

Old Testament Survey
Lesson 23 – Introduction to the Prophets and Isaiah
Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School
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Introduction to the Books of the Prophets

As we studied the books of history, we noticed the dominant role prophets played in many of those events. It is not surprising that their words and works are recorded for us in detail in other books. The role of a priest was to talk to God for the people. He was the one who led them in acts of sacrifice (get right) and worship (stay right) to God. Priests were generally welcomed. Prophets, however, were not popular. The job of a prophet was to talk to the people for God. Foretelling the future was only a small part of his job. He was the one who confronted them, led them in acts of confession (admitting sin) and repentance (turning from sin). A prophet's appearance meant there was apostasy and rebellion in Israel. His job was to raise his voice in protest against idolatry and corruption, calling the nation back to God.

Since his message was sometimes considered subversive to the nation, the prophet was often considered a traitor and he was persecuted, treated harshly, violently, or even killed. 2 Kings 17:13 demonstrates the position, authority, and message of the prophet:

¹³Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah through all His prophets and every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the prophets." 2 Kings 17:13

So a prophet was primarily a servant of God, sent to warn the people of God to turn back to God and to keep the law of God. The prophet spoke "primarily" to God's people, but three prophets spoke to Gentile or pagan nations: Obadiah to Edom and Jonah and Nahum to Nineveh.

Under Moses and throughout the period of the Judges, the Hebrew nation was a pure Theocracy. God was actually the King. Israel was meant to be a unique nation living among the many, illustrating what it was like to have the Creator God of Gods as their King of Kings. When the people cried for a king and turned their Theocracy into a Monarchy, God told Samuel, "...they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, from being King over them." (2 Sam 8:7). But, even though the people had rejected God as their king, He did not abdicate His throne. The prophets are proof that God was still the King of Kings. It was through the prophets, not the kings, nor the priests that God still spoke to His people.

God's prophets were called to be His spokesmen. Their message was mainly a call to the nation for a return to their covenant relationship with God, either the conditional covenants (obey and I will bless, disobey and I will curse), or then unconditional covenants (I will make you a great nation with a land of your own ruled by one from the line of David, the Messiah, King of Kings). God communicated His message to them. They were told what to do and what to say and were allowed to see, and sometimes to even understand, God's plans for his people.

God used very human individuals. At their best the prophets were:

Courageous – Samuel challenged Saul, Nathan confronted David

Honest – they told the truth in the face of hostile a nation

Moral – Amos called for justice and Micah said the Lord required them, "to act justly and love mercy..."

Compassionate – Amos announced judgment on Israel for taking advantage of the poor.

At their worst the prophets were:

Afraid – Elijah was afraid of Jezebel, depressed and felt alone.

Faithless – Jeremiah felt that God had deceived him and brought insults, abuse, and reproach to him.

Vindictive – Jonah really did not want to see Nineveh spared.

God worked in various ways. The Hebrew designations given to the prophets help us define their job:

Seer – One able to see hidden truth, lost objects, the future.

Man of God – A traveling preacher with message often confirmed by signs and wonders.

Prophet – A spokesman (Aaron for Moses) for God.

God chose a diverse group. The prophets came from many different backgrounds:

City boys – Isaiah

Royalty – Hezekiah

Country boys – Micah

Bureaucrats – Samuel, Nathan, Isaiah

Background

The period of the history of Israel known as "the period of the prophets" was extensive. It lasted from the kingdom of Ahab in Israel (Elijah) in the ninth century BC, to the reign of Artaxerxes I in Persia (Nehemiah and Malachi) in the fourth century BC. After that, the prophetic silence lasted until John the Baptist arrived on the scene in Jerusalem. There were occasionally prophets before this time, like Samuel and Nathan, but the prophet became the norm as God's authoritative voice during this historic period. They dominated the scene, dictating to kings, preaching to the people, stating what was "the will of God", and proclaiming, "thus says the Lord."

The political and religious conditions of their times dictated the message of the prophets, so they need to be studied in context of place and time. We will try to do that as we go from prophet to prophet, especially since we are not going chronologically, but in book order.

A Chronology of the Old Testament Prophets			
	Prophets to Israel	Prophets to Judah	Prophets to Foreign Nations
ASSYRIAN PERIOD:	-Amos ca. 763-755 BC -Hosea ca. 755-710 BC (began ministry in Israel, but later in Judah)	-Joel ca. 835-796 BC -Isaiah ca. 739-680 BC -Micah ca. 735-710 BC	-Obadiah ca. 850-840 BC (to Edom) -Jonah ca. 775 BC (to Ninevah) -Nahum ca. 650-630 BC (to Ninevah)
BABYLONIAN PERIOD:		-Zephaniah 635-625 BC -Jeremiah 627-570 BC -Habakkuk 620-605 BC -Daniel 605-536 BC -Ezekiel 593-570 BC	
PERSIAN PERIOD:		-Haggai 520-505 BC -Zechariah 520-470 BC -Malachi 437-417 BC	

