

A Trek Through Isaiah 03 - 1:5 - 2:4

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Comprehensive failure, complete restoration 1:2-31 (cont'd)

Context

- In the author's preface to the prophecy ch 1-5
- In the preface to the preface ch 1

1:5-9 The desolation of Judah

- Because of their sin, they and their land are devastated. But a remnant will be preserved.

Judah is stricken

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.

- Moses prophesied this in his song
 - Deu 32:23-25 'I will heap calamities on them; I will exhaust My arrows on them. 'They will be wasted by famine, and consumed by plague And bitter destruction; And the teeth of beasts I will send upon them, With the venom of crawling things of the dust. 'Outside the sword will bereave, And inside terror— Both choice man and virgin, The nursing baby with the man of gray hair.

Deu 32:29-30 "Would that they were wise, that they had insight into this, That they would understand their future! "How could one pursue one thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And Yahweh had handed them over?

- Isaiah asks the same question: why will you continue to rebel and be struck down?

Metaphor of a sick body

1:6 From the sole of the foot even to the head There is nothing sound in it, Only bruises, wounds, and raw wounds, Not pressed out, not bandaged, Not softened with oil.

- 3 descriptions of hurt: No part well
- 3 descriptions of common remedies: No care given

Reality of a sick land (v7-8)

1:7-8 Your land is desolate; Your cities are burned with fire; Your fields—strangers are devouring them in your presence; It is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. 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.

- Judah during one of the foreign invasions
- Desolate. Overcome by foreigners.
- Daughter of Zion. Precious child of Yahweh
- Shelter in a vineyard. Abandoned after the harvest, useless and deteriorating

God's curses coming to pass

- Dt 28:22 "Yahweh will strike you with consumption and with fever and with inflammation and with fiery heat and with the sword and with scorching wind and with mildew, and they will pursue you until you perish.
- Dt 28:33 "A people whom you do not know shall eat up the produce of your ground and all your labors, and you will never be anything but oppressed and crushed all your days.

God's grace (v9)

1:9 Unless Yahweh of hosts Had left us a few survivors, We would be like Sodom, We would be like Gomorrah.

- They had made themselves like S&G in sin; deserved to be made like S&G in destruction. But God was merciful to save a remnant.
- Moses' song in Deu 32:26-27 'I would have said, "I will cut them to pieces; I will cause the memory of them to cease from men," Had I not feared the provocation by the enemy, Lest their adversaries misjudge, Lest they say, "Our hand is triumphant, And Yahweh has not done all this."
 - Divine grace to preserve God's name.

1:10-20 False and true religion

- Judah's religion was abhorrent to Yahweh because of their iniquity. He wants righteousness. They must choose.

The call to the people (v10)

1:10 Hear the word of Yahweh, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the law of our God, You people of Gomorrah.

- Hear the word of Yahweh,
 - Call to hear
- Sodom ... Gomorrah
 - Word play
 - V9 Not like Sodom/Gomorrah: a remnant preserved
 - V10 Like Sodom/Gomorrah: wicked
- Henry says this verse was what prompted Isaiah's execution by the Jewish leaders.

Their religion is rejected. (v11-15)

1:11-15 “What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?” Says Yahweh. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats I take no pleasure. “When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? “Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of convocation— I cannot endure wickedness and the solemn assembly. “My soul hates your new moon festivals and your appointed times, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. “So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Indeed, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood.

- What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?
 - Judah’s religion
 - Many sacrifices, offerings, convocations, feasts. They believed that correct performance brings righteousness
 - Rom 10:2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.
 - Zealous but not what Yahweh wanted.
- God's response: abhorrence and rejection
 - V11 I have had enough...
 - V13 “Bring your worthless offerings no longer...
 - V13 wickedness and the solemn assembly
 - Religion that allows/encourages wickedness
 - V14-15 “My soul hates your new moon festivals and your appointed times, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. “So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Indeed, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen.
- What was wrong: iniquity
 - V13 I cannot endure wickedness and the solemn assembly.
 - v15 your hands are full of blood.
- Other prophets said the same:
 - Jer 6:20 “For what purpose does frankincense come to Me from Sheba And the sweet cane from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, And your sacrifices are not pleasing to Me.”
 - Mic 6:7-8 Is Yahweh pleased with thousands of rams, With ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does Yahweh require of you But to do justice, to love lovingkindness, And to walk humbly with your God?
- Henry notes: When affliction comes, wicked men are much more willing to increase their devotions rather than to give up their sin.

