

# Isaiah - Introduction & Background

## Title

Like most OT books, the title of the Book of Isaiah is derived from the work's central character. The book's opening verse explains that its visions will be narrated by the prophet Isaiah (1:1). Isaiah means the "Lord is Salvation" or "Yahweh is salvation." As will become apparent, this name is an appropriate title for the book's contents. The Hebrew title of the book is *Yesha'yahuor Yeshaiah*, which is the shortened form. The LXX entitles the book *Hesaias* and the Latin title of the book is *Esaias* or *Isaias*.

## Authorship

Because Isaiah is mentioned many times throughout the book (1:1; 2:1; 7:3; 13:1; 20:2,3; 37:2,5,6,21; 38:1,4,21; 39:3,5,8) with no other writer being mentioned, the book itself promotes Isaiah as its author. Regarding Isaiah's biography, he was married to a prophetess (8:3) and was the father of two children. Each of his children's names signified something about the southern kingdom that Isaiah spent his prophetic career prophesying to. The first child's name was *Shear-jashub* (7:3), which means a remnant will return. *Shear* means "a small remnant" and *jashshub* means "to return or follow." This name signifies God's restorative purposes for the believing remnant as described in chapters 40–66 of the Book of Isaiah. His second child's name was *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* (8:3), which means, "swift is the booty, speedy is the prey." This name summarizes the judgment that the unbelieving remnant would experience at the hands of the Assyrians. This condemnation is the main subject in chapters 1–35 of the Book of Isaiah.

Amoz was the name of Isaiah's father (1:1). Although this name is mentioned 13 times elsewhere in the Old Testament, little is known of Isaiah's father. However, tradition indicates that Amoz was the brother of Amaziah thus making Isaiah Uzziah's cousin. This connection helps explain why Isaiah enjoyed access to the royal court as well as access to Judah's various kings such as Ahaz (7) and Hezekiah (36–39). In addition to his career as a prophet (Is 6; 2 Chr 26:22; John 12:38), Isaiah also functioned in the role of political counselor to both Ahaz and Hezekiah. He was also a historiographer. Apparently, Isaiah wrote about the lives of both Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:32) and Uzziah (2 Chr 26:22). In addition to this distinguished family background, he was also a man of high education as evidenced by the high caliber of his literary work. Unfortunately, his ministry was not well received. According to tradition (*Ascension of Isaiah*), he was sawed in half during Manasseh's reign (Heb 11:37).

According to the book's plain statements as well as 1800 years of Christian tradition, Isaiah is the unambiguous writer of the book. However, recent higher critical authorship has

challenged both the authorship and unity of the Book of Isaiah.<sup>3</sup> In 1775, Döderlein postulated that Isaiah 40–66 was written by someone other than Isaiah called Deutero-Isaiah during the time of the Babylonian exile. In 1892, Duhm expanded this concept to indicate that a third writer other than the prophet Isaiah called Trito Isaiah wrote chapters 55–66 during the post-exilic period. Duhm believed that his section of the book reflected a post-exilic environment before the temple was rebuilt (58:12; 61:4; 64:10; 66:1). Thus, those scholars holding to the Deutero Isaiah theory contend that proto Isaiah was written by the prophet Isaiah during the pre-exilic period in the 8th century and deutero Isaiah was written in the exilic period in the 6th century. Those scholars holding to the Trito Isaiah theory believe that while the prophet Isaiah wrote Proto Isaiah during the 8th century and Deutero Isaiah was written during the exile, Trito Isaiah was written during the post-exilic period in the 5th century. These categories are captured on the following chart:

1–39	Proto Isaiah	Pre-exilic perspective	8th century	700's	Assyrian threat	Assyrian kings
40–55	Deutero Isaiah	Exilic perspective	6th century	500's	Babylonian threat	Cyrus alive
56–66	Trito Isaiah	Post-exilic perspective	5th century	400's	Post-exilic threats and problems	Problems regarding the rebuilding of the temple

Despite its widespread acceptance at the scholarly level, this divisionist framework is built upon tenuous assumptions. First, the theory assumes that the prophet only spoke to the needs of his own time and therefore addressed only a contemporary rather than distant audience. However, Chisholm explains:

Isaiah's rhetorical approach in chapters 40–66 may be compared to an aging grandfather who writes a letter to his baby granddaughter and seals it with the words, "To be opened on your wedding day." The grandfather knows he may not live to see his granddaughter's wedding, but he understands the challenges she will face as a wife and mother. He projects himself into the future and speaks to his granddaughter as if he were actually present on her wedding day. One can imagine the profound rhetorical impact such a letter would have on the granddaughter as she recognizes the foresight and wisdom contained within it and realizes how much her grandfather cared for her. When God's exiled people living more than 150 years after Isaiah's time heard his message to them, they would have realized that God had foreseen their circumstances and that he cared enough about them to encourage them with a message of hope.

By way of analogy, if Moses addressed the second generation at Moab as if they had been present when God spoke to the first generation at Sinai (Deut 5), then Isaiah could have also spoken to the exilic generation from a pre-exilic frame of reference.

Second, the theory assumes that because Isaiah 40–66 reflects a Babylonian setting and mentions the Persian Cyrus who would liberate Judah from Babylonian Captivity (45:1–4), it could not have been written by the 8th-century Isaiah. However, this assumption represents nothing more than a bias against predictive prophecy and supernaturalism. In the disputed section God routinely boasts of His ability to predict the future so as to distinguish Himself from mere idols (42:8–9; 44:7–8; 45:1, 4, 21; 46:10; 48:3–6). If this section is not predicting future events, then these boasts become meaningless. Because most have no problem accepting Isaiah's prediction of the coming messiah (Isa 52–53), predictive prophecy should not be an issue in accepting the authenticity of Isaiah 40–66. Even if someone embraces Trito Isaiah, they still must acknowledge that some parts in the third section are predictive.

Third, the division theory is built upon the premise that the literary and stylistic differences between chapters 1–39 and 40–66 argue for separate authors. In actuality, the similarities between these two units are greater than any alleged disparity between them. For example, while Babylon is the focus of the second unit, Babylon is also mentioned frequently in the first unit (13:1–14:23; 21:1–10). In fact, Babylon is mentioned more frequently in the first unit than in the second unit. Furthermore, many similar phrases can be detected throughout the two sections (1:15, 59:3; 1:29, 57:5; 10:1–2, 59:4–9; 1:2, 66:24; 1:5–6, 53:4–5; 5:27, 40:30; 6:1, 52:13, 57:15; 6:11–12, 62:4; 11:1, 53:2; 11:6–9, 65:25; 11:12, 49:22; 35:10, 51:11). Commonalities between the two units include the highway motif (11:16; 19:23; 35:8; 40:3; 62:10), the remnant theme (10:20–22; 11:11, 16; 28:5; 37:4, 31; 37:32; 46:3), justice (9:7; 11:4; 16:5; 28:6; 32:16; 33:5; 42:1, 3–4; 51:5), fire as a metaphor for punishment (1:31; 10:17; 26:11; 33:11–14; 34:9–10; 66:24), "peace" (mentioned 11 times in the first section and 15 times in the second section), "joy" (mentioned 13 times in the first section and 19 times in the second section), and "thornbush" (7:19; 33:12; 55:13).

Also, there are 25 Hebrew words or forms that occur in both sections that cannot be found in any other prophetic writing. Moreover, the fact that a historical bridge (36–39) unites the book's two major sections (1–35; 40–66) argues for the unity of the book. Finally, 42:9 seems to unite the book's two major sections when it speaks of both the former and new things. While it is clear that the first unit is more terse and rational and the second is more flowing and emotional, perhaps this discrepancy can be explained in terms of a difference in subject matter between the two sections. The first section warns of the exile while the second section comforts in the midst of exile. These differences may also be explained by the personal maturation of the prophet Isaiah who ministered for nearly 60 years.