Oral Prophets

The office of prophet probably originated during the time of Samuel, who founded and presided over various schools of young prophets ("company of the prophets," 1 Sam 19:20). These prophets are also classified as oral prophets. The Bible records the names of only a few of the oral prophets. Some mentioned are: Ahijah (1 King 11:29), Iddo (2 Chron 12:15), Jehu (1 Kings 16), Elijah (1 Kings 17), Elisha (1 Kings 19), Oded (2 Chron 15:8), Shemaiah (1 Kings 12:22), Azariah (2 Chron 15), Hanani (2 Chron 16:7), Nathan of Gad (1 Kings 1:10), Micaiah (1 Kings 22), Eliezer (2 Chron 20:37), Jahaziel (2 Chron 20:14), and Huldah (2 Kings 22:15).

Preview of Written Prophecy (in Chronological Order)

Obadiah was concerned with the hostile attitude of the Edom toward Israel, and confronted that attitude in the name of the Lord.

Joel saw Judah as a nation under their rightful king, God. His message proclaimed "the day of the Lord."

Jonah is a prophetic story teaching that God desires to include Ninevah, a heathen nation, into His kingdom if they will forsake their sin and follow Him. Using Jonah, Israel is taught a lesson about God's mercy and their own bigotry.

Amos was in tune with the people of both Israel and Judah and His message was one of need for their national accountability to God and separation from surrounding heathen nations.

Hosea through his own experience and broken heart revealed the sin of spiritual infidelity and adultery in Israel.

Micah commented on the false rulers who were in authority in Judah by contrasting them to the true and righteous rulers.

Isaiah declared that judgment must fall on the nation that fails to fulfill its God ordained mission in the world. He, however, pointed to a day of victory under a Servant Messiah that would, through personal suffering, bring ultimate triumph.

Nahum was a follow-up for the ministry of Jonah one hundred years later. Ninevah, which was spared because of the repentance brought by Jonah's teaching, was now returning from its own captivity and needed a warning and encouragement of its own.

Zephaniah knew God intimately and declared that not only justice and punishment but also grace and mercy were attributes of God.

Habakkuk gave an account of his own personal faith as he delivered God's message. He himself was puzzled by the circumstances of his time, but he found and proclaimed a great solution for the nation.

Jeremiah was God's voice in the midst of darkness and disaster. He delivered his message of punishment and promise through great personal suffering and was totally rejected by the people. He was, humanly speaking, a failure, but he was faithful and therefore a spiritual success. He also wrote the Lamentations, in which he poured out his heart over the sin and suffering of his nation as one sympathizing with a best friend.

Ezekiel bore testimony to the glory of God in the dark days of exile. He had an especially hard message because he spoke of restoration of the nation when they were in bondage and their deepest apostasy.

Daniel was also a prophet of hope in the dark years of exile. He teaches the sovereignty of God, the failure and judgment of the people, and the great and glorious future of victory yet to come.

Haggai understood and taught that a right relationship to God was the secret to national strength. He lobbied for the rebuilding of the temple.

Zechariah worked in concert with Haggai and became the foremost prophet in all of Jewish history in the area of eschatology (last things).

Malachi condemned the corruption of living lives of form without substance. He ends with predictions of the Messiah, "the One to come."

The Prophetic Message

The ministry of the prophets was two-fold:

1. Immediate: God's conditional covenant. Temporal and spiritual blessings to the faithful, temporal and spiritual judgment for the unfaithful, and grace and mercy to the repentant.
2. Future: God's unconditional covenant. A day of righteous judgment is coming for the nation that will prepare it for the coming Messianic Kingdom. Jews will be re gathered and purified through tribulation, and this remnant nation will be the seed of the New Kingdom of the Messiah covering the entire earth.

The message of the prophets, for the most part, centered around five points in history: 1) revelation concerning the past; 2) their own time; 3) the threatening captivities (Assyrian and Babylonian), and subsequent restoration; 4) the coming of the Messiah (i.e. the first coming of Christ); and 5) the Millennium (i.e. the second coming of Christ).

When a prophet speaks of Christ, he refers to Him in either of His two comings: first coming, as the suffering Messiah (e.g. Isaiah 53) or the second coming, as the reigning Messiah (e.g. Isaiah 11). The prophets were apparently not aware that a long interval of time would transpire between Christ's manifestation in suffering (first coming) and Christ's revelation in glory (second coming). His suffering and His reigning appeared to them to be very close in time.

There are three applications of an Old Testament prophetic message:

1. Historic: The application to Israel in that specific time and place. It is important to us as examples of God's nature, especially how He shows mercy in dealing with people.
2. Prophetic: The predicting of future events. These predictions are interesting as we observe those that have been fulfilled and those yet to happen. Only a few apply to us today.
3. Universal: The stating of truth and principles that never change. They are binding.

