

Theme: Through Isaiah, God is bringing a covenant lawsuit against His people, exposing their sin, announcing their punishment, and offering forgiveness and reconciliation if they will repent

I. Intro – Legal Thriller Drama’s

- A. Some of my favorite shows, movies
- B. Will the guilty party be discovered?
- C. Will they be successfully prosecuted?
- D. Oftentimes flamboyant characters, verbiage
- E. These things form backdrop of Isaiah 1
- F. This is introduction to whole book

II. The Covenant Lawsuit

- A. The calling of witnesses
 - 1. Hear heavens & earth - alliteration (שמעו שמים)
 - 2. Common witnesses - Dt 4:25-26; 30:19
- B. The Plaintiff: the LORD is bringing lawsuit
 - 1. Emphasis - YHWH is speaking (sv vice vs)
 - 2. Impressive titles - v24 - not Isaiah - YHWH
 - 3. Holy One of Israel - vs 4; 25x Isaiah; 6x rest OT
 - 4. This is Holy God in covenant with Israel
- C. The charge: Judah has stupidly forsaken YHWH
 - 1. Dumber than an ox and ass (v3)

- 2. Have forsaken YHWH, HolyOOI (v4)
- 3. Has not responded to discipline (vv5-6)
- 4. The discipline of invasion (vv7-8)

III. Judah’s Weak Defense

- A. Judah’s trust is in empty religion
 - 1. The pitiful hope of empty religion (1:11-14)
 - 2. God is rejecting their false faith (vv11-14)
 - 3. God turns from them and does not hear (v15)
 - 4. Opposite of Aaronic benediction!
- B. The reason: external ritual without real faith
 - 1. Judah’s sin (v4, 10, 16-17, 21-22)
 - 2. This is James’ concern in 1:22,26-27
 - 3. External religion without real faith & change
 - 4. Note modern day - computer prayers
- C. The root - Judah has rebelled & forsaken YHWH
 - 1. Rebelled - v2,5
 - 2. Forsaken - v4

IV. God’s Mercy in the Face of Sin

- A. God has shown mercy in preserving them (v9)
- B. God is offering cleansing from sin (v18)

- C. God calls for us to repent and be restored (v19-20)
- D. His discipline is always redemptive in purpose

V. Applying the Word

- A. Do we see this is spoken to the church - not America?
 - 1. This is spoken to God's covenant people - the church
 - 2. Judgment begins in God's family
 - 3. Do we quickly judge others - and ignore our sin?
 - 4. The church has far too much sin in her midst!
- B. Does our faith produce holiness, justice, mercy?
 - 1. God and people not impressed by religiosity
 - 2. We must keep proper order: redemption, law, worship
 - a. Ritual without ethics is just a hobby
 - b. Ethics without redemption is legalism
 - c. Redemption produces ethics and worship
 - 3. Has God's mercy produced holiness, justice, mercy?
- C. Responding to God's mercy with true worship
 - 1. God is here offering mercy immense and free
 - 2. Respond with true worship
 - 3. Go forth and work for justice and mercy

The Grand Arraignment

Isaiah 1
James 1:19-27
May 10, 2009
The Heart of Worship
1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time--if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God and provoking him to anger, 26 I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long but will certainly be destroyed.
Deuteronomy 4:25-26

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live
Deuteronomy 30:19

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says... If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. 27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.
James 1:22, 26-27