:38), showing that his ministry lasted at least 58 years (739-681 BC) and perhaps 65 years (745-680 BC; cf. LaSor)! Therefore, Isaiah prophesied both before and after the fall of Israel in 722 BC, which may explain the difference between chapters 1–39 (pre-fall?) and chapters 40–66 (post-fall?).

#### When did this prophecy take place in chapter 1 (1:2)? What was happening then?

When?

##### This time period saw the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel through the Assyrian conquest westward. A parallel might be like living in Singapore in 1941 when Malaysia to our north fell to the invading Japanese.

Assyrian Map

##### Not only was it politically instable, but also the spiritual state of Judah was sad. They had God’s law—but they still lived in sin. So God told Isaiah to write.

Law could not do

##### The Book of Isaiah heads up the 17 Old Testament prophetic books like Genesis begins the historical books or Job begins the poetic books. In a similar way in the NT, Romans is a key book that starts Pauls’ epistles and Hebrews is the longest book that begins the General Epistles.

Structure of the OT

##### Isaiah is not the oldest book but it is the most comprehensive in content. It covers much on God’s judgment, and also his salvation.

Judgment - Salvation

##### The key word for Isaiah is restoration. God will restore all things! It’s global!

Restoration

##### He speaks not only of Israel and Judah, but of God’s plan for all creation. Today we hear much about global warming.

Global Warming

##### Isaiah is not about “Global Warming,” but about “Global Warning”!

Global Warning

#### This book is the most prominent of all the prophets, so it’s worthy of our study the next five weeks. We will address only the first six chapters at this point, showing God’s justice and salvation.

Judgment - Salvation

### Preview: Every legal case has three parts—the charge, the evidence, and the verdict—so we will see these three today.

Court Procedure

### Text: Isaiah 1 provides the setting for today’s case.

(Following the setting in verse 1, we see the next three verses telling us…)

# I. The Charge: God’s people do not know him (1:2-4)!

MP

[Israel started a relationship with God 800 years before but could no longer identify him.]

## The *charge* against Judah was not knowing the LORD by forsaking the Mosaic covenant (1:2-4).

SP

### Heaven and earth should witness God’s charge (1:2a).

2a

Point Earth

### Judah’s people rebelled against God like they didn’t know him (1:2b-4).

#### God’s children rebelled against him (1:2b).

2b  
Sons

##### Many of you know that I have three sons. They have known me all their lives—how could they ever say they don’t know me?

My 3 sons

Family pic

##### Their wives could make this claim—but not my sons!

2b  
Tattoos

##### God says his sons have no idea who he is!

#### Even animals know their master cares for them (1:3a).

3

#### However, Israel didn’t know God (1:3b).

## Do you know God?

Red

### We all know *about* God—but do we know *him*?

### We set ourselves up as a god by not abiding by what he says.

MPI

(So God made the charge that Judah—and we—don’t know him. But is it true? What evidence can God as prosecuting attorney offer? Verses 5-15 give…)

# II. The Evidence: Rituals with injustices shows God’s people guilty (1:5-15).

MP

[Exhibits A and B prove us blameworthy of prioritizing rites over inequalities.]

## Exhibit A: Discipline by Assyria hadn’t led to repentance (1:5-9).

EXHIBIT   
A

### Judah was like a guilty victim where further beating won’t do any good (1:5-6).

#### God seeks to use discipline and difficulty to teach us his ways—practices that are actually in our own best interest.

#### However, at some point, even further punishment will not turn the unrepentant around.

### God’s punishment by Assyria ravaged Judah’s cities but still left a remnant (1:7-9).

## Exhibit B: Rituals without justice only mocked God (1:10-15).

EXHIBIT   
B

### Judah’s leaders were no better than the immoral rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:10).

### God despised bloody hands giving sacrifices, offerings, monthly and annual festivals, and prayers (1:11-15).

Jewish  
(8 slides)

## We are also guilty of rituals with injustice today.

Christian  
(11 slides)

MPI

(So we’re guilty as charged when we don’t really know God—and when rituals become paramount. But can we do anything about it or must we just accept God’s sentence? Verses 16-31 have good news in…)

MPII

# III. The Verdict: When rituals replace relationship, repent for restoration (1:16-31).

MP

[Turn to God instead of religion—so don’t be religious, be restored!]

[This comes through a change of mind (repentance) followed by the fruits of repentance (justice).]

## The blessing of restoration after judgment exhorted Judah to aid the oppressed (1:16-31).

Jud-Sal  
16-31

Title

Title

Title

Title

Title

### Actions toward the defenseless would result in either prosperity or judgment (1:16-20).

#### Giving justice would result in eating the best food (1:16-19).

#### Rebellion by injustice would end in “being eaten” by death (1:20).

#### Did Judah repent as God asked (1:18-20)? Not really.

##### Judah has some brief periods of good rulers after this but the people continued their sinful ways.

##### Unfortunately, even good kings like Hezekiah and Josiah could not turn the tide, so eventually both the leaders and the people sinned to the point of no return and were judged.