Bonus of Prophecy

Along with accuracy, honesty, and integrity, prophecy stands as one of the reasons we believe the Bible is not only trustworthy, but supernatural. If you are interested in the use of prophecy to validate Scripture, there are a number of books on that subject, including *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, by Josh McDowell, which has an entire chapter on the probabilities of prophecies coming true, especially focusing on Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

Introduction to the Book of Isaiah

Virtually every commentary, outline or brief study of the Book of Isaiah mentions the fact that Isaiah is a miniature Bible. It is made up of 66 chapters with the first 39 (corresponding to the OT) stressing the righteous, holiness, and justice of God. Isaiah announces judgment on all immoral and idolatrous behavior, beginning with Judah but eventually including the entire world. Much redemption and restoration can be seen in these chapters thus binding them to the last half of the book along the theme of YHWH's restoration of His creation. The last 27 chapters (corresponding to the NT) show God's compassion, mercy, and grace and introduce the Messiah as both the coming sacrifice and the coming king. This section includes more Scripture about the person and work of Jesus, than any other Old Testament book.

Introducing the Prophet

Isaiah's name means "Jehovah's salvation" or "The Lord is salvation," (Joshua, Elisha, and Jesus are very close to the same word). That certainly applies to the message of his prophecies in this book. Isaiah was born into an upper-class family that was involved in the society and politics of the nation of Judah. He was well bred and highly educated. He had the ear of the royal leaders, including the king (7:3) and the priests (8:2). He took part in formulating Judah's foreign policy and some writers refer to him as the "court seer or court preacher." Traditional Jewish history tells us that his father, Amoz, was a brother of King Amaziah who was King Uzziah's father. This would make Isaiah Uzziah's cousin and explain why he was so devastated when he saw Uzziah's future death in a vision in chapter six.

Isaiah was a city boy, born and raised, and he remained in Jerusalem for more than fifty years of ministry where his message could have an effect on the spiritual and political life of Judah. His illustrations, his references and his imagery are all drawn from city life. Isaiah had a wife, whom he referred to as "the prophetess" and his two sons, by their names alone, were a part of his message. One was named Shear-jashub, "a remnant will return" (mercy) and the other Maher-shalal-hash-baz, "quick to plunder, speeding to the spoil" (judgment).

As Judah's leaders watched Israel taken into exile by Assyria (722 BC), Isaiah warned them to avoid the false security of foreign alliances and trust the Lord instead. He then watched as his whole world disintegrated. Due to this, Isaiah dressed in a hair-cloth (sackcloth) garment, like Elijah and John the Baptist, mourning for his land and calling the people to repentance. At one time he, for three years walked the streets of Jerusalem, barefoot and dressed only in a loincloth, just like a slave, to illustrate the coming captivity. Some consider him an early "hippie" and see him as a political activist, but his preaching against the social problems of the nation were based on the knowledge that those problems indicated a bad heart attitude and spiritual apostasy.

He was not a popular prophet. In fact, Jewish traditional writings (*Talmud*) describe him being sawed in half while still alive inside a hollow log by order of Manasseh, the evil king who ruled for 55 terrible years and brought the eventual fall of Judah.

Isaiah is accepted as the author of the Book of Isaiah by most Jewish and Christian scholars, with a few notable exceptions. The questioning comes from a change in style and perspective in chapters 40-66, with the biggest objections coming from those who cannot accept supernatural prophesying of future events.

The beginning of the book places us in the correct historical time frame:

¹The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz concerning Judah and Jerusalem, which he saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Isa 1:1

Isaiah grew up in a day of great affluence and plenty. King Uzziah, in Judah and King Jeroboam II, in Israel brought the people to lofty heights of political and economic prosperity. Some claim it rivaled the days of David and Solomon. With these riches and power came vices and abuses. When his spiritual mentor, a prophet named Zechariah died, even the righteous King Uzziah fell. Late in his rule, when he tried to usurp the office of priest, he was struck with leprosy. Isaiah was "called" to be a prophet in the year of Uzziah's death and would live to see the fall of Israel and the decay of his beloved Judah.

In the last half of the eighth century BC, Judah was following the downward path of the Israel who had already been carried away into captivity. Judah was completely surrounded by enemies when King Ahaz came to the throne: Joab and Edom on the east, Egypt to the south, the city states of Philistia in the west and Israel in the north.

On the horizon, and threatening Israel, was the fast growing power, Assyria. Ahaz thought Assyria would leave Judah alone and, in fact made a pact with Tiglath-pileser to help keep their other enemies away. Isaiah had already warned him that Assyria was the real enemy, and when they marched through Israel and destroyed their enemies they made Judah a vassal state even destroying all of their major cities.

Hezekiah, Ahaz's righteous son, brought religious reform that lasted for almost thirty years. He was, like David, a man after God's own heart and called his nation to revival and repentance. God destroyed his enemy, Sannacherib by sending one angel to wipe out his entire army. As often happened, his son was another story. Manasseh allowed idolatry to overwhelm the kingdom and Isaiah predicted this would eventually bring on the Babylonian captivity. Isaiah also assured the faithful remnant that they would survive and the nation would be restored.

