

DISCOVERING WHO JESUS IS  
**FORETOLD**  
THROUGH THE MAJOR PROPHETS

# The Messiah Who Cleanses Sin

Isaiah 1:1–2:5

Our sin demands punishment, and only in  
grace through the Messiah do we find peace.

---

# Introduction

---

- Isaiah's prophetic visions begin with a hard word for God's people.
- They are sinful and rebellious, worthy of punishment, and totally unable to rescue themselves.
- Even their best efforts to keep the religious demands of the Law fall short because their hearts are far away.
- Yet, we serve a good, gracious God who is willing to forgive and restore us.

We cannot save ourselves. We must  
look to Christ to make us clean

Isaiah 1:1-20

---

# We Cannot Save Ourselves

---

- Truly facing our sin is a nasty shock. Too often, we don't appreciate how serious it is when we fall short of God's holy demands.
- We feel as though we are doing so well—then God shows us how far we have gone astray.
- In Isaiah 1, God gives His people a wake-up call, using strong words and imagery to make plain the magnitude of their sinfulness and rebellion.

---

# We Cannot Save Ourselves

---

- Isaiah begins by calling the heavens and the earth to bear witness of just how far God's people have fallen from His way of righteousness.
- They have rejected "the Holy One of Israel" and all creation is witness to Judah's rebellion.
- As Isaiah puts it, even farm animals understand where they get life and protection, but the people neglect their obvious dependence on God.

---

# We Cannot Save Ourselves

---

- Verse 4 points out that the entire nation bears the burden of sin because such rebellion wasn't limited to just one family, tribe or generation.
- Sin has continued from one generation to the next.
- This is an example shown by parents and taken up willingly by their children.



---

# We Cannot Save Ourselves

---

- Judah has “forsaken” and “despised” the Holy One of Israel.
- In verses 5–6, Isaiah describes Judah as a person who has been beaten and badly injured yet doesn’t have the sense to seek help where it can be found.
- Verse 7 - Judah suffers and dwells insecurely in the Promised Land.



---

# We Cannot Save Ourselves

---

- In verse 8, Isaiah describes Judah as a “booth,” a “lodge” and a “besieged city” to illustrate just how desperate the circumstances were.
- The “booth” and “lodge” references point to makeshift shelters used by watchmen to tend the fields and keep wild animals out (not a permanent shelter).
- Instead, Judah is like a “besieged city,” surrounded by enemies and totally overwhelmed.

---

# We Cannot Save Ourselves

---

- If these first few verses weren't enough, Isaiah pushes the point even further by criticizing the idolatrous and wicked religious practices in Judah (he even calls them "Sodom" and "Gomorrah" in verses 9–10).
- Judah needed to come to terms with how God viewed their wicked worship practices.
- By neglecting the heart of God's promises, Judah had corrupted the temple worship commanded by God.

---

# We Cannot Save Ourselves

---

- Isaiah makes the shocking claim that Judah should just quit offering sacrifices, quit observing the Sabbath, and quit honoring the required feast days.
- How could this be what God wanted?
- Judah didn't understand that even as their priests lifted hands over the sacrifices, God would not honor their practices. Even as the people lifted up prayers to the heavens, God would not answer.

---

# We Cannot Save Ourselves

---

- Judah needed something else, and verses 16–20 provide some guidance.
- In spite of all the strong talk and clear judgment, God still offers hints of grace in the midst of this condemnation.
- Judah needed to go back to being fully committed to God's ways. God's people needed God's solution to their sinful rebellion.

---

# We Cannot Save Ourselves

---

- Judah needed to seek to protect and shelter the weak by promoting the good of all the people in the land.
- Judah needed to seek cleansing from God alone and not from empty observance of rituals.
- True worship revolutionizes both individual and community as the individual experiences God's cleansing and the community practices a way of life marked by mercy, joy and peace.

Even our best intentions fall  
short of God's holy demands

Isaiah 1:21-31

---

# God's Holy Demands

---

- Isaiah begins this section with a reminder that Jerusalem, and all the people in it, were once faithful to God alone.
- Now, even the city itself is rebellious; wickedness and rebellion overflow where faithfulness and righteousness used to dwell.
- Isaiah points to Jerusalem because of the intimate connection between God's city and God's people.

---

# God's Holy Demands

---

- Simply put, as Jerusalem is, so are the people; as the people are, so is Jerusalem.
- Isaiah uses the imagery of prostitution to illustrate that the people have rejected God as a woman rejects the husband who cares for and loves her (verse 21).
- In verses 22–23, Isaiah laments Judah's impurity.

---

# God's Holy Demands

---

- When Judah should be pure like silver, they have become a weaker, mixed metal (verse 22).
- When Judah should be pure wine, they have watered down the covenant practices (verse 22).
- When Judah should have leaders defined by justice and mercy, they have become thieves open to follow the whims of the highest bidder (verse 23).