#### When will the hypocritical worship and social evils end (1:10-23)?

##### This continued until the Babylonians conquered Judah over 100 years later in 586 BC (2 Kings 25).

##### Not until the righteous Davidic King Jesus rules will the city be called “the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City” (1:26 NIV).

### God will follow his judgment against Jerusalem’s injustices and idolatry with restoring the city [when Messiah rules] (1:21-31).

Earth

• SP 21-31

#### Injustice will be removed by God’s judgment (1:21-25).

#### Just judges will replace idolatrous rebels (1:26-31).

#### When will God avenge his enemies and judge evil (1:24-31)?

##### This won’t happen until the return of Christ.

##### God is the ultimate example of patience, so he still calls us to repent.

## Will God’s promise of blessing prod us to get our act together too?

Subject

(How should we respond to an all-knowing Judge who takes us to court?)

# Conclusion

### God’s court case has three elements:

MPI

#### The Charge: God’s people do not know him (1:2-4)!

MPII

#### The Evidence: Rituals with injustices shows God’s people guilty (1:5-15).

#### The Verdict: God’s people can choose judgment or blessing.

MPIII

### When rituals replace relationship, repent for restoration (MI repeated).

MI

### Application: Here’s how you can choose restoration!

Choose Restoration

#### Do you have a relationship with God? Or are you one of these children of verses 2-3 that have rebelled or don’t understand God?

• Know?

#### Do you put your security in any rituals?

• Security?

##### “If I only can take the Lord’s Supper, I will be healed.”

##### “I was baptized, so I must be a Christian.”

##### “I pray three times a day before meals and even fast occasionally!”

#### What sin of injustice do you need to abhor? Don’t just dislike sin—disdain it!

• Just?

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### This chapter begins Isaiah’s long prophecy—especially starting the first six chapters that list Judah's violations.

### While the northern nation of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians during Isaiah’s time, the south also saw 46 towns decimated—all but Jerusalem.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### The heart of man is understandably vexed by injustice. This comes from being made in the image of God.

### Here God, as a just judge, lists the violations of his people against him. Otherwise he would be arbitrary.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### Idolatry destroyed Israel during Isaiah’s lifetime.

### The northern nation had put up both with Jeroboam’s calf idols and Baal worship.

# Questions

### Who was Isaiah (1:1a)?

#### The name “Isaiah” means “Yahweh is salvation.”

#### Internal Evidence: Isaiah, the son of Amoz, was the author (1:1). He married a prophetess (8:3) and had two sons: Shear-Jashub (7:3) and Shalal-Hash-Baz (8:3). Isaiah probably lived in Jerusalem as he had access to the royal court (7:3; 36:1–38:8; cf. 2 Kings 18:3–20:19; 2 Chron. 26:22).

#### External Evidence: Tradition says he was a cousin of King Uzziah (Talmud Meg. 10b), but no firm evidence supports this (Martin, BKC, 1:1029). The Assumption of Isaiah (cf. LaSor, 366) records that he was martyred in Manasseh's day by being sawn in two (cf. Heb. 11:37).

### How long was the time period when Isaiah preached that spanned four kings (1:1b)?

#### Date: Isaiah's long ministry stretched through the reigns of four kings of Judah (1:1), starting during the reign of King Uzziah (790-739 BC; 6:1), likely a few years before Uzziah's death (2 Chron. 26:22). His ministry then spanned the reigns of Jotham (739-731 BC), Ahaz (731-715 BC), and Hezekiah (715-686 BC) since Isaiah wrote Hezekiah's biography (cf. 2 Chron. 32:32).

#### He also lived at least until Sennacherib's death in 681 BC (37:38), showing that his ministry lasted at least 58 years (739-681 BC) and perhaps 65 years (745-680 BC; cf. LaSor)! Therefore, Isaiah prophesied both before and after the fall of Israel in 722 BC, which may explain the difference between chapters 1–39 (pre-fall?) and chapters 40–66 (post-fall?).

### When did this prophecy take place in chapter 1 (1:2)? What was happening at that time?

#### This time period saw the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel. A parallel might be like living in Singapore in 1941 when Malaysia to our north fell to the invading Japanese.

#### Not only was it politically instable, but the spiritual state of Judah was very sad. People resorted to ritual instead of relationship.

#### The Book of Isaiah heads up the 17 Old Testament prophetic books in a similar manner as Romans starting Pauls’ epistles and Hebrews beginning the General Epistles. It is not the oldest book but it is the most comprehensive in content. He speaks not only of Israel and Judah, but of God’s plan for all creation. Isaiah is not about “Global Warming,” but about “Global Warning”!