⁹Unless the LORD of hosts Had left us a few survivors, We would be like Sodom, We would be like Gomorrah. Isa 1:9

Note: Amos, Hosea, and Micah were also prophesying at the same time, confirming God's message. The people had ample warning but would not repent.

Importance of the Book

The Book of Isaiah is often quoted in NT writings. It is Isaiah from which Jesus most frequently quoted. (Remember it was Isaiah that the Ethiopian eunuch was reading when Philip led him to the Savior.) As long as evangelism has its proper place in the church, Isaiah will be an important tool. Both Jew and Gentile can see the thread of truth that leads to a consideration of the Person and work of God's son, Jesus. Jerome, the historian, saw so much emphasis on the expected Messiah in this book that he called it the *Gospel of Isaiah* rather than the *Prophecy of Isaiah*, saying about Isaiah, "*He is not so much a prophet as an evangelist.*"

Isaiah supports the position that Israel has never been totally abandoned by God and the church has not taken Israel's place in history. God will fulfill His covenant promises to Israel, the Kingdom will be renewed on the earth with its capital in Jerusalem and the Messiah on the throne (55:10-12). Too many prophecies have already been fulfilled to believe the remaining ones will not also come to pass.

Outline of the Book of Isaiah

Isaiah spoke for God to the nations of Israel and Judah warning them of a coming judgment because they broke their covenant with Him. God would judge them, using surrounding nations, then judge those nations, and reestablish His people in their own land. God's promise to return and reform the Hebrew nation, with its capital in Jerusalem, would be only temporarily and partially fulfilled in 538 BC. The full restoration awaits a future time when, not only will the nation exist, but the Messiah will Himself sit upon the Throne of David.

I. Part 1: Judgment (Chapters 1-39)

The book begins with God declaring judgment on everybody in sight.

A. Judah (1-12)

God begins by indicting Judah for breaking their covenant with Him, for failing to keep their promises of worship and allegiance to Him. They had been beaten bloody by the Assyrians, and yet they would not repent and obey. Even though Jerusalem was the only city left untouched by their enemies (1:7), still they did not repent and turn back to God. This was to be the last warning.

1. Condemnation of Judah (1-6)

Likening them to Sodom and Gomorrah, Isaiah tells them to obey or be punished. This is God's way to purify them for a renewed relationship with Him. He gives them vivid pictures of the coming judgments, and the eventual perfect kingdom.

- a. Sermon 1 – Through Isaiah, God brings charges against Judah – ingratitude and indifference to God; iniquity, and empty religion. God compares His errant people to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, denouncing their false worship and social injustice (1:2-23). God's ultimatum is: "*obey and receive forgiveness and restoration; disobey and be destroyed.*" Judgment is coming (1:24-31)
- b. Sermon 2 – Isaiah gives a glimpse restoration after the purification at the end of chap 1 beginning with a view of the coming Millennial Kingdom (2:1-5). Then the sins of the nations are enumerated. Israel is charged with wide-spread pride (2:6-22), weak rulers (3:1-15), and worldly women (3:16-4:1). Isaiah presents a picture of the coming millennial kingdom by using the picture of a beautiful branch bearing much fruit (4:2-6)
- c. By use of a parable of a vineyard and vine-dresser, Isaiah explains why the coming divine judgment is necessary (5).

At this point Isaiah sees an incredible scene of heaven and is symbolically purified and commissioned to be the official messenger of God to this stiff-necked people (6). Isaiah's response ("Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, ..." 6:5) is common when encountering the King. (Job 42:5-6; Dan 10:15-17; Luke 5:8; Rev 1:17)

2. Illustrative Signs – Coming of Messiah (7-12)

Isaiah next used three signs to illustrate how the Lord would ultimately work to deliver His people. Judgment of Assyria is contrasted to the eventual glorious return of a re-united Hebrew nation. A closing hymn gives praise to the Messiah, who will reign forever.

- a. Using three signs, Isaiah discusses the Lord's ultimate deliverance of His faithless people. The background for these chapters is the Syro-Ephramitic War (735-733 BC) when Aram and the Northern Kingdom invaded Judah and laid siege to Jerusalem. Ahab was terrified and refused to follow Isaiah's instructions to ask God for a sign, but God gave three signs:

- 1) God with us – the sign of a virgin bearing a child who is Immanuel – 7)
- 2) The sign of Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Isaiah's son) whose name means quick to plunder-swift to spoil – 8
- 3) The Child is given – 9:1-7

These signs point to Judah's short-term victory, mid-term defeat, and ultimate long-term permanent victory.