Fourth, the division theory is built upon alleged theological incongruity between the two sections. For example, the first unit supposedly focuses upon God's majesty and judgment while the second unit focuses upon God's uniqueness, eternity, and deliverance.

However, these theological differences are outweighed by theological unity between the

sections. For example, the phrase "Holy One of Israel" is found 12 times in the first unit and 13 times in the second unit but only an additional 6 times outside of the Book of Isaiah. The phrase "Lord of Hosts" is also common to both sections. Moreover, while it is alleged that messiah as king is focused upon in the first section and the suffering servant is focused upon in the second section, in actuality both sections portray Christ as servant and king. The majestic and all-powerful God concepts are also found in both units.

Fifth, some divisionists do not deny predictive prophecy but think it unnatural for an entire 26 chapters (40–66) to be comprised of this genre.<sup>5</sup> However, this assumption ignores the sustained sections of futuristic content found elsewhere in Scripture (Ezek 35–48; Matt 24–25; Rev 4–22). Sixth, the division theory assumes that because the exile is not mentioned in the second unit, it must have been written after the time of the exile.

However, because the exile was already predicted in the first section (39:6–7) it is assumed in the second section, which focuses upon the return from the exile. It would be an exercise in redundancy to simply repeat in the book's second section what had already been clearly established in the book's first section.

In addition to being built upon tenuous assumptions, the division theory must also overcome key arguments favoring a unified Isaiah. First, Isaiah's name is used 22 times in the New Testament in connection with some quotation from this book (Is 40:3 in Matt 3:3, Mark 1:23, John 1:2–3; Is 40:3–5 in Luke 3:4–6; Is 42:1–4 in Matt 12:17–21; Is 53:1 in Rom 10:16; Is 53:4 in Matt 8:17; Isa 53:7–8 in Acts 8:32–33; Is 65:1 in Rom 10:20). In fact, Isaiah's name is used more than any other OT writer. Despite the fact that both sections are quoted, the New Testament writer always refers to him as Isaiah. Interestingly, Christ quotes all three major sections of the book (Is 6:9–10; 53:1 in John 12:38–41 and Is 61:1 in Luke 4:17–19) and attributes them all to the work of the singular writer Isaiah. Contending that Christ was simply accommodating the first century consensus that the book was written by Deutero and Trito Isaiah is unlikely given Christ's pattern of going against the status quo by correcting inaccurate yet popular interpretations (Matt 5:33–34, 38–39; 15:11–20; 19:9; John 8:24, 44). While it is true that Matthew does cite Jeremiah for a passage from coming from Zechariah, this phenomenon only seems to occur regarding citations from combinations of books. Such a combination is not in view in John 12:38–41 and Luke 4:17–19.

Second, the Dead Sea Scroll discoveries do not support multiple authorship of Isaiah. In the Qumran Isaiah scroll, Chapter 39 ends on the second to last line while chapter 40 begins on the last line with no indication of a division between the chapters. It is doubtful that a pseudo Isaiah could have arisen in 500 BC, have his writings accepted as canonical and attached to the original Isaiah, and then be forgotten in time for the Qumran Isaiah scroll to be produced in the second century. Third, a host of extra biblical sources revealing

common Jewish tradition indicate that a single writer wrote the book. They include the *Ecclesiasticus*, the LXX, the Talmud, and Josephus (*Antiquities* 11.1.2).

Fourth, if the book claims to have been written by Isaiah and yet was actually written by another, then the book represents a deliberate deception. If this is so, then how can the book's ethical imperatives be taken seriously? Fifth, if multiple authorship is correct then Israel's greatest prophet was the only anonymous writing prophet. Sixth, if multiple authors wrote the Book of Isaiah then why is not their contribution more clearly identified in the text? For example, editorial clues abound in Proverbs and Psalms when multiple authors are at issue. Why would the Book of Isaiah be the single exception to this norm? Seventh, if the second section of Isaiah was written in the exilic or post-exilic eras, then why is idolatry repeatedly condemned throughout this unit (41; 44; 57; 65) when the exile had the effect of ridding the nation of this particular sin? Eighth, if Isaiah 40–66 was written in the exilic era, then why do the pre-exilic prophets (Nahum, Zeph, Jer) repeatedly refer to this same body of material? Ninth, if multiple authorship of Isaiah is so obvious, then why did it take 1800 years of Christian history to discover?

### **Scope**

According to 1:1, Isaiah's life spanned the following four kings: Uzziah (790–739 B.C.), Jotham (750–733 B.C.), Ahaz (735–715 B.C.), and Hezekiah (729–686 B.C.).<sup>6</sup> Isaiah began his ministry in the year of Uzziah's death (6:1) in 739 B.C. If his ministry spanned through the reign of Hezekiah and the death of Sennacherib (37:38) in 681 B.C., then his ministry covered the 58-year period in between 739 B.C. and 681 B.C. Because Isaiah began his ministry in the year of Uzziah's death, his ministry spanned the three kings of Jotham (1–6), Ahaz (7–12), and Hezekiah (15–39). Thus, the book of Isaiah is really an examination of three kings or four kings if the kingship of Christ is included (40–66). Because of this scope, the "vision" spoken of in 1:1 really should be understood as multiple visions.

### **Date**

Because Isaiah's ministry went through Sennacherib's death in 681 B.C., the date for the writing of his book was probably 680 B.C. This is probably as close as can be ascertained regarding a specific date for the writing of the book since the exact date of Isaiah's death remains unknown.

### **Recipients**

According to 1:1, Isaiah's ministry concerned Jerusalem and Judah. Thus, Isaiah was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah. This designation is reinforced upon observing that the four kings mentioned in the book's first verse are kings that governed the southern kingdom of Judah. While it is true that Isaiah gave prophecies concerning the northern kingdom (9:1, 8-12; 17:3-6) as well as the surrounding nations (13–23), these prophecies were still probably addressed to those in Judah. The book seems to indicate that Isaiah spent most of his ministry in Jerusalem.

However, although part of his book was aimed at the audience of his own day (1–39), his prophecies also concerned a distant generation (40–66). God used Isaiah to minister to this distant generation even though the exile had not yet transpired. Thus, Isaiah's message was designed to reach a pre-exilic (1–39), exilic (40–55), and post-exilic (56–66) audience. With the first audience, he warned them to repent so that they could be spared from the coming Assyrian invasion. With the last two audiences, he sought to give them hope in the midst of the exilic and post-exilic eras.

### **Historical Background**

In order to grasp the historical background of the book of Isaiah, it is best to note the various external, geo-political forces that impacted events recorded in the book. First, Isaiah ministered during a time of Assyrian dominance. The Assyrian king Tiglath Pileser (745–727 BC), or Pul as he is called in 2 Kings 15:19 and 1 Chr 5:26, turned west after numerous conquests in the east. He then conquered a number of small countries along the Mediterranean including Israel and Judah. He began receiving tribute from both Menahem of Israel and Rezin of Aram (Syria). The anti-Assyrian coalition between Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Aram caused Pul to conquer Damascus and kill Rezin in 732 BC (2 Kings 16:9). After this campaign, Pul returned to Assyria and then died.

When Hoshea of Israel revolted from paying tribute to Assyria, Pul's successor Shalmaneser V put down this rebellion (7:16). Sargon II then completed what Shalmaneser V had begun by dispersing the northern kingdom in 722 B.C. Sennacherib's reign then followed. He sought to destroy Judah when Hezekiah stopped paying tribute to Assyria in 701 B.C. However, Sennacherib was soundly defeated through God's miraculous intervention (36–37). Sennacherib died and was replaced by Esarhaddon (37:38).

