

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

There is coming a day when your Son, Jesus Christ, will be “beautiful and glorious,” and those who are left in Jerusalem “will be called holy.” Your spirit of judgment and burning will have “washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst.” Your cloud will cover Mount Zion by day, and the “shining of a flaming fire by night” (Isa 4:2–6). I want to be there to see your glory and sing your praise! “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev 22:20b). Hallelujah!

Today in Your Word

Today you shared with me the beginning of Isaiah’s prophecy to Judah. Judah had been prospering under the rule of Uzziah, a man who followed you faithfully for most of his 52-year reign. But just like Israel, the people of Judah had forsaken you. In grief and anger, you called the heavens and the earth to hear: “I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand. Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him” (Isa 1:2b–4 NIV). Judah was no doubt shocked by Isaiah’s words. After all, they were faithful to offer sacrifices and offerings. They attended your feasts and spread out their hands before you in prayer. Your response? “I am sick of your burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fattened cattle. Stop bringing me your meaningless gifts; the incense of your offerings disgusts me! I hate your new moon celebrations and your annual festivals. They are a burden to me. I cannot stand them!” (Isa 1:11–14 NLT). What then did you want from Judah? “Wash yourselves and be clean! Get your sins out of my sight. Give up your evil ways. Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows” (Isa 1:16–17 NLT). Judah embraced the rituals of worship, but they rejected the heart of your covenant. Like the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day, they gave a tithe of even the smallest garden herbs, but they neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faith. As Jesus said, “You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former” (Matt 23:23 NIV). I should take heed, because the tendency to substitute religious piety for loving obedience is as prevalent today as it was in Isaiah’s time. What should Judah do? Was it too late? Not at all! “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword” (Isa 1:18–20).

Reflection

You often contrasted the sinfulness of Israel with the future holiness of Zion during Christ’s millennial reign. This reminded Israel of why you chose them from the nations, and it challenged them to repent.

Request

Father, keep me from rejecting “the law of the LORD of hosts” and from despising “the word of the Holy One of Israel.” May my life always magnify the “Holy God who shows himself holy in righteousness” (Isa 5:16).

Thanksgiving

My heart says, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD” and offer thanksgiving for His love! (Isa 2:3)

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[Come to the Fountain](#)” – Frances J. Crosby.

Meditation Verse: Isaiah 5:16.