Yahweh desires righteousness (v16-17)

1:16-17 "Wash yourselves, purify yourselves; Remove the evil of your deeds from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Execute justice for the orphan, Plead for the widow.

- Wash yourselves, purify yourselves. Repentance
- Remove the evil of your deeds from before My eyes. Salvation: ceremonial offerings looking to the coming Messiah.
- Cease to do evil, Learn to do good...Sanctification
- Note the simplicity of what is required.

They must choose (v18-20).

1:18-20 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says Yahweh, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool. "If you are willing and obey, You will eat the best of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You will be eaten by the sword." For the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.

- Two alternatives presented: willing/obey, refuse/rebel. Each includes disposition and action.
- Two outcomes: eat and be eaten
- Call to consider the alternatives. Let us reason together.
- The same choice as in Dt 28-29.
- Note the longsuffering of the LORD.
- Note the contrast with mere religion

1:21-31 Zion redeemed

- God's city is corrupt but will be redeemed and restored to righteousness.

Lament (v21-23)

1:21-23 How the faithful city has become a harlot, She who was full of justice! Righteousness once lodged in her, But now murderers. Your silver has become dross, Your drink diluted with water. Your rulers are rebels And companions of thieves; Everyone loves a bribe And pursues rewards. They do not execute justice for the orphan, Nor does the widow's plea come before them.

- V21 Was: faithful...full of justice...righteousness. Is: a harlot...murderers
 - How far the city had fallen
 - As Jesus lamenting over Jerusalem in Lk 13:34-35 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you did not want it! "Behold, your house is left to you desolate..."
- V22 Your silver has become dross, Your drink diluted with water.
 - Was pure. Is contaminated
- V23 Your rulers are rebels And companions of thieves; Everyone loves a bribe And pursues rewards. They do not execute justice for the orphan, Nor does the widow's plea come before them.
 - Injustice
 - The rulers should have protected the people but were themselves wicked.
 - Psa 50:18 "When you see a thief, you are pleased with him, And you associate with adulterers.

God's response: remove impurity, restore righteousness (v24-26)

1:24-26 Therefore the Lord, Yahweh of hosts, The Mighty One of Israel, declares, "Ah, I will be comforted concerning My adversaries, And I will avenge Myself on My enemies. "I will also turn My hand against you, And will smelt away your dross as with lye And will remove all your alloy. "Then I will have your judges return as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning; Afterwards you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful town."

- V24 Lord, Yahweh of hosts, Mighty One of Israel: emphasizing sovereignty, power but also commitment to His people.
- V24 I will be comforted concerning My adversaries, And I will avenge Myself on My enemies.
 - CALVIN notes that God cannot rest until He takes vengeance on His enemies.
 - Here His adversaries are His own people.
- V25 "I will also turn My hand against you, And will smelt away your dross as with lye And will remove all your alloy.
 - Heb always means take action against. But here Yahweh's action against His people results in redemption.
- V26 "Then I will have your judges return as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning; Afterwards you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful town."
 - God will restore Jerusalem by (1) installing good leaders (2) giving the people a spirit of justice and righteous
- V26 inclusio w v21

Choice (v27-28)

1:27-28 Zion will be redeemed with justice And her repentant ones with righteousness. But transgressors and sinners will be broken together, And those who forsake Yahweh will come to an end.

