

## “That Which is Right”

Isaiah 1:1

Bill Parker

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I'd like for you to open your Bibles with me to the book of Isaiah chapter 1. The title of the message this morning is “That Which is Right.” I'm really just going to deal with one verse. Now I want to tell you how this message came about because I believe that's significant for your understanding of what I'm trying to do. I've just been thinking about this new year that we're going into. This is an election year, as you know. There's been a lot of political talk, news on the landscape for our country and electing a president and how that's going to come about. Who's going to be president? And I was thinking about the state of our nation and that's what drew me to the book of Isaiah chapter 1, because the prophet Isaiah is basically, in this first chapter, setting forth the state of the nation Israel in his day. This is about 750 years before the actual appearance of Christ on earth.

He starts out as God's prophet talking about the people, the nation, the state that they're in, it's not a good state. He talks about how they're so sinful. He says in **Isaiah 1:4**, “*Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity,*” Then he starts out in verse 10 to show them that religion will not help them. Their ceremonies, their going through the motions, even those which are commanded in the old covenant law

of Moses will not help them. The blood of bulls and goats can never take away sin and then he says to them that they have to learn to do well. And that's really where I started doing this to talk about learning to do well. And, of course, the doing well there has to do with understanding and seeing the main purpose of that old covenant law. It was not a legal system of works by which sinners under that law, by their works, could attain salvation. It was not. It was not a way of salvation by works. It was not a way in which sinners could make themselves righteous by their works. That was a perversion of the law. But that law was given by God, to the nation Israel, to show them their depravity, their sinfulness, their their lack of righteousness and the impossibility of attaining righteousness based on their works. Read it at the end of Romans chapter 9. I'm going to get into that mainly next week in this series. He tells them that Israel sought after righteousness but they didn't find it. They didn't attain it. They didn't make it. They fell short of it. That's us by nature isn't it? You know, most people when they read the Old Testament today, they really have a very arrogant attitude because most people think in some way, to some degree, at some stage, they would be better than Israel. They could do better. Now you read the whole first chapter of Isaiah and I am going to get into that some next week. I'll tell you what this describes. It doesn't just describe sinful Israel, it describes sinful me by nature, sinful you. You say, "wait a minute, I was born in the South and the buckle

of the Bible Belt.” That doesn’t matter. Religion will not help you. No matter how good you try to be, or I try to be, we cannot be (as the old guy said) “good enough” to make ourselves acceptable, righteous with God. Well, someone says, “that’s shocking to me.” It shouldn’t be. That’s why salvation is by grace through Christ. That’s why it’s conditioned on him and not on ourselves. Isaiah talks about that but what grabbed my attention is this first verse look at verse one.

**Isaiah 1:1** *“The vision of Isaiah”* (that means the word of God that was given to this man who was God's prophet) *“the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem”* (that's the southern kingdom. Remember, after Solomon, the kingdom was divided into the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom. Isaiah was a prophet in the southern kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem. Then he lists these kings) *“in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.”* Now some scholars say that Isaiah even went on and prophesied during the next king who was Manasseh. We don't know that for sure, but he lists four Kings here. Who are these kings and what is this about? Now here’s what got me on this and to thinking about this and why I entitled this message “That Which is Right.” Think about our country today. Now we’re not under the old covenant. That's done away with. That was abolished by way of fulfillment when the Lord died on the cross and the veil was rent in two. So we don’t have any mandate from God. You see, in Israel there was no separation

of church and state. It was altogether. The law of God, the old covenant, was their economy. Some scholars call it the Mosaic economy. That's the economy under the law of Moses. But now in our country there is a separation of church and state. In other words, there is no state religion. I thank God there's not because I guarantee you it wouldn't be the right one. It would be a false one. And I thank God, I pray every day, Lord enable us to continue to have the freedom to come to this place and worship without hindrance from the government, from the law. We need to pray for that. Whoever is elected President or whoever is elected in Congress. But I asked myself this question, what does our world need more than anything else? And we can talk about a lot of things couldn't we? No doubt our country, our world is in dire need of moral reformation. I think the world's always been immoral since the fall of man, but we see it in vivid Technicolor in our living rooms on television. We hear it all the time, see it on the Internet. We are brought closer to it, you know. And like I said during the the Bible study hour, we've been spoiled in our country and especially in our region. Our region, basically, has been a law-abiding region. I hear people talk about back in the 50s you didn't have to lock your car, you didn't have to lock your doors, and things like that. That was good, but we've been spoiled. It wasn't like that everywhere. Albany, Georgia or Ashland, Kentucky or wherever - it wasn't like that all over the world. There are people suffering. But we'll say, this country, this world is in