- b. Next comes a message of judgment on Samaria, the capital of Israel (9:8-10:4). Even though they had been ravaged by enemies, they were "*asserting in pride and arrogance of heart ... we will rebuild ...*" (9:10). This portion also predicts the destruction of Assyria in payment for all they had done to Israel and Judah and they would be restored (10:5-34).
- c. Assyria's destiny is laid out in direct contrast to the eventual glorious return of a re-united Hebrew nation under the "Branch of Jesse" (chap 11) to their promised land. Unlike Isaiah's day when the nation "despised the Holy One of Israel" (1:4), the Holy One of Israel will be exalted among His people (12:6).
- d.

This section ends with a great hymn of praise which previews the nations ultimate response when Jesus, the Messiah reigns. (12)

B. Other Nations (13-23)

Before the prophet's vision of peace for His people could be realized, God had to subdue their enemies, the heathen, the pagan, the idolatrous, the Godless. These speeches of judgment remind us that God is sovereign and His people need not fear other nations.

1. Babylon (13-14:23)

The first message is against Babylon. In Isaiah's day, they were struggling with Assyria for control of Mesopotamia. In order to surround their enemy, they wanted to sign a treaty with Judah. But, Isaiah knew (he was a prophet) that they would be the ultimate enemy taking his people into captivity. The Lord would use the cruel Medes (13:17) to totally wipe them from the earth (13:20-22). This, of course, made it possible for the Jews to return to Jerusalem, rebuild the temple, wall, and nation.

2. Assyria (14:24-27)

Assyria was the power that destroyed and carried off the Northern kingdom Israel and attempted to destroy Judah as well. God protected Jerusalem from them earlier and would see them eventually broken and trampled.

3. Philistia (14:28-32)

The Philistines were rejoicing because the Assyrians were busy elsewhere and thought they were safe. Isaiah tells them not to gloat. In 712 BC, Sargon made most of Philistia an Assyrian vassal province, and in 701 BC Sennacherib conquered the rest.

4. Moab (15-16)

We do not have an exact reference to the fall of the Moabites but records available tell of a monstrous invasion by Assyria in the late eighth century BC. Isaiah "twists the knife" by quoting their own cry for help, including the admission that only a Davidic ruler could help save them (16:3-5).

5. Damascus, Syria, and Israel (17)

This speech was against Damascus, the capital of Aram (Syria), but it is primarily dealing with their top ally, Israel. When the Assyrians captured Israel, they also enveloped Syria as well.

6. Ethiopia (18)

South of Egypt was the land of Cush. They could not get Judah to help save them from Assyria and were plundered. Later they brought gifts to Jerusalem to acknowledge God's sovereignty.

7. Egypt (19-20)

Egypt was closely allied to Ethiopia at this time and was also decimated by Assyria. Isaiah spoke against any alliance with Egypt, knowing that God was going to judge them. Isaiah not only foretold of a time when a foreign king would sit on Egypt's throne (Ashurbanipal), but also saw a time when Assyria and Egypt would worship the true God (this prophesy yet to come).

8. Babylon (21:1-10)

Isaiah had a very vivid and emotional vision that he told in dramatic fashion. He described them feasting when they should be arming for battle. In 539 BC Cyrus marched his army into the city and took it unopposed, as the king and his army partied.

9. Edom (21:11-12)

This short speech took the form of a riddle. Isaiah was saying, in effect, that a day of relief was coming, but a night of gloom would follow. There was no hope in this message.

10. Arabia (21:13-17)

In a related speech, Isaiah dramatically described a situation of deserters running from battle. He officially announced that Kedar, a royal Arabian city, would be destroyed. Sargon and Sennacherib brought this to pass when they invaded Arabia.

11. Jerusalem (22)

In the midst of the defeat of enemies, is a message to Judah and Jerusalem. There are two judgments: First, to the people of Jerusalem who reacted to the crisis (probably Sennacherib's siege) by fortifying city walls, building a new water system, and then losing hope and partying when things looked black instead of trusting God. (1-14) Second, a bureaucrat named Shebna was so proud he built a giant tomb for himself while he was supposed to help God's people. Isaiah said that he would lose his job and be buried in a foreign land. He did and he was. (15-25)

12. Tyre (23)

Tyre was a shipping port on the northern coast of the Mediterranean. Its many shipping partners were told to mourn, for the Lord would lay it low. It went into a decline that lasted seventy five years and was only great again when all of its wealth was paid in tribute to God's people.

C. Israel and Judah (24-39)

In this section Isaiah describes God's judgment, on a universal scale, culminating his messages to the individual nations. This section is sometimes called Isaiah's Apocalypse since it deals with the end time Tribulation Period and the future Kingdom.

1. Future Tribulation and Kingdom (24-27)

- a. Isaiah foresees the time when God devastates the earth judging it for its rebellion and destroying all but a small remnant (24).
- b. That remnant lifts a song of praise and worship, as the Lord hosts a feast in Jerusalem. God *"will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth"* (25)
- c. A second song of praise is sung. (26)
- d. This chapter describes the defeat of God's enemies as His people hide. He will then make Israel His *"fruitful vineyard,"* and watch over it with never ending attention. This is the final hope of the Jew. (27)

2. Denunciation of Israel and Judah (28-35)

Throughout the period of threat from enemies on all sides, Israel and Judah often looked to Egypt for help. Isaiah was constantly warning them to trust the Lord, not Egypt. Those warnings take shape in this section and are in the form of woes.

