

Isaiah chapter 1

What is wrong with the world today? You can list many. You might say people are selfish, immoral, bias, prejudice, etc. You might also say the world is full of wars and hatred, corruptions, the earth environment has been destroyed, etc. You can see similar situation at the time of Isaiah. The book of Isaiah is the first book of Major Prophets in OT. Prophet Isaiah prophesied around 745 to 685 BC under the reign of four Judean kings: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isa.1:1), and he likely met his death under the fifth king - Manasseh who is an evil king. The later chapters in the book of Isaiah gives the most comprehensive prophetic description of Jesus Christ.

During that time, Israel was divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). Isaiah is likely live in or near Jerusalem in Judah. The earlier chapters mainly described the sinful nature of Judah and God's judgement and plan. The northern kingdom Israel also had similar corrupt morals and sins. Today we mainly study Isaiah chapter 1 that tells what's wrong at that time and the similar situation today.

1) Children deny the Father

Isa. 1:2-9 described the Israelites' denial of God. They (God's children) rebelled against God the Father. The nation (Judah) is filled with sin. They have forsaken God and all His teachings.

God let the consequence of rebellion upon them as stated in part of Isa. 1:7 "your fields are being stripped by foreigners right before you, laid waste as when overthrown by strangers."

We also can evaluate the conditions of the world today. Problems are everywhere including wars, lots of refugees, all types of crimes, destruction of the earth environment, etc. Many western nations were followers of God years ago, and now many nations have turned away from God. Those countries are going downhill on morals and the government officials are highly immoral persons. Many individuals in those nations are also turned away from God. World problems today are consequence of not following God and His teaching. However, God has mercy as stated in Isa. 1:9 "Unless the Lord Almighty had left us some survivors, we would have become like Sodom and Gomorrah." God is also patient with us as stated in II Peter 3:9 "he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." God want all the people in the world to turn back to Him.

2) Not hearing the Lord's word

Isa. 1:10-15 described the root problem. The problem of the Israelites at that time as well people today are not listening to God's voice and His words (teachings). God was very unhappy about their meaningless offerings and worthless assemblies. Their prayers are not in God's will. Today, many people go to churches occasionally but they are not true worshipers. God cannot bear people that give offerings without knowing the true meaning and purpose, and have church gatherings without true worship. In another words, they don't read, meditate, understand and follow the teaching of God.

3) The situation can be changed (Isa. 1:16-20)

Isa. 1:16-17 summaries the needed changes that is to stop doing wrong (sin) and learn to do right. Verse 17 lists some "do right" examples such as seek justice, defend the oppressed and have mercy and caring for the helpless because the society was lack of that at that time as well as today.

God has mercy but requires us to turn back to Him as stated in verses 18 and 19 "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow...". Bible verse in New Testament like I John 1:9 stated "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Jesus already died for our sins, and all we need is to repent and accept Him as your savior and Lord. If you have not repented and accepted Jesus as your savior and Lord, you can do it today. If you have, you should examine yourself and confess your sins to Him. Then, you as an individual and as a part of the body of Christ do what is right in God's sight.

God is very clear on what is right and wrong but also has mercy and love. My wife often imitates God's method in her Sunday School teaching. She often asks her students and former students for feedback. Most of them said she is very good, very nice and love us, but she is very "straight". Need to fear her if you are not doing things right.

We need to fear God and listen to His warnings. We shall be thankful for His grace and mercy towards us. We as God's children and citizens of His kingdom shall do our parts of keeping God's commands including love others and doing good, share the Good News and pray for our nation and other nations.

We also need to teach our younger generations to know God's teaching on what is right and wrong with love and mercy.