

# ISAIAH 1



God consistently warned His people of their impending doom. The era of the kings had been and overwhelming failure, and things were moving from bad to worse. Along the way, God raised up prophets who spoke to the people reminding them of their covenant commitment to God. Our Bible contains the writings of five major prophets and twelve minor prophets. When you read the words “major” and “minor”, don’t assume that the major prophets are more important. The distinction is simply based on the length of the books. There’s much debate as to the exact time when each of the prophets spoke to the people, but we can divide them into 3 main groups: 1) those who wrote before Israel was kicked out of the promised land, 2) those who wrote while the nations were living as exiles outside of the land, and 3) those who wrote after some Israelites were allowed to return to the land. One of the most prominent prophets to warn the nation before they were judged was Isaiah. His opening chapter, addressed to the southern tribes in Judah, demonstrated the enormity of God’s anger over the sin of the people. Though the chapter hints at the offer of forgiveness, it is clear that God is about to judge severely.

## JEREMIAH 2:4-13



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God accused His people of two sins. First, the abandoned God. This choice was stunning because as Jeremiah reminded the people that God had been faithful to them, leading them since their time of slavery in Egypt. Second, and equally disastrous, they had created their own gods to worship. Jeremiah, speaking on behalf of God, compared this to a cistern, a reservoir in the ground that held water. The nation chose to abandon the cistern choosing to dig their own cisterns that couldn't even hold water, much less provide water to meet their needs. The coming judgement was their own fault, a reality God pointed out time and again through prophets like Jeremiah, both here and in the book of Lamentations. The downfall of Israel reminds us that sin always has consequences, and we have no one to blame but ourselves.

## JEREMIAH 31:31-34



The prophet Jeremiah used the familiar word “covenant” to describe the way God would deal with His people. Prophets like Jeremiah often spoke of the future in varying stages. At times, the prophets described the immediate future. The book of Jeremiah referred to the time when the nation would be judged for their sin and removed from the land. Other times, they spoke of the distant future- when the fulfillment of God’s promises through Jesus would come to pass. Still other times, they described the final judgment when Jesus will return and declare His final victory. Here Jeremiah spoke of the second stage. After God’s first judgment, He would fulfill His covenant by forgiving the sins of His people and by giving them a new heart capable of loving God and others as they were created to do in the first place.

## JEREMIAH 32:36-44



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God often spoke of His personal relationship to Israel with this language—“They will be my people, and I will be their God.” It’s amazing to consider the grace of God in allowing an entire nation of sinful people to claim God as their God. He went even further and said that He would find great joy in doing good to His people after they experienced the consequences for their sin. This revealed God’s deep love for His people. His love is altogether different that the love we express to one another. It’s uncommon for someone to find joy in doing good to someone who has done them great harm, but this kind of love God shows us through Jesus. He died for us to become lovable. He simply delights in showing love to sinners.

# ISAIAH 53



Not all that the prophets said or wrote was bad news. Remember, the future promises of God are still in effect. He would still defeat Satan, sin and death through a child of Eve, the line of Abraham, the tribe of Juda, and the throne of David. No amount of human sin could stop this from happening. Isaiah 53 is filled with the good news of this coming One, though the images used are not what most would expect from the coming Savior. We're given one of the most vivid pictures of the crucifixion of Jesus found in the Old Testament. The Savior would be crushed for human sin, and like a sacrificial lamb, slaughtered so that we might live. Even more striking, we're told that this is God's will—it was God's plan all along to kill this One so that sinners could be forgiven.