

ISAIAH (Teacher's Edition)

Part One: Prophecies of Condemnation (1:1--35:10)

- I. Prophecies Against Judah 1:1-12:6
- II. The Prophecies Against Other Nations 13:1--23:18
- III. The Prophecies of the Day of the Lord 24:1--27:13
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SPECIAL NOTE: With Isaiah we begin the study of the remaining OT books referred to as "The Prophetic Books".

AUTHOR-

The very first verse of this most incredible book names its author as Isaiah and there is no good reason to doubt he wrote it **in its entirety**. The only debate as to Isaiah's authorship deals with scholars who have difficulty with the detailed **prophetic prediction** of **future events** in chapters 40-66. They deny **divine inspiration** and the possibility of the supernatural. We do not so there is no difficulty in accepting the unity of Isaiah's authorship.

Regarding Isaiah himself, he is mentioned 12 times in 2 Kings and 4 times in 2 Chronicles as well as in the NT. As the book declares, he was the son of Amoz and his name means "**Yahweh is salvation**". Isaiah was probably born in Jerusalem of a family that was related to the **royal house of Judah**. He spent his early years as an official of King Uzziah (Azariah) of Judah (2 Chron 26:22) and when he died, Isaiah received his prophetic calling from God. He was married to a woman described as "the prophetess" and they had two sons whom they named Shear-Jashub, "A Remnant **Shall Return**" and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, "Speed the Spoil, Hasten the Booty". These strange names portray the two basic themes of the Book of Isaiah: God is about to **bring judgment** upon His people but after that there will be an outpouring of God's **mercy and grace** to the **remnant** who will remain **faithful** to God. It is important to note that after God called Isaiah to proclaim His message, He told Isaiah that most of his work would be a ministry of **judgment** and even though the prophet would speak the truth, the people would **reject his words** (6:10). Jesus found in these words of Isaiah's call a prediction of the rejection of his message by many of the people (Matt 13:14-15).

He must have been extremely **well educated** because Isaiah was a writer of considerable literary skill. The poetry of his book is magnificent in its sweep. His style marks the climax of Hebrew literature. He is a perfect artist in words. Beauty and strength are characteristic of his entire book. Epigrams and metaphors, particularly of flood, storm and sound (1:13; 5:18, 22; 8:8; 10:22; 28:17, 20; 30:28, 30), interrogation and dialogue (6:8; 10:8, 9), antithesis and alliteration (1:18; 3:24; 17:10, 12), hyperbole and parable (2:7; 5:1-7; 28:23-29), even play upon words (5:7; 7:9), characterize Isaiah's book as the great masterpiece of Hebrew literature. He is also famous for his richness of vocabulary and synonyms. For example, Ezekiel uses 1,535 words; Jeremiah, 1,653; the Psalmists 2,170; while Isaiah uses 2,186.

A person of strong emotion and deep feelings, Isaiah also was a man of **steadfast devotion** to the Lord- demonstrating this to the point of even **walking naked and barefoot** for 3 years at the Lord's command.

According to a popular Jewish tradition, Isaiah met his death by being **sawn in half** during the reign of the evil king **Manasseh** of Judah. It is said that it occurred as a result of because of certain speeches concerning God and the Holy City which his **contemporaries** alleged were **contrary** to the law- what he preached was not **'trendy and people pleasing'**. Whatever the case, this tradition seems to be supported by the writer of Hebrews (Heb 11:37).

WHEN THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN-

According to 1:1, Isaiah prophesied during the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. We are told that he received his call in the year Uzziah died and in chapter 37:37-38 Isaiah mentions the death of Sennacherib. This gives us a date of between **740-680 B.C.** During this time, **Rome** was being founded and the first **Olympic games** of the Greeks were being conducted.

ABOUT THE BOOK-

Isaiah prophesied at the most crucial period in the history of Judah and Israel. Both of the kingdoms had experienced nearly a half-century of increasing prosperity and power. Eventually, Israel had succumbed to **pagan worship** and was carried away into exile by **Assyria**; Judah, under Uzziah, Jotham, and Hezekiah, had maintained an **outward conformity** to the laws of God, but had gradually fallen into serious moral and spiritual decline and appeared to be awaiting the same fate. **Secret places** of pagan worship were tolerated; the wealthy oppressed **the poor**; women neglected their families in the quest for carnal pleasure; many of the priests and prophets had become drunken men-pleasers (5:7-12, 8-23; 22:12-14). It seems that it was clear to Isaiah that the covenant of Moses in Deuteronomy 30 had been so completely violated that judgment and captivity were inevitable for Judah.