---

# God's Holy Demands

---

- In the end, those facing challenging circumstances, the potentially vulnerable (widows and orphans) are trampled upon when powerful people lose their sense of God (verse 23).
- Social injustice is ultimately the result of refusal to entrust yourself completely to a fair and loving God.
- The weak and marginalized, those at the borders of our society, pay for such power grabbing.

---

# God's Holy Demands

---

- In the face of Jerusalem's wickedness, Isaiah reveals God's design for purging and cleansing the people.
- Verses 24–31 proclaim a double truth that offers both concern and comfort. Because of Jerusalem's wickedness, judgment will come (verse 24).
- The sovereign God will guard His name among the nations by purifying Judah's wickedness.

---

# God's Holy Demands

---

- Isaiah revisits the blacksmith imagery from verse 22 by proclaiming that God will burn away the impurities of the people in the fires of His wrath (verse 25).
- But there is hope. God works judgment for purification, not total destruction.
- God's people will not be totally consumed, but returned to a fitter state of dependence. Not on the surrounding nations, false gods, or compromised spirituality.

---

# God's Holy Demands

---

- Instead, Jerusalem will once again be called “city of righteousness, the faithful city” (v. 26).
- God will restore His righteousness in Jerusalem through His faithful determination to preserve, redeem, and forgive His people.

---

# God's Holy Demands

---

- Just as Isaiah points to the double truth of judgment and restoration, Judah is offered a choice between two ways.
- Much like Jeremiah's offer for the way of life or the way of death (Jeremiah 21:8), Isaiah 1:27–31 reminds the careful listener that God offers a path of repentance leading to righteousness and life or a path of rebellion leading to sin and death.

---

# God's Holy Demands

---

- By repenting of sin and looking to God's righteousness, a person finds newness of life. Looking to God's offer to repent and believe draws a person into right fellowship with God.
- In contrast, persisting in sin and looking away from God for hope results in brokenness and total separation from God Himself.

---

# God's Holy Demands

---

- This person cannot avoid this fate.
- As verses 30–31 describe, the strong cannot resist God's plans, a life lived in abundance here and now is like a garden that has been cut off from water.
- Withering death is all that await those who reject God.
- Heed Isaiah's vision. Accept God's path for accomplishing God's purposes.

But God will restore His children  
through His grace and mercy

Isaiah 2:1-4

---

# God Will Restore His Children

---

- Isaiah 2 offers a powerful promise for what life is like as we live in fellowship with God.
- Isaiah begins chapter 2 much like he began chapter 1, pointing to another oracle directly connected to Judah's present and future fates.
- While chapter 1 holds in tension the present state of Judah and the future promises for Judah, Isaiah 2 possesses a distinctly future-directed message with present implications for God's people.

---

# God Will Restore His Children

---

- God's people live today in God's promises fulfilled yesterday and God's promises guaranteed for tomorrow.
- In this light, Isaiah 2 represents a stirring picture of what life is like when God rules over His people, as well as the future promises guaranteed to His people.
- The prophet uses the images of "mountain," "temple," "word of the Lord," and "judge" with specific emphasis on the promised Messiah.

---

# God Will Restore His Children

---

- One day, God will finally reveal His grandeur and majesty to the whole world.
- As a mountain rising up in powerful authority above all other hills, so God's rule will be established over all other worldly systems, religions, and governments (verse 2).
- In fact, all nations, not just Israel, will stream into God's presence (verse 2).

---

# God Will Restore His Children

---

- As verse 3 describes, the peoples of the world will enter God's presence searching for ways to obey His commands faithfully.
- The whole world will look to God for righteousness and seek His wisdom for all matters in life. God's wisdom is sufficient not simply for matters of Christian life and witness, but also for guidance in the things of this world, even disputes between entire nations (verse 4).

---

# God Will Restore His Children

---

- In the end, God's peace will rule over all the earth causing every nation to be marked by unity and peace (verse 4).
- Swords and spears will become tools for harvesting in final fulfillment of God's creational command to cultivate and keep the earth (Genesis 1:28–31).
- Human existence will be unified around a shared life marked not by strife and covetousness, but by joy and generosity.

---

# God Will Restore His Children

---

- In verse 5, God invites His people to walk in the light as He is in the light, to live in fellowship and unity (1 John 1:7). The peace promised by Isaiah is fulfilled by Christ and ought to rule our hearts (Colossians 3:15).
- God's righteousness and wisdom that will one day draw all nations to God's mountain in worship and praise ought to be the message we proclaim to every tongue, tribe and nation (Matthew 28:18–20).