dire need of moral reformation from our leaders to the vast majority of the citizens. We watch the direction this world is going and it grieves us, doesn't it? I'm not optimistic about this world. I'm optimistic about the grace of God in Christ. I'm not optimistic about this world, are you? Somebody said this world is going to hell in a hand basket. The world's been going to hell in a hand basket since the fall, folks, since the fall of man. When has the world not being corrupt, evil? The Lord has always called this world evil, this present, evil age. I want you to listen to everything I say in this statement. I want you to think about this. I believe that one of the greatest deceptions of many people in our day is that they think things are much worse than they've ever been.

I really believe that can be a deception. Now, I agree that things are worse but in what way? We think about movies, TV, the Internet, Hollywood, the corruption that comes out of there. We've got a church in town that produces movies that they call family entertainment. Well, I'm all for family entertainment if it sends the right message. I watched one of those movies and here's the message I got out of it. If you accept Jesus as your personal savior you'll get a new truck and your football team will win the state championship. Now that's not a right message. And I'm not just saying it to make fun. I really am not. I'm saying that to make this point: what our world needs, what our nation needs, what Albany, Georgia needs more than anything else, it needs the gospel,

God's grace. They need not just some kind of a pliable God that they can do with what they will, but they need to hear more about a sovereign, righteous God who does have a plan and purpose for his people in the Lord Jesus Christ. This country needs the gospel. And I see the main way that it's getting worse and worse in our day is the gospel is getting scarcer and scarcer. That's the same way it was in Isaiah's day. Did you know that? Here they are, the people of Israel, the people of God, who had been given so much (and understand now, than anything we're given that is good is totally undeserved and totally unearned) We certainly see that, we who know Christ, we certainly see that in the way of salvation. But you know that even filters right down to the last breath you take. It's a gift of God that you didn't earn and didn't deserve. Why didn't we earn it? Because of sin. *"Ah Sinful nation, a people laden (a people that are heavy, overburdened) with iniquity, a seed of evildoers...."* **Isaiah 1:4**. *"...children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward."* You read passages like that and you think that he's describing the ingrate, perverted scum of society that out to be in prison. No, he's describing the religious people. You read the whole chapter and like I said, I'll get more into this next week. They're people who pray. They're people who read their Bibles. They're people who meet to worship. And do you know what God says to them?

He says, I'm tired of it, I've had enough of it because it's religion without truth. It's religion without heart and mainly its religion without Christ. That's what it is. They were doing all of that to do one thing, to establish their own righteousness before God and they had rejected the righteousness of God in Christ, the works, the merits, the obedience unto death of the promised Messiah. God said I've had enough.

But I want you to look back at verse one.

According to Isaiah 1:1, Isaiah prophesied through the reign of four kings of Judah. I want you to turn back to 2 Chronicles chapter 26. Look at 2 Chronicles 26.

Now these four kings that are listed here, you can read about the history of them in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles. I'm not going to go through the whole history of all of these. We don't have time to do that. But I want you to see he talks about Uzziah. Isaiah especially mentions Uzziah in Isaiah chapter 6. In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah said he saw God gave him a vision of the throne of the temple, his throne high and lifted up, "holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." Remember he saw the the holiness of God, the righteousness, the justice of God and remember what conclusion he came to when he saw that vision of God's holiness? He said, "*I'm undone...*" That means, I'm cut off, I'm a sinner, I'm alienated, I've got no right to approach God because I'm a sinner. And then he said (**Isaiah 6:5**), "*I'm undone,*" I'm cut off and "*I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips...*" You remember, the Seraphim flew to the altar and got a

live coal from the altar. Now that's a picture of salvation by God's grace in Christ. That altar's the brazen altar where the judgment of God fell upon the substitute, the surety, the Lord Jesus Christ in the stead of his people, in the place of his people. Our sins imputed to him, his righteousness to us. And he brought that live coal and touched the lips of Isaiah. He saw the message of God's sovereign grace in Christ and that happened the year King Uzziah died and he said Uzziah. Sometimes in the Bible you'll see the name Azariah, it's the same guy.