### Does the “sinful nation” refer to Israel, Judah, or both (1:4)?

#### Verse 1 indicates that the message is directed at Judah.

#### Verse 8 accuses Zion (Jerusalem).

### Why does God say that Judah has been beaten enough (1:5-6)?

#### God seeks to use discipline and difficulty to teach us his ways—practices that are actually in our own best interest.

#### However, at some point, even further punishment will not turn the unrepentant around.

### Is the judgment description of the present Assyrian invasion (701 BC) or prophetic of Jerusalem’s fall to Babylon over 100 years later in 586 BC (1:7-9)?

#### He uses the present tense in verses 7-9.

#### He also refers to the present leaders in verse 10.

#### I can’t be sure, but it sounds like the devastation of Judah that followed Samaria's 722 BC fall—a time when Assyria also destroyed 46 towns of Judah over twenty years later (2 Kings 18:13–19:37; cf. Daniel David Luckenbill, trans., The Annals of *Sennacherib*, ed. Henry James Breasted [Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1924], 15 at <https://www.google.com.sg/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CCEQFjABahUKEwjMptOn75PIAhWQHI4KHYlCCm0&url=https%3A%2F%2Foi.uchicago.edu%2Fpdf%2Foip2.pdf&usg=AFQjCNEzEbRoaWXDim_FZNKSz_IVXTeUpg&sig2=yrT7ZCNzLq5C4BfQMIatTw> accessed 26 Sep 2015).

### When will the hypocritical worship and social evils end (1:10-23)?

#### This continued until the Babylonians conquered Judah over 100 years later in 586 BC (2 Kings 25).

#### Not until the righteous Davidic King Jesus rules will the city be called “the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City” (1:26 NIV).

### Did Judah repent as God asked (1:18-20)?

#### Judah has some brief periods of good rulers after this but the people continued their sinful ways.

#### Unfortunately, even good kings like Hezekiah and Josiah could not turn the tide, so eventually both the leaders and the people sinned to the point of no return and were judged.

### When will God avenge his enemies and judge evil (1:24-31)?

#### This won’t happen until the return of Christ.

#### God is the ultimate example of patience, so he still calls us to repent.

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

When God Takes His People to Court

A Lawsuit by God

Why Go to Church?

Ritual or Relationship?

Global Warning

# Possible Illustrations

### This week the Pope had an opportunity that no pope has ever had in the 239-year history of the USA. He was privileged to speak to a joint session of Congress—the House and the Senate—plus the Supreme Court justices, President Obama, VP Biden, and every other key government leader.

#### What would you say with such an opportunity of not only a lifetime but of all history? Instead of speaking of Jesus, he spoke of climate change. Instead of repentance from our sexual sins, we see no word about President Obama appointing the first homosexual to head the United States Army this week.

#### Kevin Swanson notes, “The pope pays a visit to our country, and speaks to the President about climate change, tolerance, and economic inequality. But, where's the Gospel? Where's the beef? Where's the mention of the salient sins of the day, and a call to repentance. We compare the Pope to Paul, and get to what this nation really needs on this program. Also, the President appoints the first homosexual to head the United States army. Kevin Swanson provides some encouragement for Christians who must work for homosexuals in the armed forces or the business world” (“The Pope Makes an ‘Impact’ on Obama - The Gospel of Climate Change and Tolerance - 9/24/2015 at <http://www.oneplace.com/ministries/generations-radio/listen/the-pope-makes-an-impact-on-obama-the-gospel-of-climate-change-and-tolerance-490368.html> accessed 26 Sep 2015).

# Possible Applications

### Do you have a relationship with God or are you one of these children of verses 2-3 that have rebelled or don’t understand God?

### Do you put your security in any rituals?

#### “If I only can take the Lord’s Supper, I will be healed.”

#### “I was baptized, so I must be a Christian.”

#### “I pray three times a day before meals and even fast occasionally!”

### What sins do you need to abhor? Don’t just dislike sin—disdain it!

# Original OT Survey Volume 2 Notes

**Isaiah**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Restoration of the Created Order** | | | | | | | |
| **Judgment**  **(and Salvation)** | | | | **Salvation**  **(and Judgment)** | | | |
| **Chapters 1–39** | | | | **Chapters 40–66** | | | |
| **Assyrian Invasion** | | | | **Babylonian Captivity** | | | |
| **Prophecy** | | | **History** | **Prophecy** | | | |
| **Mostly Condemnation** | | | **Interlude** | **Mostly Consolation** | | | |
| Violations & Deliverance  1–12 | Judgment on the Nations  13–23 | Worldwide Judgment & Blessing  24–35 | Salvation, Sickness, & Sin  36–39 | Shepherd  of Israel  40–48 | Suffering  Servant  49–57 | God’s Initiative  58–59 | Restoration under Messiah  60–66 |
| **Judah** | | | | | | | |
| **739-681 BC**  **(Before, During, and After the Israel’s Fall to Assyria in 722 BC)** | | | | | | | |