# Challenges

---

# Repent of Sin

---

- It is easy to stand in judgment of Judah's sin.
- Are you equally aware of your own sin? Are you trying to make yourself clean, or do you look to God for grace and forgiveness?
- When you begin to sense your sin, look to Christ to offer new life and peace. We do not need to continue in sin. We can live in righteousness through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

---

# Reject Idols

---

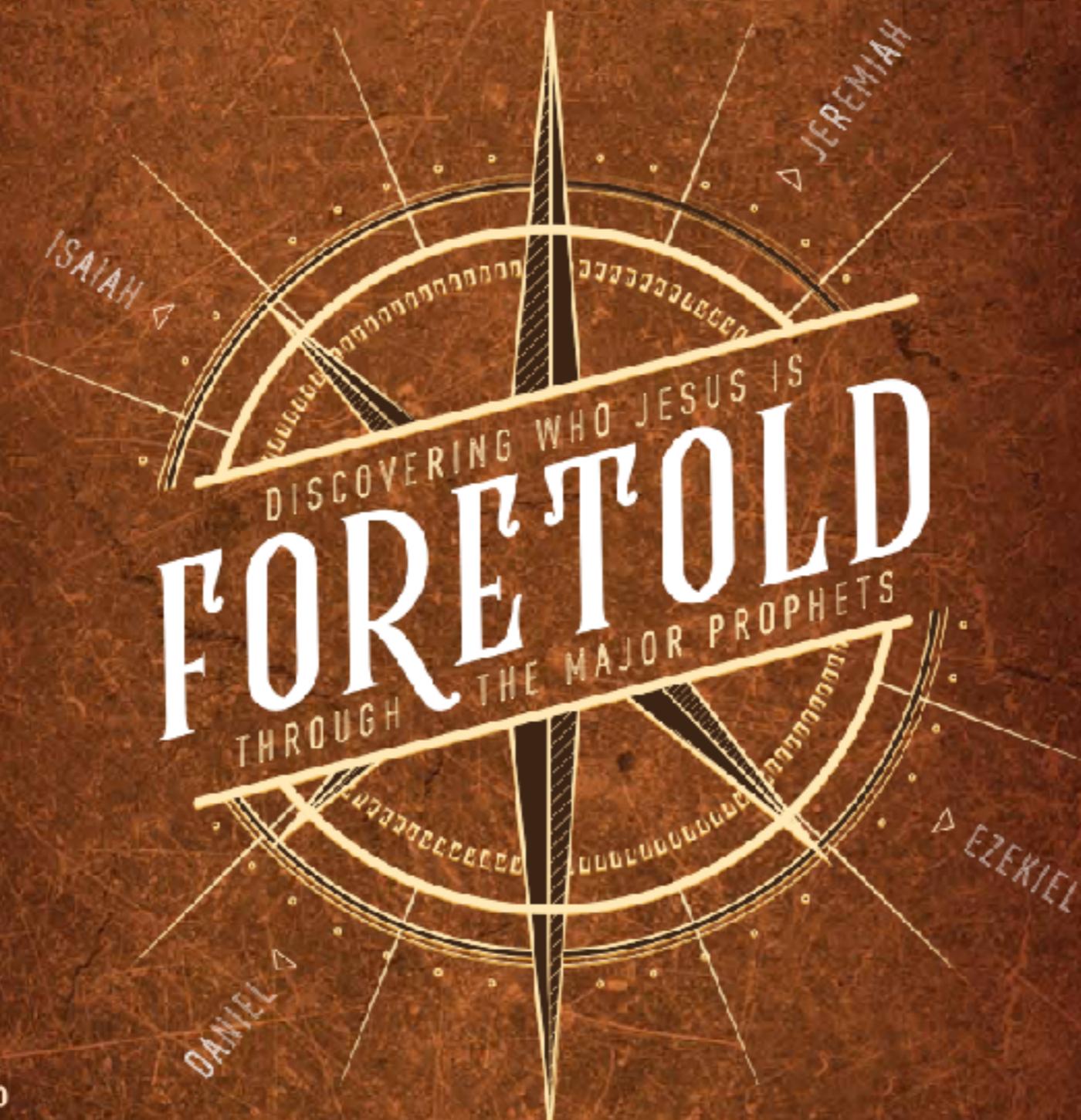
- Judah's idolatry seems distant and disconnected from our own experiences.
- While we may not suffer the temptation to seek protection from surrounding nations, we often run to wealth, relationships or some other idol for protection and peace.
- Look to God alone to give your life meaning. Accept identity not in power or comfort, but in Christ alone.

---

# Rest in God's Promises

---

- The picture of Isaiah 2, a life filled with peace and security, grants God's people special strength each day.
- The peace of Isaiah 2 comes through Christ, and you don't have to wait to feel His peace and joy flowing in your life. When life seems confusing, call out to God in prayer and seek His wisdom in Scripture.
- We live today in the sure hope of God's promises tomorrow.



ISAIAH

JEREMIAH

DISCOVERING WHO JESUS IS  
**FORETOLD**  
THROUGH THE MAJOR PROPHETS

EZEKIEL

DANIEL