Criticism and Comfort

Isaiah 1:1 – 2:5

The Prophets

- The Major Prophets in the English Bible
 - Isaiah
 - Jeremiah and Lamentations
 - Ezekiel
 - Daniel

- The Latter Prophets in the Hebrew Bible
 - Isaiah
 - Jeremiah
 - Ezekiel
 - The Twelve = the Minor Prophets all in one book

• As a group, the Latter Prophets provide the canon with an interpretation of the history that has already been described in the Law and the Former Prophets ... Israel's consistent rebellion against God produces judgment, but a remnant of faithful persons who never turn away from the Lord will always exist.

- Paul R. House



- The books of prophecy can seem complicated.
- There are three main topics:
 - 1. Rebellion
 - 2. Results
 - 3. Restoration accomplished through the faithful remnant.

Isaiah's Major Characters:

- Isaiah
- Yahweh
- King Ahaz of Judah
- King Hezekiah of Judah
- Israel's Remnant
- Assyria
- Babylon

Isaiah's Plot (from *OT Survey* by House and Mitchell):

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- 4. God ultimately redeems persons from many nations through the work of the coming son of David.

Isaiah the Prophet:

- A very long ministry 40 to 50 years.
- Educated (aristocratic?) background had personal access to the kings in Jerusalem.
- His book is excellent literature and is deeply theological.
- He lived to see the fall of the northern Kingdom of Israel.

Once again, our three main topics of prophecy

- 1. Rebellion
- 2. Results
- 3. Restoration

Criticism and Comfort Isaiah 1:1

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- This shows the long ministry of Isaiah.
- Again, he was active for 40 50 years.

Criticism and Comfort Isaiah 1:2-4

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- The topic here is clearly rebellion.
- Israel doesn't appreciate their special relationship with the Lord.
- This leads them into open national sin.

Criticism and Comfort Isaiah 1:5-9

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- This passage shows us the results of persistent, national sin.
- The "few survivors" in v.9 are the remnant we spoke of earlier.
- The restoration of the nation is based upon the godly remnant that eventually returns.

Criticism and Comfort Isaiah 1:10-11

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- God compares the nation to Sodom and Gomorrah.
- This is not a compliment.
- But notice their persistent religiosity.

Criticism and Comfort Isaiah 1:12-17

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- The constant practice of religion combined with corruption throughout society.
- The "fatherless and widows" are the most vulnerable members of society.

Criticism and Comfort Isaiah 1:18-20

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- The themes of rebellion results and restoration all appear in these three verses.
- 1:18 is a verse worth remembering.

Criticism and Comfort Isaiah 1:21-23

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- This illustrates the nation's rebellion.
- Everyone is selfish and the most vulnerable members of society are ignored.
- God portrays Israel as an unfaithful wife.

Criticism and Comfort Isaiah 1:24-31

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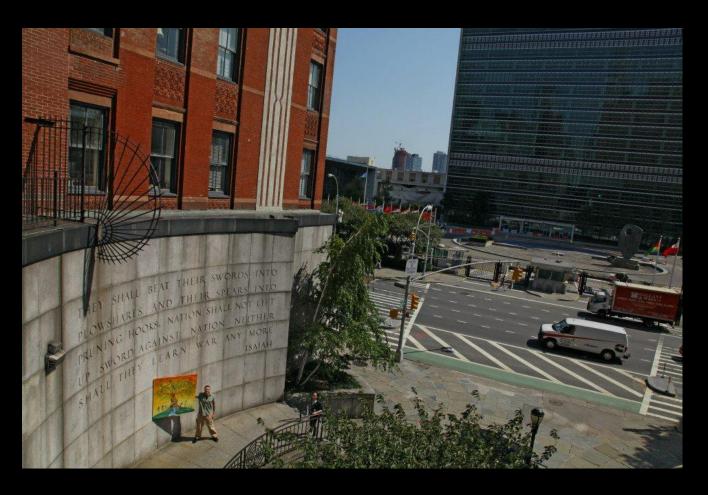
• The themes here alternate between the results of rebellion and restoration.

Criticism and Comfort Isaiah 2:1-5

Criticism and Comfort Isaiah 2:1-5

- Here the theme is clearly restoration.
- These are prophecies that have yet to be fulfilled.
- The theme that the Lord will become the God of all nations takes us back to God's blessing of Abraham.

Criticism and Comfort Isaiah 2:1-5



and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

Isaiah
at Ralph Bunche Park
across from the U.N., NYC

- Israel tried to hide her rebellion with a veneer of religious hypocrisy.
- Their religion might have been sincere at a sentimental level, but it never led to a change of heart.



The only remedy for the situation of Jerusalem is a genuine return to the Lord, which will involve far more than just religious rituals. Such rituals can fool others into thinking we are in a right relationship with God, but God can see through hypocrisy.

Edouard Kitoko Nsiku,
South African Theological Seminary



What he requires is not rituals but a sanctified life, manifested in love for one's neighbour. This love must be shown in our economic and political behaviour, as well as in our religious behaviour.

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- God viewed Israel as an unfaithful wife.
- Jesus called the people of his day "an adulterous generation" (Matt. 16:4, Mark 8:38) even though they also were outwardly religious.

 We have to be careful that our outward practice of Christianity is not a cover for a hypocritical life.

- Sin is ultimately self-destructive.
- The judgment that came upon Israel and Judah could have been avoided – but it wasn't.
- It was the result of the depth and persistence of their rebellion.

- Ultimately, restoration is God's goal.
- Jesus is looking for those who will turn in repentance to him.
- You and I can be part of the faithful remnant.

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 - 1. Look for a way to be faithful to God when no one is looking. This is a cure for hypocrisy.
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 - 3. Look for a vulnerable person and be their advocate. This is a cure for society's injustice.