But look at **2 Chronicles 26:1-4**. I'm going to read a few verses here and then I'm just going to touch on the others. Listen to what happened, verse one:

*"Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old (that's when he started to rule in Judah), and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah. 2 He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.*

*3 Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem.*

*4 And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah did."*

He did that which is right. And that's why entitled the message "That Which is Right." Uzziah was considered what some scholars call one of the good kings of Judah. Remember you had the north, the northern tribes, Israel. All the kings of that nation



down through its history, from the split of the kingdom all the way down to where it was destroyed in Isaiah's day. By the Assyrian Empire they were all called bad kings. There were no good kings in Israel but in Judah there were some bad kings and what scholars call good kings. I hesitate to call them good kings. I just simply say that they were the kings that did that which is right, whatever that is. They did that which is right and it says here Uzziah did that.

Look across the page to **2 Chronicles 27**. Here's the next king that's listed in Isaiah, his name was Jotham. It says in verse two of second Chronicles 27 Jotham *"...did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord. And the people did yet corruptly."* Remember the story of Uzziah. Uzziah was a successful king, politically, economically, and he brought prosperity back to Judah - buildings, the farms, everything. But in the end of his career, he was lifted up with pride and what did he do? He took it upon himself to go into the temple, into the holy place. Remember the Temple had the outer court with the brazen altar, then you had that tent inside and that was divided into the holy place where only the Levites, the priest could go. That's where the table of showbread was, the Golden altar, the basin and the golden candlestick. And then there was the veil, the curtain that separated the holiest of all, where only the high priest could go one

time a year, on the day of atonement, with the blood of lamb all picturing Christ, all picturing salvation. Well, Uzziah got lifted up with pride and took it upon himself to burn incense in the holy place. He had no right to do that. He wasn't a priest. He was the king, but he wasn't the priest. Remember what happened: God struck him with leprosy and he dwelt separated from the people the rest of the days of his life with leprosy. That's what happened to Uzziah. Then Jotham comes along. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord but it says here in verse two of 2 Chronicles 27, he didn't enter the Temple like his daddy, but it says, *"And the people did yet corruptly."* What happened was, back long before even Uzziah, false prophets had arisen in Judah and they built what the Bible calls high places of idolatry compromising and denying the true worship of God in the Temple. Under Jotham, even though he did that which was right, except for this, he allow those high places to remain.

Turn the page look at **2 Chronicles 28**. Here's the next King that Isaiah prophesied under, his name is Ahaz. Sometimes his name is listed as Ahazzia, but he's the same one. It says in **2 Chronicles 28:1**, *"Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord, like David his father:"* He didn't lead the people right. And then across the page **2 Chronicles 29**, there's

Hezekiah, that's the last King that's listed in Isaiah 1:1. **2 Chronicles 29:1** *“Hezekiah began to reign when he was five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. 2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done.”* He led the people right. Now, what you see in all these kings: first of all, no individual king was a perfect person. They were all sinners. They were all flawed men. Go back to Israel's glory days. What would you say is Israel's glory days? Under King David? Under Solomon? Well, they were certainly flawed men. There was no perfect king, but there were a few of whom the Holy Spirit has recorded in the Old Testament that it could be said they did that which is right. What does that mean? They lead the people in the ways of the Lord according to the law. That's what it meant. Let me give you these three things to consider.

1. The office of king in Israel was a type of the kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings. It was a type, a picture: the King of Kings. You see we talk about Christ as mediator. That means he's the one who stands in between God and sinners. There is one God, one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. There's no other mediator. Christ is the one mediator between God and men. What does it take to be a mediator? Well, Christ is said to

be a mediator in three of his offices. First of all, he's a mediator in his priestly office. The office of high priest under the law was a type of Jesus Christ, our great high priest. His performing the duties of his priestly office is the foundation of our salvation and is also the foundation of his other two offices: prophet, priest, and king. What does he do as a priest? He represents the people before God. God gave Christ a people before the foundation of the world. That's what the Scripture says and he sent Christ into the world to save them from their sins. And as our high priest, Christ himself, God in human flesh, he presented himself a sacrifice for our sin. That's what it takes to perform the duties of a high priest. There's got to be an appointed high priest. Jesus Christ was appointed by the father. He's got to be qualified. Well, he is, he's Emmanuel, God in human flesh. And he's got to be willing. The scripture says in John 13:1 he loved his people to the end, to the finishing of the work. for the joy that was set before him. that joy, the glory of his father and the salvation of his people. you have to have an altar. that's what you have to have to have a satisfaction. Someone has to die. God must be just when he justifies. He must punish sin. People today present God as some kind of an old, grandfatherly, heart melting person who just says well, I feel sorry for you guys you made some mistakes now I'll just look over it. We'll just forget about it. No, God must punish sin. He's just. That's his nature. He's a holy God. That's what Isaiah saw, "holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty."