**Key Word: Restoration**

**Key Verse: “Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail” (Isaiah 51:6).**

**Summary Statement:**

**Isaiah writes to encourage Judah that while God will *judge* for breaking His Law, He will also provide *restoration of the created order* through a godly remnant, a return to the land, and salvation through Messiah who will bring universal blessing.**

**Application:**

**The future restoration of the earth should cause us to get our priorities right now.**

**Isaiah**

**Introduction**

**I. Title** The name Isaiah (Why:[.v;y> *yesa‘yahû* ) means "salvation of Yahweh" (BDB 447d), a fitting title for the deliverance which the book describes.

**II. Authorship**

A. External Evidence: Because of the contrasting emphases of chapters 1–39 and 40–66, most scholars (e.g., S. R. Driver, *Intro. to Lit. of OT*, 204-8, 230-46; Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Intro. to OT,* 415-16, 452-81, etc.) since the rise of modern scholarship in the nineteenth century have challenged the unity of the book, saying that each of these two parts had a different author, the second part being written by a "Deutero-Isaiah" after the Babylonian captivity (586 BC). Some even say it had three authors (chs. 1–39; 40–55; 56–66), the last section being written by “Trito-Isaiah”). The unity is attacked on several fronts, each which is explained by conservative scholars who argue for the unity of the book (e.g., Edward J. Young, *Book of Isaiah*, 3:538-49; R. K. Harrison, *Intro. to the OT,* 764-800; cf. Archer, Merrill, etc.):

1. Accusation: Chapters 1–39 have an Assyrian background but chapters 40–66 have a Babylonian background.

Response: Babylon is mentioned more than twice as often in chapters 1–39 than in 40–66. The only shift is one of perspective from a present to a future time. Besides, Isaiah may have prophesied chapters 1–39 before Assyria conquered Israel and then preached chapters 40–66 afterwards concerning Babylon.

2. Accusation: The language, style, and theology of the two sections differ radically.

Response: The differences are exaggerated by critics and can be explained by different emphases (condemnation verses consolation). Critics often will not admit that content, time of writing, and circumstances normally affect an author's style.

3. Accusation: Messiah is presented as King in chapters 1–39 but as Suffering Servant in chapters 40–66.

Response: These two concepts are not contradictory and both depict each section.

4. Accusation: Isaiah could not have predicted the Babylonian captivity and return under Cyrus who is specifically mentioned by name (chs. 44–45) 150 years in advance.

Response: The accusation assumes the impossibility of predictive prophecy, despite God's claim to know the future (42:9). It also does not answer how many of Isaiah's prophecies were fulfilled even hundreds of years later in Jesus Christ (Isa. 53).

Furthermore, the New Testament upholds the unity of the book by attributing quotes from both sections to Isaiah. John 12:37-41 quotes Isaiah 6:9-10; 53:1 and Paul in Romans 9:27; 10:16-21 credits Isaiah with chapters 10, 53, and 65.

**1. External evidence.**

As already stated, Jewish tradition has uniformly ascribed the entire book to Isaiah. The Dead Sea Scrolls include a complete copy of the Book of Isaiah, thus pointing to its acceptance as one book by the Qumran community in the second century B.C. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament in the second century B.C., gives no indication that the Book of Isaiah was anything other than a single book.

Christian tradition has uniformly assumed that Isaiah was a single work until the 18th century when liberals began to challenge that position.

The New Testament writers assumed that Isaiah was the author of the entire book. In the New Testament all the major sections of Isaiah are quoted under the title Isaiah. For example, John 12:38 ascribes Isaiah 53:1 to Isaiah, and John 12:39-40 ascribes Isaiah 6:10 to Isaiah. Several portions of Isaiah 40-66, which are quoted in the New Testament, are ascribed to Isaiah (Isa. 40:3 in Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:2-3; John 1:23; Isa. 40:3-5 in Luke 3:4-6; Isa. 42:1-4 in Matt. 12:17-21; Isa. 53:1 in Rom. 10:16; Isa. 53:4 in Matt. 8:17; Isa. 53:7-8 in Acts 8:32-33; Isa. 65:1 in Rom. 10:20). Interestingly Isaiah is mentioned by name 22 times in the New Testament, more than any other Old Testament prophet.

Jesus Christ assumed that Isaiah was the author of the whole book. Jesus was given the “scroll of the Prophet Isaiah” (Luke 4:17-19) which He unrolled and from which he read Isaiah 61:1-2.

