

Isaiah's Message to America

DUMBER THAN AN OX

TEXT: Isaiah 1, 3

INTRODUCTION: For over a hundred years of the divided kingdom, the northern kingdom of Israel had enjoyed... no, maybe that is not the correct word ... endured a prophetic voice. God had sent Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Hosea, and Amos. Each of them called God's people to repentance and warned them of God's coming judgment if they did not turn from their sin.

But during the ministry of all these prophets in the north, there was no prophet in the south. Not that the people of Judah had no word from the Lord. They had the Torah (our Genesis through Deuteronomy), the psalms, and the proverbs. But they had no prophet until God sent the man who is often considered Israel's greatest prophet. His name was Isaiah. He would preach the Word of the Lord in Judah for 51 years, through the reigns of four kings. He would finally be sawn in half and become a martyr for his testimony and faithfulness to the One True and Living God.

He began to preach the message of God with these words:

Isaiah 1:2

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!

For the LORD has spoken:

"I have nourished and brought up children,

And they have rebelled against Me;

Like his prophet brothers in the north, Isaiah preached a similar message to the wayward people of God. And why should we be surprised? He and his prophet brothers had the same Father, and His word was and is always consistent.

Isaiah did not merely rail against the sin and wrongdoing of his countrymen. With the Spirit of God as the author of his sermons, he cut to the quick to point out both the source of the problem and the solution to it.

And I would say to you dear brother and sister, even while I say these same words to myself, for I claim no exemption to this message, that what God exposed as the source of the problem in Israel and Judah and what God revealed as the only solution to that problem, through the words of Isaiah is as applicable to the United States of America as it ever was in the Promised Land.

Ultimately, neither Israel nor Judah heeded this message and they both reaped the judgment of God that destroyed their cities, caused many to die, and took vast portions of their population into captivity. And if we in America do not heed God's Word even worse will befall us as a nation and as a people.

Therefore, will you join me in examining these next five weeks a study of the application of Isaiah's prophetic message to The United States of America?

The Holy Spirit caused Isaiah to begin with a clear statement of the problem.

Isaiah 1:3

The ox knows its owner
And the donkey its master's crib;
But Israel does not know,
My people do not consider."

The word "consider" may also be translated "understand."

May I be plain spoken? God says, "My people are dumber than an ox."

The prophet Hosea said the same thing to the people of the northern kingdom.

Hosea 4:1

Hear the word of the LORD,
You children of Israel,
For the LORD *brings* a charge against the inhabitants of the land:
"There is no truth or mercy
Or knowledge of God in the land.

I. THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM IS THAT PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW GOD.

What do people not know about God? Well, let's start at the beginning, like at Genesis 1 and 2.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

A. People do not know that God is Creator.

No one believes that this grand piano could be produced by the chance interaction of molecules over the supposed 13.7 billion years of the universe, but billions of people believe that they themselves were thus assembled by the mindless, purposeless, random process of evolution even though their very own mind and body are infinitely more complex than this beautifully crafted instrument.

This piano cannot move itself. It can make no sound on its own. It cannot compose music. It cannot reproduce. As limited as this beautiful instrument is, we know someone made it. It did not happen by chance.

Each of us can move ourselves, make sounds, enter into conversation, even reproduce another human being at least partially like ourselves; and we can do a thousand other things that are complex and require intelligence.

It is the epitome of foolishness to acknowledge that the grand piano has to be made, but that a human being can come about by random chance.

But as the Scripture says, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”

But that is not all that has been revealed that is ignored and therefore is not known.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

B. People do not know that life is sacred.

Hitler in the Holocaust – 14,000,000 half of which were Jews

Killed by Stalin – 20,000,000

Killed by Hitler – 34,000,000

Killed by Mao – 40,000,000

Killed in the U.S. by abortion since 1973 – 57,000,000 + and rising

But still that is not all

Genesis 2:22, 24 ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

C. People do not know that God instituted, defined, and established marriage.

In our reading for tomorrow, in Isaiah 5, you will find these words.

Isaiah 5:20

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

When people start calling evil good and good evil it is definitive proof that they do not know God. This is not what I say. This is not just what Isaiah says. This is what God says, and He says it again and exceedingly plainly in Romans chapter 1.

Romans 1:18–28

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

²⁴ Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. ²⁷ Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ...

Many Americans no longer believe in God as Creator, so therefore they do not believe in God as law giver or as the arbitrator of right and wrong. So God had given them up to a debased mind and they call that which is evil like homosexuality good. They call that which is good, the exclusivity of marriage for one man and one woman, evil, because they do not know God!

Furthermore,

D. People do not know that anything contrary to the commands of God is sin.

Genesis 2:16–17 ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

E. People do not know that sin brings death.

Death is separation.

- **Physical death is the separation of the body from the soul and the spirit.**
- **Death of the soul is the separation of the mind from the truths of God and separation of the feelings from the affections of God.**
- **Death of the spirit is separation of the spirit from God for eternity in hell.**

F. People do not know God. Many people know something of their own construct of God, but what they know is not the God of the Bible Who alone is the One True and Living God.

When people say, “Well, my god does this or my god would not do that, and they describe a god contrary to the One revealed in Scripture,

THEY DO NOT KNOW GOD!

Just as surely as men and women can construct a god of their own liking with their hands from wood or stone, so also men and women can and do construct gods of their own liking in their minds.

But thinking something or even believing something with all sincerity does not make it so.

I can think or believe I have a hundred thousand dollars in my bank account, but I cannot spend it. As soon as I try to go beyond what is actually in the bank, my debit card quits working and I get all kinds of nasty little notes from my financial institution.

Folks, **you can construct whatever kind of god you desire in your mind, but**

- **he or she will not answer your prayers**

- **will not transform your life for good**
- **cannot and will not help you with life's struggles**
- **and will not bring you to heaven when you die!**

G. In addition to the problem of not knowing about the One True and Living God who has revealed Himself in the Scriptures, there is also the problem of knowing about this God but not knowing Him personally.

I know a lot about President Obama.

I do not know him personally.

You can know about God. What you know may be perfectly correct, and your knowledge of Him even sufficient, **and still not know Him personally.**

I am confident there are people in this place today like this.

- You know about God.
- The God you know about is not made up in your mind, He is the God of the Bible.
- But you do not know Him personally!

H. **The only way to come to know God personally is through faith in Jesus Christ His Son.**

John 14:6–11 ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷ "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

⁸ Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹ Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

CONCLUSION: May I conclude this morning by helping those of you who are here today, but you do not know God. Maybe you do not know the truth about Him, or maybe you know some or much of that truth, but you do not know Him personally. You have no relationship with Him, so He is not transforming your life, and if you died right now you would fall straight into hell.

1. **God created you.** He not only created humanity, He created you.
2. **God knows you.** You may not know Him but He knows you. He knows your name. The hairs on your head are numbered. For me, you may think that's no big deal, but for you that is something! Even your mama doesn't know that about you. God knows you.
3. And even though God knows everything about you, **God still loves you.**

4. **God wants to have a relationship and fellowship with you.** That is why He made you. And He wants to have that fellowship with you **for eternity.**
5. But sin in your life keeps that from happening. **Sin separates you from God because God is holy.**
6. But **God loved you so much that He sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross to pay the penalty for your sin and to purchase the gift of eternal life.**
7. **He offers that gift to you** right here and right now.
8. You can receive that gift by believing that Jesus, God's Son, died for you upon the cross and rose from the dead and inviting Him to become the Lord and Master of your life.

Romans 10:9 ... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

9. **When you trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior,** you become the child of God. You are adopted into God's family. Then He not only knows you. **You know God.**