

# GOD'S GRACIOUS OFFER

Isaiah 1:1–20

## The Essence of Idolatry

In order to accurately understand the message of Isaiah chapter one, we need to understand the essence of idolatry or spiritism. The essence of idolatry is manipulation. Those who “worship” these spirits seek to manipulate the spirits to give them what they want. One means of manipulation is appeasement. Another means of manipulation is trickery. The idol worshipper is able to manipulate the spirits because the spirits are themselves driven by their desires.

## The Historical Setting

In 701 B.C., the 37th year of Isaiah’s ministry, King Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Judah ([2 Kings 18:13 - 19:37](#)). The level of devastation described in this passage fits this invasion. Survivors fled to Jerusalem. The immediate setting in which this message was delivered seems to be a gathering of the people in Solomon’s Temple. In the midst of this holocaust the people were looking for words of encouragement and comfort from the prophet. But that was not what they received.

## Israel’s Rebellion Confronted (1:2-4)

The Jews of both the northern and southern kingdoms had rebelled against Yahweh. They no longer knew or understood Him. They were more spiritually dull than oxen and donkeys. At least oxen and donkeys know their master is the one who is in charge and provides for them. The word “forsake” is linked to idolatry in the prophets. The people of Judah not only “worshipped” Yahweh, but idols/evil spirits as well. As a result, their idea of Yahweh became twisted and their character degenerated. Their rebellion cost them dearly.

## Rebellion Brings Devastation (1:5-9)

If you stood on the wall of Jerusalem at this time you might have seen plumes of smoke marking what used to be your town. Everything for which the people had toiled was gone; their entire life’s work, destroyed. The refugees were the lucky ones. Sennacherib boasted he deported 200,000 Judeans. Those who made it to Jerusalem were in bad shape. Worse than the physical trauma was the psychological. The things they saw were horrific; city leaders stripped and impaled alive, others skinned alive, still others beheaded. The city of Jerusalem stood alone and isolated. The devastation to the kingdom of Judah was so severe it drew a comparison to the complete annihilation of Sodom and Gomorrah ([Genesis 19](#)). The one difference being that Yahweh had left a remnant in Judah. In the midst of this holocaust the people were desperate for encouragement. But how could Isaiah encourage when, in fact, the people had brought this upon themselves?

## Yahweh Not an Idol to be Manipulated (1:10-15)

The people related to Yahweh as they did their idols. There was no love, no gratitude, no reverence, no submission to Yahweh in the giving of their sacrifices. Sacrifices, incense and ceremonies were means of manipulation that hopefully would get Yahweh to give them what they wanted: deliverance from Assyria. When their sacrifices and ceremonies didn’t work, they wondered why. They truly did not know Yahweh; they did not understand His character, nor His will.

God was insulted in the extreme being treated like their idols. Their sacrifices were “an abomination”, they were repulsive to God. His soul “hated” their new moon ceremonies and their celebrations of the feasts of the Lord. In verse 13 He told them to stop. Though He had every reason to reject His people, He didn’t. Yahweh is a covenant keeping God; though His people fail to keep the covenant, God fulfills His covenant promises. But more than that, God is infinite love and though His people had despised Him and insulted Him in the extreme He loved them still. In verses 16-20 Yahweh extended a gracious offer.

**Yahweh's Gracious Offer (1:16-20)**

God offered complete forgiveness if the people were willing. They had to be willing to acknowledge their guilt and turn away from their evil. They had to be willing to turn to Yahweh and learn from Him how to live the righteous life. They had to be willing to reform their society. This was an extravagantly gracious offer in light of their rebellion. To accept Yahweh's offer would lead to blessing (1:19); to refuse would lead to further cursing (1:20). The choice was theirs.

**WHAT IS ISAIAH 1:2-20 SAYING TO US TODAY?****Nurture An Accurate Understanding of God Through Continual Study of God's Revelation of Himself in The Bible and In Creation**

We must resist the temptation to graft cultural values into our understanding of God. Can we know and understand God accurately? Yes! He has revealed Himself to us in the written Word and in Creation.

**God's Will for Us Is to Do Good Works (Titus 3:1-8)**

God's ultimate desire for His people was not that they sacrifice animals to Him. His desire was for them to love Him and live the righteous life full of good works. The same holds true today. God wants us to be reconciled to Him through faith in Jesus so that we might live the righteous life full of good works.

**God's Gracious Offer Remains... If You Are Willing**

God loves us. God offers to completely forgive our sins and restore us to Himself for eternity... if we are willing.

GRACE NEWS AND NEEDS

- *Join the WELCOME TEAM! Signup today on the patio to welcome and assist those new to Grace.*
- *If you need a HELPING HAND, fill out a yellow request in the foyer and drop into offering box in sanctuary.*
- *Men's Ministry: Cornhole Tournament Signups / Men's Retreat Sept. 29 - Oct. 1 Signups.*
- *Youth Ministry: Parent Meeting TODAY after 2<sup>nd</sup> service in the Youth Room / Apologetics Conference Sept. 22-23.*
- *Men's & Women's Bible Study Fellowship starting up soon. Check website for info (gccramona.com).*
- *AWANA begins soon, signup online @ ramonaawana.org*
- *VOM Needs for August: Nerf Ball / Dental Floss / Gauze for bandages - rolls or flat.*

**General Fund Giving Through Sunday, 08/20/2023**

Overall General Fund Giving for 2023: \$443,239.45 (92.4% of the need)  
-36,488.55 below the 2023 combined weekly need of \$479,728.00