**2. Internal evidence.**

Some of the same terms occur throughout the whole book. For example, “the Holy One of Israel” a title for God, occurs 12 times in chapters 1-39 and 14 times in chapters 40-66. This title is used only 6 times elsewhere in the entire Old Testament (2 Kings 19:22; Pss. 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; Jer. 50:29; 51:5).

The “highway” motif occurs in several parts of the book (Isa. 11:16; 19:23; 35:8; 40:3; 62:10). The “remnant” theme occurs in 10:20-22; 11:11, 16; 28:5; 37:4, 31; 37:32 and also in 46:3 (KJV).

The establishment of justice is a theme in the first division of the book (9:7; 11:4; 16:5; 28:6; 32:16; 33:5) and in the second division (42:1, 3-4; 51:5). And “peace” is mentioned 11 times in chapters 1-39 and 15 times in chapters 40-66. “Joy” occurs 13 times in chapters 1-39 and 19 times in chapters 40-66. Also the Hebrew word X…wxSoÅn (“thornbush”) occurs in the Old Testament only in Isaiah 7:19 and 55:13 (“thornbushes” in 33:12 translates a different Heb. word).

Similar passages occur in both parts of the book:

1:15 59:3, 7

1:29 57:4-5

2:3 51:4

10:1-2 59:4-9

28:5 62:3

29:18 42:7

29:23 60:21

30:26 60:19

33:24 45:25

35:6 41:18

The theological unity of the book argues for a single author. This theological factor is strong evidence for persons which believe that the Bible is the Word of God. Chapters 40-55 emphasize the fact that [Vol. 1, p. 1031] God would deliver His people from captivity in Babylon. Through Isaiah God predicted that Cyrus would appear on the scene (44:28-45:1) and deliver Judah from captivity. In chapters 40-55 (esp. 43:5-6, 16, 19) the theological point is made that God was telling His people about the return from the Exile before-hand so that they would believe in Him when that event came to pass. In this way He differed greatly from the surrounding nations’ gods. As the sovereign God He can foretell events; this ability proves His uniqueness in contrast with false gods.

However, liberal scholars, denying the predictive element in Old Testament prophecy, say that the references to Cyrus mean that chapters 40-55 must have been written after Cyrus ruled Persia (559-530 B.C.). But if those chapters were written *after* the time of Cyrus this means that the God of Israel did not foretell that event and is no different from the gods of the surrounding nations. Therefore to say that chapters 40-55 were written after Cyrus’ time strips those chapters of theological validity and makes them almost meaningless” (John A. Martin, *BKC*, 1030-1031).

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B. Internal Evidence: Isaiah, the son of Amoz, is author (1:1). He married a prophetess (8:3) and had two sons: Shear-Jashub (7:3) and Shalal-Hash-Baz (8:3). Isaiah probably lived in Jerusalem as he had access to the royal court (7:3; 36:1–38:8; cf. 2 Kings 18:3–20:19; 2 Chron. 26:22). Tradition says he was a cousin of King Uzziah (Talmud *Meg.* 10b), but no firm evidence supports this (Martin, *BKC*, 1:1029). The Assumption of Isaiah (cf. LaSor, 366) records that he was martyred in Manasseh's day by being sawn in two (cf. Heb. 11:37).

**III. Circumstances**

A. Date: Isaiah's long ministry stretched through the reigns of four kings of Judah (1:1), starting during the reign of King Uzziah (790-739 BC; 6:1), likely a few years before Uzziah's death (2 Chron. 26:22). His ministry then spanned the reigns of Jotham (739-731 BC), Ahaz (731-715 BC), and Hezekiah (715-686 BC) since Isaiah wrote Hezekiah's biography (cf. 2 Chron. 32:32). He also lived at least until Sennacherib's death in 681 BC (37:38), showing that his ministry lasted at least 58 years (739-681 BC) and perhaps 65 years (745-680 BC; cf. LaSor)! Therefore, Isaiah prophesied both before and after the fall of Israel in 722 BC, which may explain the difference between chapters 1–39 (pre-fall?) and chapters 40–66 (post-fall?).

B. Recipients: The main hearers of his message were Jews in the southern kingdom of Judah who were seeing the destruction of the north and 46 of their own cities.

C. Occasion: Uzziah (Azariah) of Judah died just before Isaiah was called as a prophet (6:1), ending a 52 year reign as king. During his reign Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, made significant inroads into the west, conquering many lands and forcing the Israelites to pay tribute (cf. 2 Kings 15:29). Jotham, the next king, was a good man, but after him followed the wicked Ahaz (2 Kings 16:1-3). At the same time Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel rose up against Judah. This military threat frightened Ahaz into making alliances with the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser, which Isaiah condemned as displeasing to God (Isa. 7:1-19).