Did you know that almost **every Hebrew word for sin** is used in the book? In using all these words Isaiah was speaking to God's displeasure and sure coming judgment on sin. But this message of stern judgment is also mixed with beautiful

poems of comfort and promise. Although judgment is surely coming, better days for God's Covenant People lie just ahead: **the coming of MESSIAH**. His name will be called IMMANUEL (7:14). As a ruler on the throne of David, he will establish an everlasting kingdom (9:7).

This is one of the great purposes of this awesome book: to lay a **foundation of hope and promise** for the **faithful remnant** of God's people. Thus the book is full of promises of **restoration and redemption**, of the certain coming of Messiah, of salvation **for all nations** and of the triumph of God's purposes.

Truly, Isaiah prophesied for all future ages and his prophetic time frame will not close until the Son of David rules over His kingdom of peace (2:1-5; 11:1-10; 42:1-4; 61:1-11; 65:17-25; 66:22-23). His words indict us to this day to cease from social injustice and carnal indulgence, to stop trusting in **the arm of the flesh** and the hypocritical pretense of "orthodox religion". And we know from God's word thru him that in the end the city of Jerusalem will be restored and God's people will gather there to worship Him in all His majesty and glory; peace and justice will reign, and God will make all things new.

A BASIC ASSESSMENT OF ISAIAH (BASIC THEMES)-

Isaiah in his ministry emphasized the **spiritual and the social**. He struck at the root of the nation's trouble in its apostasy and idolatry and sought to save Judah from its moral and political and social corruption. He failed, however, to turn the nation Godward. His divine commission carried the warning that this would be the case, and yet he **faithfully went on**. He boldly declared the inevitable crash of Judah and the preservation of a small godly remnant. However, gleams of hope radiate throughout his prophecy.

That is why Isaiah stands like a strong pillar of certainty amid the uncertainties of the passing kingdoms that surrounded him and is so applicable to us today. With nations and empires toppling one after another, the one true, ultimate kingdom was boldly proclaimed. This message of the kingdom of God not only contains the **certainty** of ultimate hope, but it **constrains us to speak out about that hope** with rock solid conviction- no matter the spiritual atmosphere.

Consider Isaiah's message of a faithful, just and righteous king-to-come, especially in light of the reigns of the four kings whose reign he prophesied under. Only one was consistently godly. The message of a faithful ruler who will have the government rest on His shoulders will bring the same encouragement today as back then. No matter the surrounding failure or confusion of men and institutions, we can proclaim the truth of 9:6-7 and 11:1-2: there is a glorious King who will begin **His reign within us** now, **through us** for a lifetime, and **with us forever!**

Consider Isaiah's proclamation of an atoning Savior. **God's antidote** to human brokenness and loss is **redemption and recovery!** This great prophetic book teaches us: **total cleansing from sin** (1:18), failures **forgiven and forgotten** (43:25), sin's record **eradicated** and God's **personal call** to come back (44:22), and a

more than adequate sacrifice promised- one that brings a full provision for all human need (52:13-53:12).

One of the greatest of themes to consider in Isaiah is a spiritual worldview that goes beyond the narrowness of his society. The book declares a multi-ethnic unity in worship as people flow together to seek the Lord (2:1-4). Well before Christ, Isaiah prophesied the breaking of the barrier between Jew and Gentile (9:1-2). In this is revealed the unrelenting Universal Deliverer who will not seek self-promotion, but rather deliverance and restoration for all (42:1-4)!

A key point we shouldn't miss is that this book references discipleship, a fact often missed. During the ministry of Isaiah when the Judeans discounted his stern warnings, he ordered that his "testimony" and "teaching" be bound and sealed—no doubt in a scroll—and committed to his disciples until history proved his words true (Isaiah 8:16). Most people did not accept Isaiah's message, but he had disciples who did. They formed the backbone of a prophetic party in Judah (there was no separation of church and state) who preserved his writings, sustained his political and religious power so that he had access to the person of the king, and arranged the final form of his preaching in written form as can be seen by constant referral to the prophet in third person rather than first.