- Repentant ones > redeemed
- Rebels & sinners > broken
- Moses laid this choice before Israel in 1400 BC.
 - Deu 28:1 “Now it will be, if you diligently listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I am commanding you today, Yahweh your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.
 - Deu 28:15 “But it will be, if you do not listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, to keep and to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I am commanding you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:
- 700y later Isaiah presents the same choice. Note the longsuffering of the LORD.
- Note the contrast with the religious practices which were supposed to make the people right with God, and which He had condemned.

Warning to the wicked (v29-31)

1:29-31 For you will be ashamed of the oaks which you have desired, And you will be humiliated because of the gardens which you have chosen. For you will be like an oak whose leaf withers away Or as a garden that has no water. 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.

- Sure judgment: broken, ashamed, withered, destroyed
- Dual imagery
 - V29 oaks which you have desired: sacred groves of idol worship
 - V30 oak that withers away: a strong man who fades away
- Repeated at the end of the book 66:24 “Then they will go forth and look On the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die And their fire will not be quenched; And they will be an object of contempt to all mankind.”

The ideal lost and found 2:1 - 4:6

What might have been (and will be) for God’s people

Structure

- 2:1 Introduction
- 2:2-4 Zion above all
- 2:5 - 4:1 Judah’s current reality
- 4:2-6 Zion restored

2:1 Introduction

2:1 The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz beheld concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

- Another introduction.
- Likely applies to ch 2-5

2:2-4 God's Ideal for His People

- Almost identical to Micah 4:1-4. Maybe a well-known prophecy.
- Abrupt change in tone from judgment and despair to glory.
 - Indicates the certainty of the future
 - Encourages the people to endure

Jerusalem will be lifted above all, both physically and spiritually

2:2 Now it will be that In the last days The mountain of the house of Yahweh Will be established as the head of the mountains, And will be lifted up above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it.

- In the last days. In the millennium. Partial fulfillment in the church
- The mountain of the house of Yahweh. The temple mount in Jerusalem
- Will be established as the head of the mountains, And will be lifted up above the hills...
 - Standard Reformation theology sees this passage as referring to the church. Better read literally as describing the exaltation of Jerusalem
 - physically. Zec 14:10 All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise...
 - Spiritually. Zech 8:3 "Thus says Yahweh, 'I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of Yahweh of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain.'

All nations will come to learn the ways of Yahweh

2:3 And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, To the house of the God of Jacob, That He may instruct us from His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion the law will go forth And the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.

- To go...to learn...to do
- Only from Zion

He will rule the nations

2:4 And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples;

- All submit to His authority
- Psa 2:6-12
 - God speaks
 - “But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain.”
 - Messiah speaks
 - “I will surely tell of the decree of Yahweh: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth as Your possession. ‘You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like a potter’s vessel.’”
 - Here is the rule of an absolute monarch who knows all.
 - The Psalmist speaks
 - So now, O kings, show insight; Take warning, O judges of the earth. Serve Yahweh with fear And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

There will be world peace

2:4 And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.

All this is certain

2:2 Now it will be...

- Assurance that God's promises would be fulfilled.

Applications

- In 1:5-8 Isaiah points to the condition of Judah as evidence of Yahweh's displeasure with them.
 - When we are afflicted, does it always indicate that the Lord is displeased with us? No. Ro 5:3-5 afflictions bring proven character and hope; Ja 1:2-4 trials bring us to perfection, lacking nothing; Heb 12:7 trials are the discipline of a loving Father.
 - Can affliction mean that the Lord is displeased with us? Yes. 1 Cor 11:30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.
- In 1:10-20 Isaiah condemns Judah's false religion.
 - What was wrong with their religion? Focus on performing the rituals, no righteousness, no justice, no conviction of sin or repentance.
 - Can we fall into the same trap today? Yes. How? Focus on externals, no righteousness, no conviction of sin or repentance.
- 1:21-31 speaks of Zion's present corruption and eventual glory.
 - How is one redeemed who lives in a corrupt culture? 1:27 repent and believe, receiving Jesus' righteousness.
- How does 2:2-4 encourage us to live for Jesus today? Right will prevail and God's word will be fulfilled