

Isaiah

Purpose: Judahites should gain hope from Isaiah's ministry during the Assyrian crises that Israel will be restored after the Babylonian trial.

Outline: 1:1 – Title

1:2-6:13 – Overview of Isaiah's Message

7:1-39:8 – Isaiah's Response to Assyrian Crises

40:1-66:24 – Isaiah's Response to Babylonian Crisis

Author: Isaiah and later editors

Date: The main part of Isaiah's ministry was 742-681 BC, around the same time as Hosea and Micah.

Highlights:

Isaiah ministered in Judah to the kings who reigned from 742-681 BC (see 1:1; 6:1; 38:25). He ministered through the Assyrian crises (738, 734, 722) in the north and the Sennacherib Invasion (701) in the south. Isaiah's ministry ended after the death of Sennacherib (King of Assyria).

Scholars think that the book of Isaiah reflects the ministry of one, two, or even three prophets. There is a definite switch at the end of chapter 39. The first part of the book (1-39) addresses the Assyrian crises in the north. The second part of the book (40-66) addresses the Babylonian crisis in the south. Chapters 56-66 actually seem to address the issues of the post-exilic community. Some of the prophecies in this last part are so accurate that some believe someone living so much earlier could not have made them. Others suggest that Isaiah was projected into the future in a similar way to John (on the island of Patmos) when he received his Revelations. However, there is also internal consistency and external affirmation of Isaiah as the one prophet.

Isaiah's ministry was on the heels of Jonah and Amos, when Israel and Judah were strong nations and Assyria was relatively weak. The peace and prosperity caused the Israelites and Judahites to indulge in sin (especially the worship of foreign gods, and a lack of righteousness and social justice). Following King Uzziah's death (in Judah), the Assyrians (under King Tiglath-Pileser III) began a westward expansion into Aram.

This led to a coalition of Aram and Israel (called the Syro-Ephraimite Coalition [Syria being another name for Aram, and Ephraim another name for Israel]). Aram and Israel went to Judah for help. Instead, Ahaz (King of Judah) called on Tiglath-Pileser for help in a decision condemned by Isaiah (7:1ff). Assyria assisted Judah, which paved the way for Assyria's victory over Israel; and led to Assyria's later invasion of Judah under King Sennacherib (known as the Sennacherib Invasion of 701). Sennacherib's death in 681 caused the decline of Assyria and the rise of the Babylonians (Assyria finally fell in 612).

Thus the *original meaning* is that Judah should learn from the Assyrian crises, which they didn't – so then the meaning shifted to hope for full restoration from Babylon.

The *New Testament elaboration* is that the church should learn from Israel's mistakes. Ultimately, the church should recognize that she is the heir of restoration promises through Christ.

Today, we must apply Isaiah's response to Assyrian power to our lives through Christ; and ultimately we must see ourselves as heirs to the great restoration in Christ.

The first 6 chapters of Isaiah are a kind of overview of his entire message, which is then expanded in chapters 7-66.

The overview begins with 3 cycles of judgment:

Cycle 1 (1:2-2:5)

Modified lawsuit against Judah (1:2-9)

Prophetic Torah against Judah (1:10-20)

Oracle of Judgment and Salvation (1:21-31)

Oracle of Salvation (2:1-5)

Cycle 2 (2:6-4:6)

Oracle of Judgment (2:6-21)

Oracle of Judgment (2:22-3:7)

Oracle of Judgment and Salvation (3:8-15)

Modified lawsuit against Judah (3:16-4:1)

Oracle of Salvation (4:2-6)

Cycle 3 (5:1-6:13)

Parable of Vineyard (5:1-7)

Woe against Judah (5:8-10)

Woe against Judah (5:11-17)

Woe against Judah (5:18-30)

Call Narrative (6:1-13)

Each of these cycles begins with words warning of disaster (in the Assyrian and Babylonian destructions), but end with words of hope (in the *future purification, remnant, and restoration*).

Isaiah's Call (6:1-13)

Isaiah sees God's splendor (6:1-4)

Isaiah sees his guilt (6:5)

Isaiah is cleansed (6:6-7)

Isaiah's selection (6:8)

Isaiah's commissioning (6:9-10)

Isaiah's clarification of his message (6:11-13)

Judgment and Hope for Ahaz (7:1-9:7)

Signs of Isaiah's Children (7:1-8:18)

Encounter with Ahaz (7:1-25)

Birth of Second Son (8:1-8:18)

Hope of Royal Light (8:19-9:7)

Warning of Darkness (8:19-22)

Hope of Davidide (9:1-7)

Judgment and Hope for God's People (9:8-12:6)

Oracles against Samaria (9:8-10:4)

Oracles against Assyria (10:5-19)

Oracles for Remnant of Judah (10:20-34)

Hope of Royal Shoot (11:1-16)

Song of Praise (12:1-6)

NOTE: The Sign of Immanuel (7:14)

Ahaz has two sons. The first is named Shear-Jashub, which means "a remnant will return" (will return – good; only a remnant – bad). The second is named Immanuel, which means "God is with us." The second son of Ahaz is Hezekiah. The typological fulfillment of the prophecy is, of course, Jesus – who is a sign of judgment because the Jews rejected him (just as Ahaz rejected Yahweh).

Israel placed their hopes in future glory on the prophets, priests, and kings. This is fulfilled by Jesus – who is the Prophet, Priest, and King.

Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in Ahaz's day through the birth of two sons; and fulfilled in the restoration hope of Jesus. Thus the Israelites (and we) see in Isaiah's message that just as his prophecies of the immediate future were fulfilled, so will his restoration prophecies.