A POSSIBLE KEY WORD-

I could not help what I chose as the key word. When you consider what Isaiah's name means, as well as what the prophecies speak to, I feel a great key expression would be: Salvation is of the Lord. Humanity has great need for salvation, and only God's great provision will suffice.

KEY VERSE(S) AND CHAPTER(S)-

There are so many verses and passages to choose! But I am proud of myself for choosing one verse. My key verse relates to the theme as well as the key word and, in my mind, summarizes the whole of Isaiah: ISAIAH 53:6. In keeping with this, my key chapter is one of the most remarkable and specific prophecies of the atonement of the Messiah (along with Psalm 22): ISAIAH 53.

JESUS REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

Where isn't He in this book? Isaiah was rightly called "the messianic prophet" because there is so much symbolism and imagery of Christ. 17 chapters of Isaiah contain prophetic references to Christ! In Isaiah Christ is spoken of as Lord, Immanuel, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Rod of Jesse, Cornerstone, King, Shepherd, Lamb of God, etc. The following table are some of the prophecies of Isaiah fulfilled in Jesus.

THE PROPHECY	THE FULFILLMENT
THE MESSIAH...	JESUS CHRIST...
Will be born of a virgin (7:14)	Was born of the virgin Mary (Luke 1:26-31)
Will have a Galilean ministry (9:1, 2)	Ministered in Galilee (Matt. 4:13-16)
Will be an heir to the throne of David (9:7)	Was given the throne of His father David (Luke 1:32, 33)
Will have his way prepared (40:3-5)	Was announced by John the Baptist (John 1:19-28)
Will be spat on and struck (50:6)	Was spat on and beaten (Matt 26:67)
Will be exalted (52:13)	Was highly exalted (Phil. 2:9, 10)
Will be disfigured by suffering (52:14; 53:2)	Was scourged and given crown of thorns (Mark 15:15-19)
Will make a blood atonement (53:5)	Shed His blood to atone for our sins (1 Peter 1:2)
Will be widely rejected (53:1, 3)	Was not accepted by many (John 12: 37, 38)
Will bear our sins and sicknesses (53:4,5)	Died because of our sins and carried our sickness (1 Peter 2:24,25; Matt 8:16,17)
Will voluntarily accept our guilt & punishment (53:7, 8)	Was silent about our sin (Mark 15:4, 5; John 10:11; 19:30)
Will be buried in a rich man's tomb (53:9)	Was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man (Matt 27:57-60; John 19:38-42)
Will die with transgressors (53:12)	Was numbered with transgressors (Mark 15:27,28; Luke 22:37)
Will heal the brokenhearted (61:1,2)	Healed the brokenhearted (Luke 4:18,19)

THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED IN THE BOOK-

- ❖ The Holy Spirit is directly mentioned as being the power, and Giver of wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge and the fear of the Lord to the Messiah in Isaiah 11:1-12
- ❖ The Holy Spirit is equated with God and called the Spirit of justice 28:6
- ❖ He is the Spirit of revival in 32:15-20, 44:2,3
- ❖ Isaiah 42 speaks of the role of the Spirit in helping the suffering Servant of the Lord to heal, liberate and bring justice to the nations

- ❖ He is the one who can be grieved in Isaiah 63:10 and gives rest in 63:14

SOME TRUTHS AND APPLICATIONS-

Is 1:15-17

Understand that sin keeps your prayers from being heard. Learn to walk in repentance and ask God to show you where you are sinning, not just against Him but others. Make things right with people and seek to do well by widows and orphans.

Is 8: 12-15

Do not get involved with conspiracy theories! Choose to only fear God! Stop listening to radio and TV that incites you to fear or hate people.

Is 8:19,20; 30:1,2; 31:1-3

People get in trouble by employing unholy means toward unholy ends and thinking about holy things in an unholy way. Do God's things God's way! Unholy methodology leads to unholy alliances that undo us. Be wary of plans or relationships God has not ordained. Reject spiritual counsel from anyone who does not speak according to the Word- even if he is a minister! Avoid all occultism.

Is 29:13,14

See also Matthew 21:28-32. God demands true obedience as a precursor to true worship. Repent of any attitude that facade and gifting determines spirituality. Do not fake worship! Seek Him honestly!

Is 55:10,11

God's Word is the most powerful force in the universe and go to it and act upon it! Faith takes God at His word when circumstances seem to deny the truth of His promises. Ask the Holy Spirit to train you in that kind of faith! Choose to believe!