Second, Isaiah ministered during a time of the northern kingdom's final years. Thus, his prophetic contemporaries consisted of the northern prophets Hosea and Amos and the southern prophet Micah. Sadly, the pattern of spiritual decline exemplified in the northern kingdom was imitated in the south. Interestingly, after the fall of the northern kingdom in 722 B.C., Isaiah began warning of the threat from Babylonia rather than Assyria despite the fact that Babylonia was not yet a world power.

Third, although Egypt was not at the height of its power during Isaiah's time, she still impacted a number of events recorded in the book. For example one of Isaiah's oracles against the nations (13–23) is directed at Egypt (19–20). Also, Isaiah condemned Judah for seeking refuge from Assyria through misplaced confidence in her alliance with Egypt (30). Interestingly, Sennacherib's commander sought to discourage Judah by pointing out the improbability that Egypt would come to Judah's aid (36:6).

Fourth, the impact of Aram of Syria is also seen in the book. As previously explained, the king of Aram named Rezin formed a coalition with Pekah of the northern kingdom of Israel for the purpose resisting Assyria. They sought to enlist Ahaz of Judah in their coalition.

However, when Ahaz resisted, they sought to depose him and instead replace him with a puppet king named Tabeel (735 BC). These geo-political movements furnish the background for the Book of Isaiah's seventh chapter. As explained above, this Syro-Palestinian coalition was put down by Pul in 732 BC.

Fifth, Babylon also plays a dominant role in the book. This nation is the subject of two of Isaiah's oracles against the surrounding nations (13:1–14:23; 21:1–10). Although not yet a world power, Isaiah predicts that Babylon would be the place of the future captivity (40–66). Isaiah first predicts the Babylonian captivity when Hezekiah showed the Babylonian king Merodach-Baldan the temple treasures (39:6–7). Apparently, Merodach-Baldan, who had earlier been deposed by Sennacherib, sought to curry favor with Hezekiah so as to include him in his coalition against Assyria. These events furnish the background for the transitional 39th chapter in the Book of Isaiah.

Sixth, the book of Isaiah predicts the rise of the Median-Persian empire. The prophet indicated that Cyrus the Persian would be the instrument that God would use to liberate Judah from Babylonian captivity (44:28–45:1). This empire would dethrone Babylon in 539 B.C. as recorded in Daniel 5. In preparation for this event, Cyrus rose to power over the Medes in 549 B.C.<sup>8</sup>

### **Structure**

Most see the book addressing the needs of three different audiences. They include the Assyrian threat faced by the pre-exilic community, the Babylonian threat faced by the exilic community, and events surrounding the rebuilding of the temple faced by the post-exilic community. Thus, many understand the book as speaking to the first audience in 1–39, the second audience in 40–55, and the third audience in 56–66. They further subdivide the first category into prophecies of condemnation against Judah (1–12), the nations (13–23), and the world (24–35).

Perhaps a better approach is to divide the book according to prophecies primarily of condemnation against the pre-exilic audience of Judah (1–35) and prophecies primarily of comfort to the future exilic audience (40–66). The first section could then be further subdivided according to prophecies of condemnation against Judah (1–12), the nations (13–23), and the world (24–35). The second section could be further subdivided according to Israel's deliverance from Babylon (40–48), Israel's ultimate deliverer (49–57), and delivered Israel under messiah's millennial reign (58–68). The book's historical, transitional section (36–39) then bridges these two larger units by looking not only backward to the historical Assyrian threat (36–37) but also forward to the future Babylonian captivity (38–39).<sup>9</sup>

### **Message**

Rather than trusting in things that cannot deliver, Judah must trust in God alone for her deliverance and salvation. Although God will accomplish the nation's immediate

deliverance through lesser sons (Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Cyrus), He will only accomplish the nation's and the world's ultimate deliverance through the greater son who is the coming servant and messiah. This messiah or servant will atone for Israel's sins, preserve a Jewish remnant, lead this remnant through a second Exodus, deliver the nation from Gentile oppression, and restore Israel to a place of prominence where she in turn will mediate God's blessings to the rest of the world.

### **Purposes**

Isaiah wrote his book in order to accomplish several purposes. First, he wanted to return his own generation to covenant fidelity so that the impending Babylonian invasion of 586 B.C. could be averted (1–35). To the extent that they had become unrepentant, he wanted to harden them in this decision (Isa 6). Second, he wrote in order to comfort the future exiles in the midst of the Babylonian captivity (40–66). Third, he wrote in order to cause His audience to place their trust in God alone for their deliverance rather than in foreign alliances.

### **Theological Themes**

Several themes recur throughout the Book of Isaiah. First, the book focuses upon God's awesome attributes such as His holiness, glory, sovereignty, and role in creation (40:21-22; 42:5-7; 43:1-7, 15-21; 44:21-28; 48:13; 45:18; 51:12-16; 63:7-14). Second, the book emphasizes human depravity (6:9-10; 42:7; 53:6) including God's displeasure with wayward Israel (1; 5; 54). Third, the book routinely notes God's deliverance, salvation, and blessing. Fourth, Isaiah highlights comfort for God's people (40:1).

Fifth, the book focuses upon the Jewish remnant. Sixth, the book emphasizes God's just judgment. Seventh, the book reiterates the universal Day of the Lord. Eighth, the book speaks consistently of the coming kingdom (11:6-9). Ninth, the book observes the prominence that Jerusalem will enjoy in the millennial kingdom (2:2-4; 45:14; 60:14). Tenth, the book also records God's program for the Gentile nations (13–23; 42:6; 49:6; 54:17; 55).

Eleventh, the book features the role of messiah not only as king (9:6-7) but also as servant. Twelfth, the book brings to the reader's mind God's covenantal structure. Both the Abrahamic (29:22; 41:8-11; 51:1-3; 63:15) and Noahic (55) covenants are dealt with. Thirteenth, the book is replete with ridicule of impotent idols (44–46). Fourteenth, the book resounds with exhortations to trust in God.

### **Unique Characteristics**

The Book of Isaiah boasts several outstanding characteristics. First, the word "salvation" dominates the book. While this word is used 26 times in Isaiah, it is only used 7 times in all of the other prophetic material. Second, the Book of Isaiah also dominates the New Testament. For example, the name Isaiah is mentioned 22 times in the New Testament. This frequency is more than any other Old Testament figure. Moreover, Isaiah 53 is either



quoted or alluded to 85 times in the New Testament and the Book of Isaiah is the most quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament. Third, "Isaiah is characterized by a systematic presentation, brilliant imagery, broad scope, clarity, beauty, and power."<sup>11</sup> Fourth, the Book of Isaiah exemplifies the "mountain peak" of prophetic interpretation where two concepts are placed together with no mention of the vast space between these concepts (Isa 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-20; 1 Pet 1:10-11).

Fifth, the Book of Isaiah exhibits a rich Christology. Sixth, Isaiah's messianic prophecies are more numerous and clearer than those given by any other prophetic writer. Only the Book of Psalms with its 150 chapters contains more messianic prophecies. Seventh, Isaiah is the greatest of the writing prophets. Eighth, Isaiah's 66 chapters have been likened to the Bible's 66 books. The first 39 chapters introduce judgment and the final 27 chapters introduce restoration.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the last set of chapters introduces a redeemer (53) and a messenger who will herald the coming redeemer (40:3). These concepts have been likened to Christ and John the Baptist in the NT. Ninth, the book exhibits unrivaled poetic beauty. Tenth, the book employs multiple figures of speech.