NOTE: The Royal Birth Announcement (9:6-7)

Wonder of a counselor (great strategist – "before battle")

God is a warrior hero (great fighter – "during battle")

Everlasting Father (unending reign – "dynastic father")

Prince of Peace (secures peace and prosperity for Israel – "after battle")

Oracles against many nations (13:1-27:13)

Babylon [Assyria] (13:1-14:27) {Negative – 13:1-22; 14:9-27; Positive – 14:1-8}

Philistia (14:28-32) {Negative}

Moab (15:1-16:14) [All negative except 16:5 which is positive]

Damascus [Syria] (17:1-14) {All negative except 17:6,7 which is positive}

Cush (18:1-7) {first 6 verses are negative, while verse 7 is positive}

Egypt (19:1-25) {Negative – 19:1-15; Positive – 19:16-25}

Egypt and Cush (20:1-6) {Negative}

Babylon [prior to Neo-Babylonian Empire] (21:1-10) {Negative}

Edom (21:11-12) {Negative}

Arabia (21:13-17) {Negative}

Jerusalem (22:1-24) {Negative – 21:1-19, 25; Positive – 22:20-24}

Tyre (23:1-18) {Negative – 23:1-16; Positive – 23:17-18}

Concluding Oracles (24-27) {Negative – 24; Positive – 25-27}

Isaiah's Ministry to Hezekiah (28:1-39:8)

Oracles Relating to Hezekiah (28:1-35:10)

Samaria and Jerusalem Compared (28:1-29:24) [Both judged, but Jerusalem delivered]

Problem of Egypt (30:1-31:9) {2 Kings 18:24} [Egypt cannot help, God will protect Jer.]

Jerusalem's Future (31:4-35:10)

Judgment and Deliverance for Jerusalem (31:4-32:20)

Assyria Destroyed and Zion Exalted (33:1-24)

Nations (Edom) destroyed and Zion Exalted (34:1-35:10)

Sennacherib's Invasion (36:1-37:38)

Invasion and Threat (36:1-22)

Hezekiah's Trust (37:1-20)

Prophecy Against Sennacherib (37:21-35)

Sennacherib's Defeat and Death (37:36-38)

Hezekiah's Ingratitude (38:1-39:8)

Hezekiah's Healing (38:1-22)

Hezekiah's Failure (39:1-8)

Isaiah's Second Calling from God [to proclaim restoration despite exile] (40:1-11)

Call to speak with comfort (40:1-2)

Call to prepare the way (40:3-5)

Herald's Commission (40:6a)

Isaiah's Objection (40:6b-7)

Herald's Answer (40:8)

Commission (40:9a-c)

Content (40:9d-11)

God's Power to Restore (40:12-44:23)

Disputation over God's Power (40:12-31)

Nations (40:12-17)

Idols (40:18-25)

Conclusion of Confidence (40:26-31)

Nations (41:1-20)

Trial Speeches Against Nations (41:1-7)

Salvation Oracles for Israel (41:8-20)

Idols (41:21-42:17)

Trial Speeches Against Idols (41:21-29)

Salvation for Israel through Servant (42:1-9)

Concluding Praise to Yahweh (42:10-17)
 Disputation Against Israel (42:18-25)
 Salvation Oracle for Israel (43:1-7)
 Trial Speech against Nations and their Idols (43:8-13)
 Salvation Oracle for Israel (43:14-21)
 Disputation against Israel (43:22-28)
 Salvation Oracle (44:1-5)
 Trial Speech against Nations and their Idols (44:6-20)
 Salvation Oracle for Israel (44:21-23)
 God's Instruments of Restoration (44:24-56:8)
 Hymn of Self-Glorification (44:24-28)
 Royal Oracle of Cyrus (45:1-8)
 Disputation against Disbelief (45:9-14)
 Salvation Oracle for Israel (45:15-17)
 Disputation against Disbelief (45:18-25)
 Disputation against Disbelief (46:1-13)
 Judgment Oracles against Babylon (47:1-15)
 Disputations against Disbelief (48:1-19)
 Call to Praise (48:20-22)
 Royal Oracle for God's Servant (49:1-6)
 Salvation Oracle for God's Servant (49:7-13)
 Disputations against Unbelief (49:14-50:3)
 Psalms of Confidence for the Servant (50:4-9)
 Salvation-Judgment Oracle in Relation to Servant (50:10-11)
 Salvation Oracles of the Servant (51:1-8)
 Lament and Response (51:9-16)
 Salvation Oracle (51:17-23)
 Salvation Oracle (52:1-3)
 Judgment against Nations (52:4-6)
 Hymn of Praise (52:7-10)
 Call to Depart (52:11-12)
 Announcement of Servant's Suffering and Exaltation (52:13-53:12)
 Hymn of Praise (54:1-17)
 Oracles of Salvation (55:1-13)
 Oracle of Salvation (56:1-8)
 Response and Restoration (56:9-66:24) [Repentance 56:9-63:6; Lament 63:7-66:24]
 Judgment Oracle against Judah (56:9-12)
 Judgment and Salvation against Judah (57:1-21)
 Call to Repentance (58:1-14)
 Call to Repentance (59:1-16)
 Salvation Oracle (59:17-60:22)
 Salvation Oracle (61:1-11)
 Salvation Oracle (62:1-12)
 Question for the Sentry (63:1-6)
 Lament over Exile (63:7-64:12)
 Divine Response of Salvation Oracles (65:1-66:24)