- a. Woe to Samaria (capital of Judah) and Judah for their drunk politicians, hypocrisy, and alliances with Egypt. (28-31)
- b. In the midst of this gloom comes a vision of that day when a just king, the Messiah would reign over a glorious kingdom. (32)
- c. The next two chapters describe destruction. The first, that of Assyria in the flow of history. The second and the final defeat of all enemy nations at Armageddon in the future. (33-34)
- d. *"The wilderness and the desert will be glad, ... "* (v1) kicks off another prophetic vision of the Kingdom and its blessings. And *"the ransomed of the Lord will return, and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."* (v10) (35)

3. Denunciation of Assyria (36-39)

During the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18-20) there were two events which Isaiah reviews here:

- a. In 701 BC the mighty Assyrian army overran the nation of Judah and, according to Assyrian records, decimated forty-six cities. Next, the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, sent his field commander to Jerusalem to tell Hezekiah that his confidence, whether in his fortified city or in his God, was misplaced. He even claimed that God had commissioned his attack. He demanded an immediate, unconditional surrender. (36) Hezekiah and the people were terrified, but Isaiah assured him that God was going to punish the Assyrian king for blasphemy. Assyria renewed their threat in writing. Hezekiah went before the Lord acknowledging Him as the ruler of the universe and asking Him to deliver them. God struck down the Assyrian army and forced Sennacherib to return home in disgrace where he was murdered. (37)

- b. The last two chapters of this section deal with Hezekiah, his illness, and request that God prolong his life. The Lord agreed and Hezekiah promised to praise Him all his days. (38) Afterwards, Hezekiah made a serious blunder by allowing the Babylonian officials into his headquarters and showing off his riches. The Babylonian captivity is predicted, but Hezekiah is ok with that since there will be “*peace and truth in my days.*” (39)

II. Part 2: Salvation (Chapters 40-66)

The entire setting of Isaiah's messages switches to the future as things he has prophesied are revisited: The time of deliverance from captivity, Salvation provided by the Servant-Messiah, and the future glory of God's chosen people.

A. Deliverance and Restoration of Israel – The Greatness of God (40-48)

God is both willing and able to deliver His people from exile. The major focus of this passage is on God's superiority over all nations and their false gods (40, 41). This message of encouragement is tied to the overall redemptive plan of God. He will supernaturally bring the release of Judah from captivity in Babylon just as He supernaturally created and controls all of His creation ... by His sovereign power!

This section is riddled with many familiar passages:

⁶A voice says, "Call out." Then he answered, "What shall I call out?" All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever. Isa 40:6-8

²⁸Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired His understanding is inscrutable. ²⁹He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. ³⁰Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, ³¹Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary. Isa 40:28-31

⁸"But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My friend, ⁹You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its remotest parts And said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you. ¹⁰'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.' Isa 41:8-10

God's glory is preeminent!

⁸"I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images. Isa 42:8

- The Servant is provided (42)
- Israel is restored (43-44). The entire restoration process in detail, using Cyrus, judging Babylon, freeing Judah, and the returning remnant. (45-48)

B. The Suffering-Servant (49-57)

The shocking message that has confused Jewish people for centuries is this: The Messiah will come, not a conquering king, but as a suffering servant.

1. Mission (49-52:12)

God introduces into the flow of history a new character – the Lord's ideal servant who would be:

- Commissioned from birth for a special task
- A new Moses to mediate a new covenant
- An obedient servant (as opposed to Israel)
- A channel of blessing to the Gentiles
- Rejected by His own people, but vindicated
- Persevering despite severe opposition and humiliation

2. Result (52:13-57)

This passage begins with an even more detailed description of the Servant's suffering, but explains why it is necessary. Isaiah 53 is excruciating, but ends, *"As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquity."* What then is the result?

- Personal and national salvation for Israel (55)
- Fulfillment of God's covenant promises – a Kingdom (56)
- Blessings and salvation extended to the Gentiles (56)
- Isaiah finally rebukes those who reject salvation (57)

C. Rebirth (58-66)

The closing chapters of Isaiah deal with the fulfillment of God's will for his chosen people.

1. Immediate (58-59)

God called His people back to Himself with a demand for right worship. He demanded righteous living, not meaningless ritual. When they were obedient they would again experience His presence and enjoy His blessings. (58) Chapter 59 listed the accusations against Israel, confession of those sins, and the blotting out of them by God.