Eleventh, the book makes use of 200 different Hebrew words. This figure is more than what is found in any other Hebrew book. Twelfth, the book refers to many events in Israel's history including the Exodus, the crossing of the Red Sea (4:5-6; 31:5; 37:36; 11:15; 43:2, 16-17), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:9), Gideon's victory over Midian (9:4; 10:26), and the song of Moses (1:2; 30:17; 43:11, 13).<sup>13</sup> Thirteenth, the book has a more exhaustive theology in comparison to any other Old Testament writing. Fourteenth, the book contains unique phrases. For example, the phrase "the Holy One of Israel" is practically unique to the Book of Isaiah where it is used 25 times and only 6 times elsewhere. The same can be said for the phrase "redeemer of Israel" that is used 13 times in Isaiah and only 5 times elsewhere. Also, the terms "righteousness" and "justice" are employed 80 times in the Book of Isaiah. This frequency is only surpassed in the Psalms. Fifteenth, the Book of Isaiah records the fulfillment of numerous short-term prophecies giving the reader confidence that its long term prophecies will be similarly fulfilled (7:11; 37:36; 38:8, 21; 7:4; 10:12, 25; 13:17; 14-23; 44:28-45:6).

### **Genre**

The dominant genres of the book are prose (36-39) and poetry (1-35; 40-66). The book also exhibits a variety of sub-genres such as taunt song (14:4-23), apocalyptic (24-27), wisdom poem (28:2-29), love song (5:1-7), hymns of praise (12:1-6; 38:10-20), national lament (63:7-64:12), and oracles of doom that include elements of accusation, judgment, and salvation (1:4-2-9, 10-20, 21-31).

The book's most conspicuous Christological features are its Immanuel passages (7:14; 9:1-7; 11:1-16) and servant songs (42:1-9; 49:1-12; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). The Christology of Isaiah is captured on the following chart.:

7:14	Virgin birth (Luke 1:26-31)
9:1	Galilean ministry to the Gentiles (Matt 4:13-16)
9:6-7	Davidic heir (Luke 1:32-33)
11:1	Branch of Jesse (Matt 1:5)
35:4-6	Miraculous ministry (Matt 11:2-6)
40:3-5	Heralded by John the Baptist (John 1:19-28)
42:4-6	Servant to the Gentiles (Matt 12:17-21)
49:6	Servant to the Gentiles (Luke 2:32)
50:6	Righteous servant
52:13-53:12	Suffering servant (Acts 8:30-35)
61:2	Healing of the broken hearted (Luke 4:18, 19)

## Outline

### I. Prophecies of condemnation (Is 1:1—35:10)

#### (1) Condemnation of Judah (Is 1:1—12:6)

##### (A) Book of hardening (Is 1:1—6:13)

##### (a) Isaiah's background (1:1)

(i) What: vision (1:1a)

(ii) Where: Judah and Jerusalem (1:1b)

(iii) Who: Isaiah son of Amoz (1:1c)

(iv) When: During the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah (1:1d)

##### (b) Sins (1:2-31)

##### (i) Rebellion (1:2-9)

(a) Sin (1:2-4)

(b) Judgment (1:5-8)

(c) Blessing: remnant (1:9)

##### (ii) Empty religion (1:10-20)

(a) Sin (1:10-15)

(b) Judgment (1:20)

(c) Blessing: covenant renewal (1:16-19)

##### (iii) Jerusalem's injustice (1:21-31)

(a) Sin (1:21-23)

(b) Judgment (1:24-25)

(c) Blessing: Zion's redemption (1:26-31)

##### (c) Judgment to eventually lead to millennial conditions (Is 2:1—4:6)

##### (i) Millennial conditions (2:1-4)

##### (ii) Sins inviting judgment (Is 2:5—4:1)

(a) Foreign customs (2:5-11)

(b) Pride (2:12-22)

(c) Leaders' sin (3:1-15)

- (d) Women's sin (Is 3:16—4:1)
  - (iii) Millennial conditions imposed by "the branch" (4:2-6)
    - (a) Wealth of the remnant (4:2)
    - (b) Holiness (4:3-4)
    - (c) Shelter (4:5-6)
  - (d) Vineyard (5:1-30)
    - (i) Parable (5:1-6)
    - (ii) Explanation (5:7)
    - (iii) Woes (5:8-23)
      - (a) Greed (5:8-10)
      - (b) Hedonism (5:11-17)
      - (c) Blasphemy (5:18-19)
      - (d) Perversion (5:20)
      - (e) Arrogance (5:21)
      - (f) Injustice (5:22-23)
    - (iv) Concluding condemnation for covenant rebellion (5:24-30)
  - (e) Isaiah's calling (6:1-13)
    - (i) Calling (6:1-8)
      - (a) God's holiness (6:1-4)
      - (b) Atonement for Isaiah's sin (6:5-7)
      - (c) Isaiah answers God's call (6:8)
    - (ii) Ministry (6:9-13)
      - (a) Spiritual callousness of those to whom Isaiah will minister (6:9-10)
      - (b) Coming judgment (6:11-13)
- (B) Book of Immanuel (Is 7:1—12:6)
  - (a) Sign of Immanuel (7:1-25)
    - (i) God gives the sign to unbelieving Ahaz (7:1-16)
    - (ii) Imminent desolation of Judah by Assyria (7:17-25)
  - (b) Sign of Maher-shalal-hash-baz (8:1-22)
    - (i) Isaiah's second son signifies soon destruction of Aram (Damascus) and Israel (Samaria) in 732 BC (8:1-4)
    - (ii) Isaiah continues describing the destruction of Judah by Assyria (8:5-8)
    - (iii) Sins of Judah inviting the Assyrian invasion (8:9-22)
      - (a) Fear that Isaiah is not to imitate (8:9-15)
      - (b) Rejecting the signs represented by Isaiah's sons and instead embracing occultism (8:16-22)

- (c) Sign of Messiah (9:1-7)
  - (i) Reversal of Israel's fortune (9:1)
  - (ii) Salvation of the Gentiles (9:2-3)
  - (iii) Kingdom of peace to be ruled by the Prince of peace (9:4-7)
- (d) Reasons for the coming Assyrian invasion (Is 9:8—10:4)
  - (i) Pride (9:8-12)
  - (ii) Faulty leadership (9:13-17)
  - (iii) Infighting (9:18-21)
  - (iv) Injustice (10:1-4)
- (e) God to Judge Assyria (10:5-34)
  - (i) While God had used Assyria to judge Judah he would cut Assyria down when she went too far (10:5-11)
  - (ii) God will punish Assyria while preserving a Jewish remnant (10:12-34)
- (f) Messiah's kingdom (11:1-16)
  - (i) Prince (11:1-5)
  - (ii) Peace (11:6-9)
  - (iii) People gathered from worldwide dispersion (11:10-16)
- (g) Concluding hymn of praise (12:1-6)
  - (i) Individual praise to God (12:1-3)
  - (ii) Corporate praise for the benefit of the nations (12:4-6)
- (2) Condemnation of the nations (Is 13:1—23:18)
  - (A) Babylon (Is 13:1—14:23)
    - (a) God's call to attack Babylon (13:1-5)
    - (b) Universality of Babylon's destruction (13:6-16)
    - (c) Finality of Babylon's destruction (13:17-22)
    - (d) Taunt song against Babylon's King (14:1-21)
      - (i) Earth rejoices (14:1-8)
      - (ii) Sheol's reception (14:9-15)
      - (iii) King's power remembered (14:16-21)
    - (e) Finality of Babylon's destruction (14:22-23)
  - (B) Assyria (14:24-27)
  - (C) Philistia (14:28-32)
  - (D) Moab (Is 15:1—16:14)
    - (a) Moabite wailing (15:1-9)
    - (b) Plea from Moabites for Judah to rule over them (16:1-5)
    - (c) Judgment upon Moabite pride (16:6-14)
  - (E) Damascus and Samaria (17:1-14)
    - (a) Damascus (17:1-3)