You say, well doesn't the Bible say God is love? Yes. Doesn't it say he's gracious and merciful? Yes. But not at the expense of his justice. In other words, if you understand the gospel of God's grace in Christ, if you understand about salvation as it is revealed in God's word; you understand not just love, but love that fulfills his justice; not just mercy, but mercy that fulfills God's requirements of righteousness; not just grace, but grace that reigns through righteousness. How's that possible? Through Jesus Christ the Lord. That's why Christ had to die. He's the surety of his people. That means our sins were imputed, charged, accounted to him. He's the substitute. The high priest had to bring an offering and that offering had to be a lamb and the blood of the lamb. Christ is our priest. He is our altar. He is our lamb. He is our sacrifice. The King was a type of Christ, the King of Kings. He's our prophet. Isaiah, the office of prophet was a type of Christ. Christ is that prophet that Moses spoke of in Deuteronomy 18. He is the word of God. He is the embodiment of the word of God. He's the word made flesh and dwelt among us. Everything we know about God in salvation comes through Jesus Christ the Lord. That's right. And then he's our King, the King of Kings. Well, this office of King was to typify him. Back in the Old Testament, the office of King was established back in the book of Genesis as the Lord brought forth all that he would say and do concerning the king of Israel, the king of his people. **Psalm 47:7**  
*"For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises*

*with understanding.*” For the Lord is our defense and the holy one of Israel is our king. Paul told Timothy, this is how our Savior is to be honored. He's the King of Kings. There's no king above him. In Revelation, he's called the King of Kings, Lord of lords. So that office was to typify Christ, the King of Kings. Somebody asked me one time, do you think all those kings knew about that? I said no. Do you think *any* of them knew about that? I think so. I believe David did. How do you know that? Because you read it in the Psalms. Let me tell you something, and I say this with all respect, it doesn't matter whether they knew about it or not. It's still true. I hope some of them did. Again, I said I believe David did. I believe Hezekiah did, but it doesn't matter - it's true. It's like I told you about the sign outside the false church. It said, God said it, I believe it, that settles it. That's wrong. God said it. That settles it, whether I believe it or not. I hope we do believe it but if God said it, that settles it.

2. Here's the second thing. The kingly line was the line through which Christ was to come according to the flesh. Go back in Genesis 35. When God made a covenant with Abraham, one of the things he told Abraham was kings will come out of you. Turn to Genesis 49. Let me show you this one. Here's Jacob on his deathbed, blessing his sons. Down in verse eight of Genesis 49, he comes to Judah. Listen to what he says to Judah. **Genesis 49:8-10** He says, *“Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy*

*father's children shall bow down before thee. 9 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?"* (You remember, Christ is called the lion of the tribe of Judah) *10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*" That's a prophecy of Jesus Christ, the King, who by virtue of his work of establishing righteousness for his people on the cross is made the Lord of glory, both Lord and King. The scepter is the king's scepter. That scepter is a scepter of righteousness. You see, we are saved and accepted with God based upon the righteousness of the King of Kings. It's called in Romans 1:17, the righteousness of God. You see, we're not saved or accepted based on the righteousness of men, not at all. The righteousness of men, even the best men is not good enough. It falls short. *"There is none righteous, no not one, there's none good."* The salvation of the people of God is founded upon the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. That righteousness which is charged to our account, which he by himself as the substitute and surety of his people worked out on the cross in his obedience unto death. That's my whole ground of salvation. "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame but holy lean on Jesus name. What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make

me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. This is all my hope and peace. This is all my righteousness.” That's what the gospel reveals. it's not the righteousness of men. It wasn't the righteousness of Uzziah. Uzziah went into the holy place that he wasn't supposed to go into. What does that show you about Uzziah? He's a sinful man. If he were saved, it has to be by what? By grace that reigns through righteousness through Jesus Christ our Lord. And that applies to every king of Israel, every king of Judah, down through the ages. That applies to men, presidents, who ever today. If salvation is to come to any of us it has to be by that grace that reigns through righteousness by Jesus Christ our Lord. And those who refuse to bow to Christ as King in that way, the Lord our righteousness whose scepter is a scepter of righteousness, there is no hope of salvation.