During Ahaz’s reign the northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians (722 BC) and Jerusalem was besieged by Israel and Syria (2 Kings 16:5, 6; 2 Chron. 28:5-15). During the reign of Hezekiah, the final king during Isaiah's ministry, Judah saw some positive reforms (2 Chron. 29:1–31:21). However, Isaiah ministered in a predominantly turbulent time in Judah's history. His message was that Judah should trust in God rather than in Assyria (against Israel and Syria) or Egypt or any of the other nations in the 12 nation anti-Assyrian coalition (Isa. 13–23). After all, only God could protect the nation and God alone had promised the glorious kingdom which Judah was seeking.

**IV. Characteristics**

A. Isaiah is probably the best known of all the prophetical books of the Bible as it contains many passages known by Bible students (e.g., 1:18; 7:14; 9:6-7; 26:8; 40:3, 31; 53).

B. It is the longest and most influential prophetical book, thus at the front of them in our Bibles.

C. Isaiah spoke more than any other prophet of the great kingdom Israel will enter at the Messiah's Second Advent (Martin, *BKC*, 1:1029). Although only the book of Revelation gives the *length* of this kingdom as 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-6), Isaiah describes the *nature* of this millennial kingdom the most thoroughly of all biblical books.

D. Isaiah shows the Bible in miniature: chapters 1–39 resemble God’s righteousness, holiness, and justice stressed in the 39 OT books, and the final 27 chapters (chapters 40–66) portray God's glory, compassion, and undeserved favor as seen in the 27 NT books (*TTTB*, 189).

E. Isaiah is one of the most quoted OT books in the NT (100 quotes), surpassed only by Psalms (119 or more quotes).

F. Many feel the prophecy of the king of Babylon’s fall (14:12-14) is Satan’s fall (cf. Ezek. 28).

G. Isaiah is the clearest revelation of the First Advent of Jesus in many ways: his virgin birth (7:14) and coming as a child (9:6) in humility (11:1; 42:1; 49:1; 52:17), as well as his atoning death (Isa. 53).

H. Isaiah is also known for his “servant” prophecies. Note that “servant” refers both to Israel (41:8; 42:19; 43:10; 44:1-2, 21; 45:4; 48:20) and to the Messiah (42:1; 49:3, 5-7; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11).

**Argument**

The Book of Isaiah breaks down easily into two major sections: chapters 1–39, which concern the judgment that Israel and the surrounding nations faced, and chapters 40–66, which comfort God's people with the salvation and restoration God promised His people. The first section probably was written before the Assyrian exile and the second after the fall of the northern kingdom. Since Judah sought its neighbor nations for security, both sections encourage a return to God in repentance–especially since He will restore all creation in a glorious kingdom under Messiah.

**Synthesis**

**Restoration of the created order**

**Messianic Prophecies**

**1–39 Judgment and salvation**

1–6 Judah's violations

1:1 Heading

1:2-31 Indictment

2–4 Future/present contrast 4:2 ff. Branch cleanses

5 Song of the vineyard

6 Isaiah Commissioned

7–12 Deliverance: near/far

7:1–9:7 Two sons 7:14 Virgin birth

9:8–10:4 Israel's exile 9:6-7 God, just, peace, right

10:5-34 Fall of Assyria

11–12 Messiah 11:1 Of Jesse: humble, just

13–23 Judgment on the nations (12 nation anti-Assyrian coalition)

13:1–14:27 Babylon

14:28-32 Philistia

15–16 Moab

17 Damascus/Israel

18 Ethiopia

19–20 Egypt

21:1-10 Babylon by the Sea

21:11-12 Edom

21:13-17 Arabia

22 Jerusalem

23 Tyre

24–27 Future judgment/restoration

24 Great Tribulation

25–27 Kingdom

25 Song of praise (Isaiah)

26 Song of praise (Redeemed)

27 Universal restoration

28–33 Woes (delight in God–not Egypt)