- (b) Samaria (17:4-11)
  - (c) God will judge Assyria who He used to judge Damascus and Samaria (17:12-14)
- (F) Ethiopia (18:1-7)
  - (a) Ethiopia warned of Assyria's coming (18:1-4)
  - (b) Assyria to destroy Ethiopia (18:5-6)
  - (c) Regeneration of Ethiopia (18:7)
- (G) Egypt (Is 19:1—20:6)
  - (a) Conquest by Assyria (19:1-4)
  - (b) Drought (19:5-10)
  - (c) Failing wisdom (19:11-15)
  - (d) Regeneration of both Egypt and Assyria (19:16-25)
  - (e) Isaiah's nakedness demonstrates the humiliation of both Ethiopia and Egypt at the hands of the Assyrians (20:1-6)
- (H) Babylon (21:1-10)
  - (a) Babylon's fall (21:1-2)
  - (b) Isaiah's response to Babylon's fall (21:3-5)
  - (c) Announcement of Babylon's fall (21:6-10)
- (I) Edom (21:11-12)
- (J) Arabia (21:13-17)
- (K) Jerusalem (22:1-15)
  - (a) Inappropriate rejoicing (22:1-4)
  - (b) Jerusalemites trust in everything except God (22:5-11)
  - (c) Unrepentance (22:12-14)
  - (d) Shebna disposed for building a monument to himself in the day of calamity and replaced by Eliakim (22:15)
- (L) Tyre (23:1-18)
  - (a) Lamentation to all (23:1-7)
  - (b) Destruction (23:8-14)
  - (c) Physical restoration of Tyre and God takes Tyre's wealth (23:15-18)
- (3) Condemnation of the world (Is 24:1—35:10)
  - (A) Tribulation and kingdom: Little Apocalypse (Is 24:1—27:13)
    - (a) Universal judgment (24:1-20)
      - (i) Divine judgment on the entire earth (24:1-13)
      - (ii) Believing remnant to glorify God (24:14-16)
      - (iii) Terror of unbelievers (24:17-20)
      - (iv) God's reign (24:21-23)
        - (a) Over spiritual powers (24:21a)

- (b) Of earthly Powers (24:21b-22)
  - (c) Over Israel (24:23)
- (b) Israel praises God for punishing the wicked and rewarding the righteous (25:1-12)
  - (i) For judging her oppressors (25: 1-5)
  - (ii) For blessings (25:6-9)
  - (iii) For Moab's destruction (25:10-12)
- (c) Judah's hymns for divine comfort (26:1-21)
  - (i) For Jerusalem's stability (26:1-6)
  - (ii) For divine judgment (26:7-15)
  - (iii) For divine deliverance (26:16-19)
  - (iv) Concluding exhortation to wait upon the Lord (26:20-21)
- (d) Kingdom (27:1-13)
  - (i) Satan's defeat (27:1)
  - (ii) God's Vineyard (27:2-11)
    - (a) Protection (27:2-5)
    - (b) Prosperity (27:6)
    - (c) Forgiveness (27:7-9)
    - (d) Destruction of opponents (27:10-11)
  - (iii) Second exodus (27:12-13)
- (B) Six woes (Is 28:1—33:24)
  - (a) Pride (28:1-29)
    - (i) Samaria's prideful drunkenness (28:1-13)
      - (a) Drunkenness leading to judgment (28:1-8)
      - (b) Rejection of Isaiah's message (28:9-10)
      - (c) Prophecy of foreign captivity (28:11-13)
    - (ii) Jerusalem's prideful confidence in foreign covenants (28:14-22)
    - (iii) Grace in the midst of judgment (28:23-29)
      - (a) Judgment is not definite (28:23-26)
      - (b) Judgment precedes blessing (28:27-29)
  - (b) Religious hypocrisy (29:1-24)
    - (i) Coming siege on Jerusalem for religious hypocrisy (29:1-4)
    - (ii) Judgment upon Israel's oppressors (29:5-8)
    - (iii) Further judgment upon Jerusalem for her continued spiritual insensitivity (29:9-14)
  - (c) Deception: concealing actions from God (29:15-24)
    - (i) Such action exalts man over his creator (29:15-16)
    - (ii) God will judge the wicked and exalt the humble (29:17-24)

- (d) Obstinate rebellion through misplaced trust (30:1-33)
    - (i) Condemnation of alliance with Egypt (30:1-5)
    - (ii) Egypt's impotence to help Judah (30:6-17)
    - (iii) God will show grace toward Judah (30:18-33)
      - (a) Millennial conditions (30:18-26)
      - (b) Destruction of Assyria (30:27-33)
  - (e) Trust in Egypt's might rather than God (Is 31:1—32:20)
    - (i) Egypt's impotence and God's power to deliver Judah (31:1-7)
    - (ii) Predicted destruction of Assyria (31:8-9)
    - (iii) Millennial conditions to replace Assyrian desolation (32:1-20)
  - (f) Destroyer's opposition (33:1-24)
    - (i) God's promise to visit destruction on Assyria due to Judah's prayer for deliverance (33:1-12)
    - (ii) God will deliver the righteous (33:13-24)
- (C) Tribulation and Kingdom (Is 34:1—35:10)
  - (a) Tribulation (34:1-17)
    - (i) Judgment on all nations (34:1-4)
    - (ii) Judgment on Edom whose lust for Israel's land epitomizes the sin of all nations (34:5-17)
  - (b) Kingdom (35:1-10)
    - (i) Agricultural productivity (35:1-4)
    - (ii) Healing (35:5-6a)
    - (iii) Agricultural productivity (35:6b-7)
    - (iv) Second Exodus (35:8-10)

## II. Historical interlude: conclusion and introduction (Is 36:1—39:8)

### (1) Looking backward: Hezekiah and Assyria (Is 36:1—37:38)

- (A) Rabshekah's addresses (36:1-22)
  - (a) Setting (36:1-3)
  - (b) First address to the leadership in (36:4-12)
  - (c) Second address to the people (36:13-20)
  - (d) Responses (36:21-22)
    - (i) People: silence (36:21)
    - (ii) Leaders: report to Hezekiah (36:22)
- (B) Hezekiah's faith (37:1-38)
  - (a) Request to Hezekiah (37:1-7)
  - (b) Sennacherib's letter (37:8-13)
  - (c) Prayer to God (37:14-20)
  - (d) God's answer to Hezekiah (37:21-35)

- (e) God's judgment upon Assyria (37:36-38)
- (2) Looking forward: Hezekiah and Babylon (Is 38:1—39:8)
  - (A) Hezekiah's illness and healing (38:1-8)
  - (B) Hezekiah praises God for his healing (38:9-22)
  - (C) Hezekiah foolishly displays the Temple treasures to Merodach-Baladan leading to the predicted Babylonian captivity (39:1-8)
- III. Prophecies of comfort (Is 40:1—66:24)
  - (1) Promises of Israel's deliverance from Babylonian captivity because of God's attributes (Is 40:1—48:22)
    - (A) Deliverance based upon God's sovereignty (40:1-31)
      - (a) Promise of comfort (40:1-2)
      - (b) Preparation for God's coming (40:3-5)
      - (c) God's immutable word makes the promise genuine (40:6-8)
      - (d) Promise based upon God's attributes: power and shepherd (40:9-11)
      - (e) 4 questions showing God's sovereignty (40:12-26)
        - (i) God is superior to the nations since he created the earth (40:12-17)
        - (ii) God is superior to the idols since they are manufactured by craftsmen (40:18-20)
        - (iii) God is superior to earthly rulers since He is eternal and they are temporary (40:21-24)
        - (iv) God is superior to deities since He is the creator of heavenly bodies (40:25-26)
      - (f) Because God cared for Judah she could be strengthened in Him (40:27-31)
    - (B) Deliverance based upon God's control over history (41:1-29)
      - (a) God predicts Cyrus (the near prophecy) (41:1-7)
      - (b) God predicts His servant Israel's ultimate victory (41:8-20)
      - (c) God predicts the future unlike idols (41:21-29)
    - (C) Deliverance based upon God's ministry plans for the new servant (42:1-25)
      - (a) New servant's ministry to the Gentiles (42:1-17)
      - (b) New servant was necessary due to the failure of the previous servant's failure (42:18-25)
    - (D) Deliverance based upon God's future promises for Israel (Is 43:1—44:5)
      - (a) Love (43:1-4)
      - (b) Regathering (43:5-7)
      - (c) Election (43:8-13)
      - (d) Restoration from Babylon (43:14-21)
      - (e) Forgiveness (43:22-28)



