

ISAIAH

“The Glorious Throne of Jehovah”

In the first seventeen books of the Old Testament – from **Genesis** to **Esther** – we have seen the history of God’s chosen people, the nation of Israel. We have seen:

1. The birth of that nation – *i.e.* beginning with Abraham.
2. The rise of that nation – *i.e.* the “*super power*” under David and Solomon.
3. The decline of the nation – *i.e.* both spiritually and physically.
4. The fall and captivity of the nation.
5. The return of the nation.

During that whole period of history, the most important men in the whole nation were the prophets – *i.e.* those men who spoke to the people on behalf of the LORD God.

Acts 3:24 “... all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.”

So Samuel was the last of the judges and the first of the prophets.

Now we come to that section in the Old Testament that is called “*The Prophets*”. And, if you will remember, in our introduction we noted that this section is actually subdivided into two parts:

1. The “*major prophets*” – *i.e.* **Isaiah** to **Daniel**. 5 books
2. The “*minor prophets*” – *i.e.* **Hosea** to **Malachi**. 12 books

Now let’s begin our survey of the first book in this section – *i.e.* the book of **Isaiah** – by noting that it ...

1. Contains 66 chapters.
2. Contains 1,292 verses.

I. The introduction.

A. The name.

The Hebrew title is *Yē-shā-ī-ah* – which means, “*Yahweh is Salvation*”. The name is taken from the very first line which says ...

Isaiah 1:1 “The vision of Isaiah ...”

In the Greek language, this prophet’s name was called, “*Esaias*” (*cf.* **Matthew 3:3**). Therefore, Jerome, in his Latin Vulgate (390-405 AD) followed the Greek and entitled the book *Esaias*.

This is the same title that was adopted and carried over into our English Bible where we find the title is, “*The Book of Isaiah*”.

B. The penman.

As we have said many times before, we know that God Himself is the Author of this book (*cf.* **2 Timothy 3:16**).

However, the human penman is clearly identified for us in ...

Isaiah 1:1 “The vision of Isaiah ...”

1. Isaiah was the son of Amoz (*cf.* **Isaiah 1:1**) – and it seems that he was born into a family of rank. This is believed to be true because:

a. He had easy access to the king – *cf.* **Isaiah 7:3**.

In fact, Jewish tradition says he was a cousin of King Uzziah.

b. He had a close relationship with the priest – *cf.* **Isaiah 8:2**.

2. It might also be noted that, Isaiah is distinguished in that Jesus and the Apostles quoted him more than any other Old Testament prophet.

C. The date.

The LORD God called Isaiah to be a prophet in the year that King Uzziah was afflicted with leprosy – and he ministered to the people of Judah for about sixty-one years.

1. Isaiah began his ministry near the end of Uzziah’s reign – *i.e.* 739 BC.

2. Isaiah’s ministry continued through the reigns of:

a. Jotham. (739-731 BC)

b. Ahaz. (731-715 BC)

c. Hezekiah. (715-686 BC)

It was as a result of Isaiah’s preaching, that a revival came to Judah. However, when Hezekiah died, his son came to rule over the nation of Judah.

d. Manasseh.

Manasseh returned to the wicked ways of his grandfather when he restored the altars that his father, Hezekiah, had destroyed – and he was guilty of filling the land with the shedding of innocent blood (*cf.* 2 **Kings 21:16**) because:

- i. He offered his own children as a sacrifice to the Ammonite deity Moloch.
- ii. He killed those who protested against his wickedness. It was during that time that ...

3. Isaiah was killed by order of Manasseh.

Jewish tradition says that Isaiah died from being sawn in two. In fact, that is believed to be what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote ...

Hebrews 11:37 “**They were stoned, they were sawn asunder...**”

Therefore, this book was probably completed between 686-676 BC.

II. The purpose.

A. The historical purpose.

The purpose is to give a warning to Judah of judgment – and to give comfort to the nation of Judah by reminding them of God’s faithful mercies.

B. The theological purpose.

In this book is revealed God’s plan for the ages. In fact, it is interesting to note that this book of **Isaiah** is actually just like a miniature Bible. It has 66 chapters – like the Bible has 66 books – and is divided into two parts:

1. The first part – like the Old Testament – has 39 chapters.

This section is filled with God’s judgments upon ...

- a. The pagan nations that have sinned.
- b. The people of God that have sinned – *i.e.* Judea.

2. The second part – like the New Testament – has 27 chapters.

This section actually begins (*cf.* **Isaiah 40:3**) with a prophecy of John the Baptist who will be a voice crying in the wilderness and preparing the way for the coming of the LORD.

Then we find a message of hope – *i.e.* the coming Messiah will be:

- a. A Savior – *i.e.* He will come to bear a cross.
- b. A King – *i.e.* He will come to wear a crown.