28 Israel

29 Judah

30–31 Egyptian alliance

32 Messiah 32:1 King of righteousness

33 Assyria

34–35 Vengeance/blessing

34 Judgment–nations

35 Blessing–Israel

36–39 Historical Parenthesis

36–37 Salvation from Assyria

38 Salvation from sickness

39 Sin leading to exile

**40–66 Salvation/restoration**

40–48 Shepherd of Israel 40:3 Forerunner

40 Comfort/Sovereignty 40:10f. Power, shepherd

41 Cyrus/Israel = Servant

42 Servants contrasted 42:1-3 Spirit, meek, just

43:1–44:5 Restoration

44:6–45:25 God's uniqueness vs. idols

46–48 Babylon's destruction

49–57 Suffering Servant

49–50 Rejection = Gentile salvation 49:1f. Rejection

51:1–52:12 Remnant should trust God

52:13–53:12 Vicarious death/exaltation 53:4-6 Vicarious, resurrected

54:1–56:8 Salvation for Jews/Gentiles

56:9–57:21 Condemnation on leaders

58–59 God's initiative

58 False profession

59 Sinful practices

60–66 Restoration under Messiah

60 Prosperity/peace

61:1–63:6 Servant 61:1f. Blessing, judgment

63:7–65:25 Remnant prayer

66 Restoration/eternal seed

**Outline**

**Summary Statement for the Book**

**Isaiah writes to encourage Judah that while God will *judge* for breaking His Law, He will also *restore the created order* through a godly remnant, a return to the land, and salvation through Messiah who will bring universal blessing.**

**Part 1 (Chapters 1–39)**

**God is justified in His future judgment of Judah by Babylonian exile for breaking His covenant in ungodly alliances, but He will also judge the nations and provide a godly remnant as well as blessing in the distant future through Messiah.**

# I. God shows how Judah has violated the Mosaic Covenant to justify His righteous judgment of the nation (Chs. 1–6).

## The heading of the book identifies the author, date, and nature of the prophecy (1:1).

### The prophecy is called a vision as it previews Judah's present and future history (1:1a).

### The author of the vision is Isaiah, son of Amoz, whose name means, "Yahweh is salvation," which summarizes the message of the book (1:1b).

### The time in which the vision takes place spans the reigns of four kings of Judah which totals at least 58 years (1:1c).

## Isaiah indicts Judah in a court case for its breach of covenant by substituting ritual for repentance to motivate the people to repent rather than be judged for rebellion (1:2-31).

## Isaiah contrasts the future restored nation to the present sinful nation to encourage the people to repent (Chs. 2-4).

### Isaiah affirms that Judah will be restored to the land in the future kingdom as an encouragement for the people to turn from their sin now (2:1-5).

### Isaiah warns of the impending Day of the LORD in the Babylonian invasion because of the pride and rebellion of Judah to exhort personal and national repentance (2:6–4:1).

### Isaiah affirms that holy survivors of Judah will be fruitful as a holy nation under the rule of Messiah (“the Branch of the LORD”) to encourage the people with what life will be like when national repentance comes (4:2-6).

## Isaiah's song of the vineyard indicts Judah in a parable for its worthless deeds in response to God's goodness to vindicate God for allowing the nation to suffer the consequences of its sin (Ch. 5).

### Through a parable, Isaiah's song of the vineyard indicts Judah for the nation's worthless deeds in response to God's goodness (5:1-7).

### Isaiah indicts Judah through woes and predicted judgment in captivity to vindicate God for allowing the nation to suffer the consequences of its sin (5:8-30).

## God commissions Isaiah to his ministry as prophet to His rebellious people sent to harden their hearts so that God's judgment is vindicated, while a holy remnant will remain (Ch. 6).

# II. God promises deliverance of Judah in both the near and distant future to encourage the people that, although He will judge them, He will not forget His promise to bless them through Messiah's reign in a new kingdom (Chs. 7–12).

**When God Takes His People to Court**

***Isaiah 1***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The response to the LORD’s indicting Judah in a court case for substituting ritual for repentance should be repentance for restoration (1:2-31).

# I. The *charge* against Judah was not knowing the LORD by forsaking the Mosaic covenant (1:2-4).

## Heaven and earth should witness God’s charge (1:2a).

## Judah’s people rebelled against God like they didn’t know him (1:2b-4).

### God’s children rebelled against him (1:2b).

### Even animals know their master cares for them (1:3a).

### However, Israel didn’t know God (1:3b).

# II. The *evidence* of Judah’s rituals with injustices shows God’s people guilty (1:5-15).

## Discipline by Assyria hadn’t led to repentance (1:5-9).

### Judah was like a guilty victim where further beating won’t do any good (1:5-6).

### God’s punishment by Assyria ravaged Judah’s cities but still left a remnant (1:7-9).

## Rituals without justice only mocked God (1:10-15).

### Judah’s leaders were no better than the immoral rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:10).

### God despised bloody hands giving sacrifices, offerings, monthly and annual festivals, and prayers (1:11-15).

# III. The response of God to Judah’s aiding the oppressed would be restoration (1:16-31).

## Actions toward the defenseless would result in either prosperity or judgment (1:16-20).

### Giving justice would result in eating the best food (1:16-19).

### Rebellion by injustice would end in “being eaten” by death (1:20).

## God will follow his judgment against Jerusalem’s injustices and idolatry with restoring the city [when Messiah rules] (1:21-31).