2. Future (60-66)

The Book of Isaiah ends on a triumphant note describing the glory of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom:

- Messiah's reign of peace (61)
- Restoration of the nation Israel (62)
- Conditions of Blessings (63-64)
- Description of the Kingdom (65)
- Final rebirth and rejoicing in Israel (66)

Lesson

Isaiah teaches us:

1. God is "the Creator of the universe" (grand and powerful), and "the Holy One of Israel" (involved and personal).
2. God demands obedience, moral purity, and justice from His people.
3. God gave His Son *"a ransom for many that He might bring us to Himself."*
4. Even though God did not put us in the place of His chosen people, He did provide a way of salvation for us so that we can live with Him forever.
5. God is in complete control of the events of history.

Homework

- Read the Book of Jeremiah

Timelines of the Kings and Prophets

1050-930 (Saul, David, and Solomon)

	Judah	Prophet		Israel
931-914	Rehoboam		931-910	Jeroboam I
914-911	Abijah			
911-870	Asa		910-909	Nadab
			909-886	Baasha
			886-885	Elah
			885	Zimri
			885-874	Omri
		Elijah	874-853	Ahab
873-848	Jehoshaphat			
853-841	Jehoram		853-852	Ahaziah
		Elisha	852-841	Jehoram (Joram)
841	Ahaziah		841-814	Jehu
841-835	Athaliah			
		ca. 840 Obadiah		
835-796	Joash (Jehoash)	835-796 Joel		
			814-798	Jehoahaz
			798-782	Jehoash
796-767	Amaziah			
			793-753	Jeroboam II
792-740	Azariah (Uzziah)			
		ca. 775 Jonah		
		ca. 760 Amos		
			753	Zechariah
			752	Shallum
			752-742	Menahem
		755-710 Hosea		
		740-680 Isaiah		
740-732	Jotham			
			742-740	Pekahiah
			740-732	Pekah
735-715	Ahaz			
		740-686 Micah		
			732-722	Hoshea
			722	Israel Falls to Assyria
715-686	Hezekiah			
697-642	Manasseh			
		ca. 650 Nahum		
642-640	Amon			
640-609	Josiah			
		635-610 Zephaniah		
		627-561 Jeremiah		
		ca. 609 Habakkuk		
609	Jehoahaz			
609-598	Jehoiakim			
605	Exile: Stage #1 Daniel and a few taken captive to Babylon			
		605-536 Daniel		
598-597	Jehoiachin			
597	Exile: Stage #2 10,000 Jews taken captive to Babylon			
597-586	Zedekiah			
		593-570 Ezekiel		
586	Judah Falls to Babylon (Exile: Stage #3 Destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem)			
539	Babylon falls to the Medo-Persians (Daniel 5)			
538	Return: Stage #1 50,000 Jews return under Zerubbabel & Joshua			
		ca. 520 Zechariah		
		520-518 Haggai		
516	Completion of 2nd Temple			
458	Return: Stage #2 2,000 Jews return under Ezra to restore worship			
445	Return: Stage #3 Nehemiah returns to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem			
		433-424 Malachi		

Isaiah Prophecies	Scripture	NT Fulfillment
The Jews would reject the Messiah.	Isa 6:9-10a	John 12:37-40
The Messiah would teach in parables.	Isa 6:9-10b	Matt 13:13-15
The Messiah would be born of a virgin.	Isa 7:14a	Luke 1:34-35
The Messiah would be called Immanuel, "God With Us."	Isa 7:14b	Matt 1:21-23
The Messiah would be God.	Isa 7:14c	John 12:45; 1 Tim 3:16
The Messiah would have wisdom from His childhood.	Isa 7:15	Luke 2:40
The Messiah would be a "Stumbling Stone" for the Jews.	Isa 8:14	Matt 21:43-44
The Messiah would minister in Galilee.	Isa 9:1-2a	Matt 4:12-17
The Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles.	Isa 9:1-2b	Luke 2:28-32
The birth of the Messiah.	Isa 9:6a	Luke 2:11
The Messiah would be the Son of God.	Isa 9:6b	Luke 1:35
The Messiah would be both man and God.	Isa 9:6c	John 10:30; John 12:45; John 14:7
The Messiah would be from everlasting.	Isa 9:6d	Col 1:17
The Messiah would come from the lineage of Jesse.	Isa 11:1a	Luke 3:23-32
The Messiah would grow up in Nazareth.	Isa 11:1b	Matt 2:21-23
The Messiah would have the Spirit of God upon Him.	Isa 11:2a	Matt 3:16-17
The Messiah would have the Spirit of knowledge and wisdom.	Isa 11:2b	Matt 13:54
The Messiah would have the Spirit of knowledge and fear of God.	Isa 11:2c	Matt 11:27; John 15:10
The Messiah would have a quick understanding in the fear of the LORD.	Isa 11:3a	Luke 2:46-47; Luke 4:31-32; John 14:31
The Messiah would not judge on the basis of outward appearance.	Isa 11:3b	John 2:24-25; John 7:24
The Messiah would judge the poor with righteousness.	Isa 11:4	Mark 12:41-44; Luke 13:30
The Messiah would come from the lineage of Jesse.	Isa 11:10a	Luke 3:23-32
The Messiah would come for all people.	Isa 11:10b	Acts 13:47-48
The Messiah would have the key of David.	Isa 22:22	Rev 3:7
The Messiah would defeat death (sin).	Isa 25:8	Rev 1:18; 2 Tim 1:10
Several Saints would rise to life at the resurrection of the Messiah.	Isa 26:19	Matt 27:52-53
The Messiah would be the cornerstone.	Isa 28:16	1 Pet 2:4-6
The Messiah would heal the blind.	Isa 35:5a	Mark 10:51-52; John 9:1-7
The Messiah would heal the deaf.	Isa 35:5b	Mark 7:32-35
The Messiah would heal the lame.	Isa 35:6a	Matt 12:10-13; John 5:5-9
The Messiah would heal the dumb.	Isa 35:6b	Matt 9:32-33; Matt 15:30
The forerunner (John The Baptist) of the Messiah would live in the wilderness.	Isa 40:3a	Matt 3:1-4
The forerunner (John The Baptist) would prepare people for the coming of the Messiah.	Isa 40:3b	Matt 3:11; Luke 1:17; John 1:29; John 3:28
The Messiah would be God.	Isa 40:3c	John 10:30; Phil 2:5-7
The Messiah would be as a shepherd.	Isa 40:11	John 10:11; Mark 9:36-37
The Messiah would be God's messenger.	Isa 42:1a	John 4:34; John 5:30
The Messiah would have the Spirit of God upon Him.	Isa 42:1b	Matt 3:16-17
The Messiah would please God.	Isa 42:1c	Matt 3:16-17
The Messiah would not desire personal attention for Himself.	Isa 42:2	Matt 12:15-21
The Messiah would have compassion for the poor and needy.	Isa 42:3	Matt 11:4-5; Matt 12:15-20