- (f) Spirit's outpouring (44:1-5)
- (E) Deliverance based upon his supremacy over idols (44:6-23)
  - (a) God's uniqueness (44:6-8)
  - (b) God's superiority in comparison to idols (44:9-20)
  - (c) God will remember Israel (44:21-23)
- (F) Deliverance based upon prediction of Cyrus (44:24—45:13)
  - (a) Cyrus as shepherd to restore the Temple and Jerusalem (44:24-28)
  - (b) Cyrus as deliverer from political captivity (45:1-13)
- (G) Deliverance based upon Judah's predicted supremacy over the Gentiles (45:14-25)
  - (a) Gentiles to bow to Israel (45:14-19)
  - (b) Gentiles to worship God (45:20-25)
- (H) Deliverance based upon predictions of Babylon's fall (Is 46:1—47:15)
  - (a) Powerlessness of Babylon's idols Bel and Nebo (46:1-13)
    - (i) God carries people while Babylon's burdensome idols had to be carried (46:1-4)
    - (ii) God is omnipotent while Babylon's idols were inanimate (46:5-13)
  - (b) Destruction of Babylon (47:1-15)
    - (i) Destruction described (47:1-5)
    - (ii) Sins inviting destruction (47:6-15)
- (I) Deliverance based upon predictions of Israel's liberation from Babylon (48:1-22)
  - (a) Israel's stubbornness described (48:1-11)
  - (b) Israel's deliverance described (48:12-22)
- (2) Israel's deliverer (Is 49:1—57:21)
  - (A) Servant's task (49:1-26)
    - (a) Calling (49:1-3)
    - (b) Concern (49:4)
    - (c) Ministry to the Gentiles (49:6b-7)
    - (d) Ministry to Israel (49:5-6a,8-26)
  - (B) Obedient servant contrasted with disobedient Israel (50:1-11)
    - (a) Israel's disobedience (50:1-3)
    - (b) Servant's obedience (50:4-9)
    - (c) Servant's exhortation to trust God (50:10-11)
  - (C) God provides reasons why Judah should trust Him (Is 51:1—52:12)
    - (a) Commands to listen (51:1-8)
      - (i) Israel's history (51:1-3)
      - (ii) God's character and power (51:4-6)

- (iii) God's righteousness will endure (51:7-8)
  - (b) Commands to awaken (Is 51:9—52:12)
    - (i) To God's power as displayed in creation (51:9-16)
    - (ii) To God's wrath being given to Judah's tormentor (51:17-23)
    - (iii) To God's peace and protection (52:1-12)
- (D) Suffering servant (Is 52:13—53:12)
  - (a) Ultimate victory (52:13-15)
  - (b) Rejection (53:1-3)
  - (c) Suffering (53:4-6)
  - (d) Death (53:7-9)
  - (e) Resurrection (53:10-12)
- (E) Deliverance of Israel (Is 54:1—55:13)
  - (a) Restoration of widowed, barren Israel to her husband (54:1-10)
  - (b) Jerusalem's insecurity in comparison to her millennial permanence (54:11-17)
  - (c) God invites Israel to be saved (55:1-13)
    - (i) Invitation to repent according to the terms of their Davidic covenant (55:1-7)
    - (ii) Potency of God's ways, word, and restoration (55:8-13)
- (F) Deliverance of the Gentiles (56:1-12)
  - (a) Israel exhorted to follow God's covenant (56:1-2)
  - (b) Gentiles exhorted to follow God's covenant (56:3-8)
  - (c) Rebuke to those who refuse to hold to God's covenant (56:9-12)
- (G) Concluding warnings (57:1-21)
  - (a) Divine judgment to be imposed upon covenant violators (57:1-13)
  - (b) Divine mercy to be given to the contrite (57:14-21)
- (3) Israel as the delivered (Is 58:1—66:24)
  - (A) First round (Is 58:1—63:6)
    - (a) Sin (Is 58:1—59:8)
      - (i) Empty fasting (58:1-12)
      - (ii) Sabbath breaking (58:13-14)
      - (iii) Injustice (59:1-8)
    - (b) Confession (59:9-15)
    - (c) Forgiveness (59:16-21)
    - (d) Kingdom (Is 60:1—63:6)
      - (i) What will come to Zion (60:1-22)
        - (a) Shekinah glory (60:1-2)
        - (b) Nations (60:3-14)

- (c) Blessing (60:15-22)
  - (ii) Messiah coming (61:1-11)
    - (a) His coming (61:1-9)
    - (b) Personified nation praises Messiah (61:10-11)
  - (iii) Redeemed Jerusalem (62:1-12)
    - (a) Divine delight (62:1-5)
    - (b) Restoration (62:6-12)
  - (iv) Judgment on Edom (63:1-6)
  - (B) Second round (Is 63:7—66:24)
    - (a) Confession (Is 63:7—64:12)
    - (b) Forgiveness: while God will judge idolaters and the righteous He will bless and deliver the righteous remnant (65:1-16)
    - (c) Kingdom (Is 65:17—66:24)
      - (i) Millennial conditions (65:17-25)
      - (ii) Judgment (66:1-6)
        - (a) False worshipers (66:1-4)
        - (b) Remnant's tormentors (66:5-6)
      - (iii) Israel's supernatural re-birth (66:7-17)
      - (iv) Universal influence (66:18-21)
      - (v) Fate of the righteous and wicked (66:22-24)
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## Introduction

Isaiah = "YHWH is Salvation"

Although he wrote during the period of 740-700 BC, Isaiah is the prophet most often quoted in the NT. He was a prophet to the Southern Kingdom at the same time as Hosea, Amos and Micah. Isaiah was of the tribe of Judah, and according to Rabbinic tradition was closely related to several Kings. He was part of the aristocratic class and may have been raised in the King's palace in Jerusalem. Often called the greatest of Israel's writing prophets, Isaiah's book is exceeded in length only by the Psalms and (just barely) Jeremiah. As the Bible has 66 books Isaiah has 66 chapters, The first 39 of them, equal to the books of the OT, speak of judgment. The last 27, the number of NT books, focus on reconciliation and redemption. It's true that chapter breaks didn't come along until much later but it's interesting that even in its form, the Book of Isaiah is a model of God's word in total.

The sudden change in theme has caused some liberal theologians to ascribe the last 27 chapters, sometimes called the Book of Comfort, to an unknown author they call Deutero-Isaiah. The fact that the last part of the book contains much more in the way of specific prophecy helps them justify this dual authorship, at least to themselves. This is because liberal theology pre-supposes the impossibility of predictive prophecy, and therefore Isaiah couldn't have known the future. If you need confirming opinions, the Jewish historian Josephus thought so too, and evangelical Christianity overwhelmingly supports the book's single authorship. See note: **Two Isaiahs?** below.