III. The story.

Isaiah gives the clearest and most detailed of the Messianic prophecies. The “*gospel according to Isaiah*” has three major sections:

A. Prophecies of condemnation. **Isaiah 1-35**

1. On the Jews – *i.e.* Judah (*cf.* **Isaiah 1-12**).

- a. Judah was guilty of neglecting the LORD God as they bowed to ritualism and selfishness.
- b. But the LORD God graciously called them to repent of their sins because repentance was their only hope of avoiding God’s wrath and judgment.

Isaiah’s call to preach is found in **Isaiah 6** – and his call was followed by his preaching (*cf.* **Isaiah 7-12**), where he spoke of Immanuel, which means, “*God with us*”. These chapters repeatedly refer to ...

- a. The coming of the Messiah.
- b. The blessings of the Messiah.

2. On the nations (*cf.* **Isaiah 13-23**).

There are eleven nations that are named – Babylon is listed twice – that will face the judgments of God because of their sins against God; and against the people of God.

- 3. On the world – *i.e.* there will be a universal tribulation followed by the blessings of God’s kingdom (*cf.* **Isaiah 24-27**).
- 4. On the Jews – *i.e.* six “*woes*” are specifically pronounced against the Jewish nation (*cf.* **Isaiah 28-33**) because they:

- a. Trusted in their riches.
- b. Were involved in drunkenness.
- c. Were following deceptive practices.
- d. Were confusing good and evil.
- e. Were trusting in human wisdom.
- f. Were allowing injustices to continue.

This section ends with a general picture of international devastation – *i.e.* called the “*Great Tribulation*” – that will precede a period of great, universal blessing (*cf.* **Isaiah 34-35**).

B. Parenthesis of history. Isaiah 36-39

This historical parenthesis looks back to the Assyrian assault against the southern kingdom of Judah in 701 BC and anticipates the coming Babylonian invasion of Judah. In this section we find ...

- 1. The invasion of Sennacherib – *i.e.* the Assyrian.
- 2. Hezekiah’s illness, prayer and recovery.
- 3. The Babylonian captivity.

C. Prophecies of comfort. Isaiah 40-66

Having pronounced Judah’s coming judgment, Isaiah then comforted them with God’s promises of hope and restoration. The basis for this hope is:

- 1. The sovereignty of God – *cf.* **Isaiah 40-48**.

There are 216 verses in these nine chapters – and 115 of them speak of God’s greatness and power! Isaiah declared that Babylon will indeed carry them away – BUT the LORD God will cause:

- a. Babylon to be judged and destroyed.
- b. Judah to be released and returned to their own land.

- 2. The comings of Messiah – *cf.* **Isaiah 49-57**.

- a. He will come as a Savior.

Even though they will reject Him, He will graciously take their sins upon Himself and suffer/die in their place.

- b. He will then come as a King – *i.e.* He will usher in a glorious kingdom of peace and righteousness.

- 3. The rebuilding of God.

- a. Jerusalem will be rebuilt.
- b. Israel's borders will be enlarged.
- c. The Messiah will reign in Zion.
- d. God's people will confess their sins.
- e. God's enemies will be judged.
- f. Peace, prosperity, and justice will prevail.
- g. God will make all things new.

IV. The revelation.

It is said that when he spoke about Christ, Isaiah sounded more like a New Testament preacher than an Old Testament prophet. His Messianic prophecies are clearer and more explicit than those of any other Old Testament book.

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| A. | Christ would be born of a virgin. | <i>cf. Isaiah 7:14</i> |
| B. | Christ would come as a baby. | <i>cf. Isaiah 9:6</i> |
| C. | Christ would have a forerunner. | <i>cf. Isaiah 40:3-5</i> |
| D. | Christ would be rejected. | |
| | 1. Beaten and spat upon. | <i>cf. Isaiah 50:6</i> |
| | 2. Terribly abused. | <i>cf. Isaiah 52:14</i> |
| E. | Christ would bear the sins of all men. | <i>cf. Isaiah 53:4-5</i> |
| F. | Christ would suffer silently. | <i>cf. Isaiah 53:7</i> |
| G. | Christ would be buried with the rich. | <i>cf. Isaiah 53:9</i> |
| H. | Christ would die with criminals. | <i>cf. Isaiah 53:12</i> |

It should also be noted that, just as the prophecies of **Isaiah** concerning the Lord's first coming were all perfectly fulfilled, those prophecies that deal with the Lord's second coming will also most certainly be perfectly fulfilled.

Conclusion

Truly the book of **Isaiah** is a great book for any man who wants to have a proper understanding of both the past and the future – and the reason is simply because this prophetic book reveals to us God's plan for the ages.