### Injustice will be removed by God’s judgment (1:21-25).

### Just judges will replace idolatrous rebels (1:26-31).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will choose relationship and repentance over ritual and judgment.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: Sometimes we substitute ritual for relationship.

### Need: How would you fair if the Judge knew your motives for rituals completely?

### Subject: How should we respond to an all-knowing Judge who takes us to court?

### Background: Today we will look at one of the world’s most famous court cases.

### Preview: Every legal case has three parts—the charge, the evidence, and the verdict—so we will see these three today.

### Text: Isaiah 1 provides the setting for today’s case.

# I. The Charge: God’s people do not know him (1:2-4)!

## The *charge* against Judah was not knowing the LORD by forsaking the Mosaic covenant (1:2-4).

### Heaven and earth should witness God’s charge (1:2a).

### Judah’s people rebelled against God like they didn’t know him (1:2b-4).

## Do you know God?

### We all know *about* God—but do we know *him*?

### We set ourselves up as a god by not abiding by what he says.

# II. The Evidence: Rituals with injustices shows God’s people guilty (1:5-15).

## Exhibit A: Discipline by Assyria hadn’t led to repentance (1:5-9).

## Exhibit B: Rituals without justice only mocked God (1:10-15).

### Judah’s leaders were no better than the immoral rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:10).

### God despised bloody hands giving sacrifices, offerings, monthly and annual festivals, and prayers (1:11-15).

## We are also guilty of rituals with injustice today.

# III. The Verdict: When rituals replace relationship, repent for restoration (Main Idea).

## The blessing of restoration after judgment exhorted Judah to aid the oppressed (1:16-31).

### Actions toward the defenseless would result in either prosperity or judgment (1:16-20).

### God will follow his judgment against Jerusalem’s injustices and idolatry with restoring the city [when Messiah rules] (1:21-31).

## Will God’s promise of blessing prod us to get our act together too?

(How should we respond to an all-knowing Judge who takes us to court?)

# Conclusion

### When rituals replace relationship, repent for restoration (MI repeated).

### God’s court case has three elements:

#### The Charge: God’s people do not know him (1:2-4)!

#### The Evidence: Rituals with injustices shows God’s people guilty (1:5-15).

#### The Verdict: God’s people can choose judgment or blessing.

### Application: Here’s how you can choose your own sentence!

#### Do you have a relationship with God? Or are you one of these children of verses 2-3 that have rebelled or don’t understand God?

#### Do you put your security in any rituals?

##### “If I only can take the Lord’s Supper, I will be healed.”

##### “I was baptized, so I must be a Christian.”

##### “I pray three times a day before meals and even fast occasionally!”

#### What sin of injustice do you need to abhor? Don’t just dislike sin—disdain it!



**Rick Griffith**

27 September 2015

Message 1 of 5

**When God Takes His People to Court**

***Isaiah 1***

# Introduction

### Sometimes we substitute ritual for relationship.

### How would you fair if the Judge knew your motives for rituals completely?

### How should we respond to an all-knowing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who takes us to court?

# I. The Charge: God’s people do not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ him (1:2-4)!

## The *charge* against Judah was not knowing the LORD by forsaking the Mosaic covenant (1:2-4).

### Heaven and earth should witness God’s charge (1:2a).

### Judah’s people rebelled against God like they didn’t know him (1:2b-4).

## Do you know God?

### We all know *about* God—but do we know *him*?

### We set ourselves up as a god by not abiding by what he says.

# II. The Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with injustices shows God’s people guilty (1:5-15).

## Exhibit A: Discipline by Assyria hadn’t led to repentance (1:5-9).

## Exhibit B: Rituals without justice only mocked God (1:10-15).

### Judah’s leaders were no better than the immoral rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:10).

### God despised bloody hands giving sacrifices, offerings, monthly and annual festivals, and prayers (1:11-15).

## We are also guilty of rituals with injustice today.

# III. The Verdict: When rituals replace relationship, repent for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

## The blessing of restoration after judgment exhorted Judah to aid the oppressed (1:16-31).

### Actions toward the defenseless would result in either prosperity or judgment (1:16-20).

### God will follow his judgment against Jerusalem’s injustices and idolatry with restoring the city [when Messiah rules] (1:21-31).

## Will God’s promise of blessing prod us to get our act together too?

(How should we respond to an all-knowing Judge who takes us to court?)

# Conclusion

### When rituals replace relationship, repent for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Main Idea).

### Here’s how you can choose restoration!

#### Do you have a relationship with God? Or are you one of these children of verses 2-3 that have rebelled or don’t understand God?

#### Do you put your security in any rituals?

##### “If I only can take the Lord’s Supper, I will be healed.”

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##### “I pray three times a day before meals and even fast occasionally!”

#### What sin of injustice do you need to abhor? Don’t just dislike sin—disdain it!