Remember Israel is recorded, you can read this in 1 Samuel 8, they desired a King. Their motives for desiring a king were not all wrong. Samuel had two sons (I think it was) and they were evil. They didn't lead the people right. He set them up as judges. So the people came to Samuel and asked for a king, but the problem was not just that they desired a King. I heard somebody say one time, they were wrong just for wanting a King. No, because God had already promised a king. He told Abraham, kings will come out of you. He told Jacob, told his son, the scepter will not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes. We could go right on through. The Messiah was always



prophesied to be king. Remember Jeremiah 23 when it talks about him, the Lord our righteousness. It talks about his scepter. But in asking for a king, they rejected God's king. They rejected God's leadership. They said we want a king like other nations. Read the history of the kings of other nations. It's pretty bad. You see, they were to submit to God's rule, God's way, at God's time. God had told them back in Deuteronomy. Turn back to Deuteronomy 17. Listen to God's king. Listen to what God says about the king that he had for us. **Deuteronomy 17:14** He says, *“When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;”* See, he knew they'd say that. That's man by nature. *“Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose:”* Not whom you choose. Who did Israel choose? They chose a guy named Saul. A big stout good-looking guy. He had that political presence from the tribe of Benjamin. God said the scepter is not going to depart from Juda. But they got their king. They took the popular vote and they got their king. But God said you'll be who I choose. *“one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee:”* I think about Christ. it said in Hebrews chapter 2 that he's not ashamed to call his people his brethren. Now that's something to think about it isn't it? If that were based upon us, he'd be

ashamed, he ought to be ashamed, but he's not. Why is that? Because we stand before God washed in his blood, clean from all our sins, clothed in his righteous. That's why. He says, *"thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. 16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself,"* in other words, all the other kings were trying to get as many horses, as much money as they could. This is not God's king. God's king is going to do that which is right. What does that mean? It means he's going to depend on God alone. His strength, his source of strength, was always God, not himself. *"nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses"* (in other words, he's not going to make alliances with idolatrous nations in order to get gain) *"forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. 17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself,"* I had a fellow tell me one time, he said, "God didn't forbid polygamy in the Old Testament." Oh yes he did. He put up with it. He said, "God doesn't put up with sin." My friend, he puts up with me, he puts up with you. Here he says, the king *"shall not multiply wives unto himself."* Just about every one of them did, didn't they? Even David and Solomon, that his heart turned not away. What happened to David and Solomon? Their heart turned away for a while. *"neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold."* His richness and riches is not in the things of this world but in Christ. **Deuteronomy**

**17:18** *“And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites:”* In other words he's going to take that law and show their sinfulness, their depravity and the fact that they cannot be saved based on their work he's going to point them to the coming Messiah

**Deuteronomy 17:19-20** *“And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God,”* (believe in, trust and worship God: that's the King. That's the king that does right.) *“to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: 20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren,”* (royalty, oh they are so much better than everyone else) *“and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children”* You see, the King was to lead his people in the ways of God. I could show you many more verses, but I'm running out of time. But I do want to show you one verse and you read through the Psalms and get a concordance and look up through the Psalms where it talks about the King. Psalm 2 the talks about the kings of the earth rising up against the Lord God and his Christ. He tells them, in Psalm two, he says listen King, you better kiss the son lest he be angry, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what the king should do. but in **Psalm 72:1-2** *“Give the king thy judgments, O God,*

*and thy righteousness unto the king's son. 2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.*” The King should be compassionate, merciful, kind, just, all of that but the main thing he was to do was to lead the people in the ways of God. The wise man in **Ecclesiastes 8:2** wrote this, *“I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment,”* (and listen to this) *“and that in regard of the oath to God.”* In other words, in light of what God has promised in light of what God has covenanted to do for his people in Christ the King of Kings. What does it mean when it says “kiss the son”? It means to embrace Christ. It means to believe in him, to worship him, follow him as the one and only king of his people.