The funny thing is, not only did Isaiah write the whole book, but many scholars believe that a number of his prophetic passages had a dual fulfillment in mind. The first would culminate in the Babylonian captivity, which came 100 years later, while the second was for the end of the age. See [Dual Reference \(Fulfillment\) Prophecies](#) for more details.

Tradition has it that after a long career as one of Israel's prophets, Isaiah so upset King Manasseh, to whom he was related, that the wicked king had him sawed in half. This is hinted at in Heb 11:36-38, part of a passage that speaks of the danger one faced in being a man of God.

### **Isaiah's Personal Background**

- Son of Amoz
  - not Amos: 1st and last letters are different in the Hebrew
  - Brother of Amaziah, Uzziah's father?
- Family of rank:
  - Access to the King (Is 7:3)
  - Intimacy with high priest (Is 8:2)
- Jerusalem was his home; served as the court preacher.
- Martyrdom tradition (*Mishna*): King Manasseh cut him in half with a wooden saw (Justin Martyr, 150 AD) (Heb 11:37)
- Married, two sons:
  - *Shear-jashub* = "a remnant shall return"; a symbolical name for the son of Isaiah the prophet
  - *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* = "swift is booty, speedy is prey"; a symbolic name given by Isaiah by the Lord's direction to Isaiah's son; a prophetic indication that Damascus and Samaria were soon to be plundered by the king of Assyria
- Greatest of the writing prophets, ministered during the reign of four kings, a period which included the invasion of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria
- [Also, the change of all calendars in 701 BC, possibly due to an alteration of the orbit of the Earth, according to some views]
- Most comprehensive of all prophets

- Span of themes include the creation of the universe (Is 42:5) to the creation of a new heavens and new earth (Is 65:17; 66:22)
- No other prophet matches his majestic eloquence on the glory of God
- All the nations of the world are included in his predictions
- No other prophet is more focused on the redemptive work of the Messiah, or more clearly aware of grace

### **Vocabulary**

- Number of different words used:
  - Ezekiel: 1535
  - Jeremiah: 1653
  - Psalmists: 2170
  - Isaiah: 2186
- Cf. Milton, Dante, Shakespeare: the largest English vocabularies on record

### **Literary Style**

- Versatility of expression, and brilliance of imagery; has no rival; regarded as the climax of Hebrew literary art.
    - Epigrams and metaphors (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)
  - Encryptions:
    - *Albam* (7:1,46)
    - ELS: 53
  - Poetical, rhythmic style (12:1-6; 25:1-5; 26:1-12; 38:10-20; 2:1-4; 49:1-9; 50:4-9; 52:13—53:12; 60-62; 66:5-24)
    - Elegiac rhythm (37:22-29)
    - Sennacherib Taunt (14:4-23)
- [Source: E.W. Bullinger]

### **Sawing Isaiah Asunder: A Most Precious Lesson**

- "Higher Criticism" leads to the "Deutero-Isaiah"
- Is 1-39 vs. 40-66
- (Trito-Isaiah also: 40-55; 56-66)

### **Two Isaiahs?**

In spite of the lack of concrete evidence that any part of Isaiah ever existed without any other part as far back as the 200s BC, the *dogma of most scholarship today is that two or more individuals authored Isaiah*.

This perspective arose, most notably in the deistic climate of 18th century Europe. J.C. Doederlein, one of the earliest to argue for a second author, said explicitly that "*since Isaiah could not have foreseen the fall of Jerusalem, the 70 year captivity, the return or Cyrus, Isaiah could not have written those chapters making such claims*" (Isa 40-66). Since this time, others have advanced arguments in support of dual or even multiple authorship.

### **The Stumbling of Pseudo-Scholarship**

- Two ISAIAS? (Some say three...)
- Tradition tells us Isaiah was "sawn asunder." *The same thing has happened to his book!*
- How was Isaiah's prophecy treated?
- *We are indebted to the Apostle John for short-cutting hours of library research!*

John 12:37-41:

37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:  
38 That the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

- A quote from Is 53

39 Therefore they could not believe, because **that** Isaiah said again,  
40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.  
41 These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

- A quote from Isaiah 6

- A single verse verifies "that Isaiah said again..."

- John 12:39 is one of my most favorite verses! Why? You can't imagine the comfort this gave my doubting heart! From our Lord Himself...

- Sixty-one separate passages are quoted or referred to 85x in NT:

— 23 passages from "Isaiah I" (32x)

— 28 passages from "Isaiah II" (53x)

### **"Isaiah I"?**

- The reign of Christ in the kingdom (Is 2:3-5)
- The virgin birth of Christ (Is 7:14)
- The reign of Christ (Is 9:2,7)
- Jesus' rule over the world (Is 9:4)

- Christ as a descendant of David (Is 11:1,10)
- Christ to be filled with the Spirit (Is 11:2; 42:1)
- Christ to judge with righteousness (Is 11:3-5; 42:1,4)
- Christ to rule over the nations (Is 11:10)

### **"Isaiah 2"?**

- Christ to be gentle to the weak (Is 42:3)
- Christ to make possible the New Covenant (Is 42:6; 49:8)
- Christ to be a light to the Gentiles and to be worshiped by them (Is 42:6; 49:6-7; 52:15)
- Christ to be rejected by Israel (Is 49:7; 53:1-3)
- Christ to be obedient to God & subject to suffering (Is 50:6; 53:7-8)
- Christ to be exalted (Is 52:13; 53:12)
- Christ to restore Israel and judge the wicked (Is 61:1-3)

### **Jesus' Quotes**

(1) Jesus quoting from Is 29:13 in Mark 7:6-7: "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men'"

(2) Jesus also referenced Is 42:1-4 in Matt 12:17: "This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah."

(3) Isaiah is also referenced in Matt 8:16-17 by quoting Is 53:4: "This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: 'He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.'"

Isaiah is authenticated by the fact that Jesus Himself quoted from both the beginning and the end of the book, attributing all of it to Isaiah.

Isaiah is mentioned 21x by 6 books in the NT as the author:

### **10 times for "Isaiah I": Isaiah:**

- |                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| (1) Matthew 4:14  | 9:1-2    |
| (2) Matthew 13:14 | 6:9      |
| (3) Matthew 15:7  | 29:13    |
| (4) Mark 7:6      | 29:13    |
| (5) John 12:39    | 6:9      |
| (6) John 12:41    | 6:9      |
| (7) Acts 28:25    | 6:9      |
| (8) Romans 9:27   | 10:22-23 |
| (9) Romans 9:29   | 1:9      |
| (10) Romans 15:12 | 11:10    |

**11 times for "Isaiah II": Isaiah:**

(1) Matthew 3:3	40:3
(2) Matthew 8:17	53:4
(3) Mark 12:17	42:1-3
(4) Luke 3:4	40:3-5
(5) Luke 4:17	61:1-2
(6) John 1:23	40:3
(7) John 12:38	53:1
(8) Acts 8:28	53:7-8
(9) Acts 8:30	53:7-8
(10) Romans 10:16	53:1
11- Romans 10:20	65:1-2

**Six different speakers quote Isaiah ("1 & 2"):**

- Christ 4x - 3,1
- Matthew 2x - 1,1
- Luke 4x - 0,4
- John 3x - 2,1
- John the Baptist 2x - 0,2
- Paul 6x - 4,2

**Manuscript Evidence**

Messianic prophecy is strong and important evidence for Jesus' claims to be God. Isaiah's writings were completed many centuries before Jesus Christ was born and yet are completely accurate.

The Dead Sea Scrolls contained more than one complete scroll of this book composed well before the birth of Christ. The book of Isaiah was included in the Septuagint LXX, the earliest version of the Old Testament scriptures, translated at least 300 years earlier. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain a complete scroll of Isaiah dated from the second century BC. The book is one unit with the end of chapter 39 and the beginning of chapter 40 in one continuous column of text.

This demonstrates that the scribes who copied this scroll never doubted the singular unity of the book. Neither did the New Testament authors, nor the early church, as quotations from both sections are attributed only to Isaiah.

**A Key Lesson**

- Learn to be a critical thinker!
- Be skeptical of unsupported academic traditions



— Don't mistake sophistication for true scholarship

— Make Acts 17:11 your "litmus test"

(1) "Receive the Word with all readiness of mind, and...

(2) Search the Scriptures daily to prove whether those things are so."

- Make your refuge the "whole counsel of God"

### **Description of the Millennial Kingdom in Isaiah**

(1) The Lord will restore the faithful Remnant of Israel to the Land to inhabit the kingdom at its beginning: 1:9,25-27; 3:10; 4:3; 6:13; 8:10; 9:1; 10:20,22,25,27; 11:11-12,16; 14:1-2,22,26; 26:1-4; 27:12; 28:5; 35:9; 37:4,31-32; 40:2-3; 41:9; 43:5-6; 46:3-4; 49:5,8,12,22; 51:11; 54:7-10; 55:12; 57:13,18; 60:4,9; 61:1-4,7; 65:8-10; 66:8-9,19

(2) The Lord will protect Israel while defeating their enemies: 4:5-6; 9:1,4; 12:1-6; 13:4; 14:2; 21:9; 26:4-5; 27:1-4; 30:30-31; 32:2; 33:16,22; 35:4; 49:8-9,17-18; 52:6; 54:9-10; 55:10-11; 58:12; 60:10,12,18; 62:9; 66:16

(3) Israel will enjoy widespread prosperity during the kingdom: 26:15,19; 27:2,13; 29:18-20; 22:22-23; 30:20; 32:3,15-20; 33:6,24; 35:3,5-6,8-10; 40:11; 42:6-7,16; 43:5-6,8,10,21; 44:5,14; 46:13; 48:6; 49:10; 52:9; 54:2-3; 55:1,12; 58:9,14; 60:5,16,21; 61:4,6-10; 62:5; 65:13-15,18,24; 66:21-22

(4) The city of Jerusalem will rise to world prominence: 2:2-4; 18:7; 25:6; 40:5,9; 49:19-21; 60:1-5,13-15,17; 62:3-4

(5) Israel will be the center of the world's attention: 23:18; 54:1-3; 55:5; 56:6-8; 60:5-9; 66:18-21

(6) Israel's mission during the kingdom will be to glorify the Lord: 60:21; 61:3

(7) Gentiles in the kingdom will receive blessing through the channel of faithful Israel: 11:10; 19:18,24-25; 42:6; 45:22-23; 49:6; 51:5; 56:3,6-8

(8) Worldwide peace will prevail under the rule of the Prince of Peace: 2:4; 9:5-6; 11:10; 19:23; 26:12; 32:18; 54:14; 57:19; 66:12

(9) Moral and spiritual conditions will reach their highest points since the Fall of Adam: 27:6; 28:6,17; 32:16; 42:7; 44:3; 45:8; 51:4; 61:11; 65:21-22

(10) Governmental leadership will be superlative with the Messiah ruling the world: 9:6-7; 11:2-3; 16:5; 24:23; 25:3; 32:1; 32:5; 33:22; 42:1,4; 43:15; 52:13; 53:12; 55:3-5

(11) People will enjoy long lives: 65:20,22

(12) Universal knowledge of the Lord: 11:9; 19:21; 33:13; 40:5; 41:20; 45:6,14; 49:26; 52:10,13,15; 54:13; 66:23

- (13) Nature and the environment will enjoy a great renewal: 12:3; 30:23-26; 32:15; 35:1-4,6-7; 41:18-19; 43:19-20; 44:3,23; 55:1-2,13; 58:10-11
- (14) Wild animals will be tame: 11:6-9; 35:9; 65:25
- (15) Sorrow and mourning will not exist: 25:8; 60:20
- (16) An eternal kingdom, as part of God's new creation, will follow the millennial kingdom: 24:23; 51:6; 51:16; 54:11-12; 60:11,19; 65:17
- (17) Jesus Christ will judge overt sin: 66:24

### **Preview of Notable Elements**

- Is 6 - Vision of the Throne of God (Cf. Ezek 10, Rev 4)
- Is 7 - Virgin Birth (also, *Albam* encryption)
- Is 9 - Messianic revelation
- Is 14 - Lucifer's Rebellion
- Is 19 - Great Pyramid allusion?
- Is 40 - John the Baptist announced
- Is 53 - Suffering and death of the Messiah (also ELSS)
- Is 61 - Quoted by Christ as His mandate
- Is 65-66 - Millennium and beyond

### **Messianic Prophecies**

- Deity, eternity, preexistence, creatorship, omnipotence, omnipresence (40:12-18; 51:13)
- Incarnation (9:6; 7:14)
- Youth in Nazareth (7:15; 9:1-2; 11:1; 53:2)
- Anointed as Servant of the Lord (11:2)
- Chosen; delighted in (42:1)
- Mild manner (42:2)
- Ministering kindness (42:3; Matt 12:18-20)
- Obedience (50:5)
- Message (61:1-2)
- Miracles (35:5-6)
- Sufferings (50:6; 52:14)
- Gathering to exultation (52:13-15)
- Rejection by Israel (53:1-3)
- Shame, struck, bruised (53:4-6)
- Vicarious death (53:8)
- Burial (53:9)
- Resurrection (53:10)

- Ascension (52:13)
  - Spiritual progeny (53:10)
  - High Priestly ministry (53:12)
  - Future glory (59:20; 63:1-6; 66:15-19)
- (Only exceeded by the Psalms! The Messiah is not mentioned as a servant after Chapter 53.)

### **The Broader Relevance**

God had called a special people to represent Him. They had become apostate, and failed. The enemies of God are represented by Assyria and Babylon. God's judgment(s) and ultimate restoration are depicted and are surprisingly relevant to God's people today. Babylon is the type, or symbol of hostile opposition to God's people. The harmony and resonance of this book to the Revelation at Patmos is astonishing.

### **Design of the Book**

- Division 1: Is 1-35
  - Is 1-6 - Judah [6: King on the Throne]
  - Is 7-12 - Israel
  - Is 13-23 - Nations: Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Syria, Egypt, Edom, Arabia, Tyre
  - Is 24-27 - World: "Day of YHWH" (the "Little Apocalypse")
  - Is 28-33 - Six "Woes" upon Jerusalem
  - Is 34-35 - Tribulation & Millennium
- Division 2 (Parenthetical: Historical Insert; Cf. 2 Kings 18:13—20:19 [written by Isaiah?]; 2 Chr 32)
  - Is 36 - Hezekiah's Trouble: Assyrian invasion threat
  - Is 37 - Hezekiah's Prayer
  - Is 38 - Hezekiah's Illness
  - Is 39 - Hezekiah's Folly
- Division 3: Is 40-66
  - Is 40-48 - The Purpose of Peace (48:22 "There is no peace, saith YHWH, to the Wicked.")
  - Is 49-57 - The Prince of Peace
  - Is 53 - The "Holy of Holies" of Old Testament
  - Is 58-66 - The Program of Peace (57:21 "There is no peace, saith YHWH, to the Wicked.")

### **God's Case Against Judah**

This first chapter is an introduction to the entire book, containing the basic themes:

- The sinfulness of God's Chosen People (v3-8)
- The tender appeals of the Lord (v16-19)
- The certainty of the coming judgment (v24-31)
- The blessedness of the salvation to come (v26-27)