Isaiah Prophecies	Scripture	NT Fulfillment
The Messiah would receive direction from God.	Isa 42:6a	John 5:19-20; John 14:10-11
The Messiah would be ministered to by God.	Isa 42:6b	John 8:29; Luke 22:42-43
The Messiah would be the "New Covenant".	Isa 42:6c	Matt 26:28
The Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles.	Isa 42:6d	John 8:12
The Messiah would heal the blind.	Isa 42:7	Matt 9:27-30; Matt 21:14
The Messiah would be the "First and the Last".	Isa 44:6	Rev. 1:17-18
The Messiah would be from everlasting.	Isa 48:16	John 17:24
The Messiah would come for all people.	Isa 49:1a	1 Tim 2:4-6
The Messiah would be called by God while in the womb.	Isa 49:1b	Matt 1:20-21
The Messiah would be called by His name before he was born.	Isa 49:1c	Luke 1:30-31
The Messiah's words would be as sharp as a two-edged sword.	Isa 49:2a	Rev. 2:12-16; John 12:48
The Messiah would be protected by God.	Isa 49:2b	Matt 2:13-15
The Messiah would be empowered for the judgment of mankind.	Isa 49:2c	John 5:22-29
The Messiah would be God's servant.	Isa 49:3a	John 17:4
The Messiah's life and death would glorify God.	Isa 49:3b	Matt 15:30-31
The Messiah would be sorrowful because of the Jew's unbelief.	Isa 49:4	Luke 19:41-42
The Messiah would be God's servant.	Isa 49:5a	John 6:38; John 8:29
The Messiah would come to bring Israel back to God.	Isa 49:5b	Matt 15:24; Matt 10:5-7
The Messiah would be God's servant.	Isa 49:6a	John 1:49-50
The Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles.	Isa 49:6b	Acts 13:47-48
The Messiah would be despised.	Isa 49:7	John 10:20; Matt 27:22
The Palms of the Messiah would be a witness.	Isa 49:16	John 20:25-28
The Messiah would speak with God given knowledge.	Isa 50:4	John 12:49; Matt 7:28-29
The Messiah would not be rebellious to God's will.	Isa 50:5	John 12:27
The Messiah's back would be lashed (stripped).	Isa 50:6a	Matt 27:26
The Messiah's face would be beaten and spit upon.	Isa 50:6b	Matt 26:67
The Messiah would not waver from His mission.	Isa 50:7	Luke 9:51-53
The Messiah would be justified by His righteousness.	Isa 50:8	1 Tim 3:16; Heb 8:32-34
The Messiah would completely trust in God.	Isa 50:8-10	John 11:7-10
The Messiah would proclaim the gospel from the mountain tops.	Isa 52:7	Matt 5:1-7:29; John 14:31
The Messiah would be God's servant.	Isa 52:13a	John 9:4; John 14:31
The Messiah would be highly exalted by God.	Isa 52:13b	Phil 2:9-11
The Messiah's face would be disfigured from extreme beatings during His trial.	Isa 52:14	Mat. 26:67-68; Mat. 27:26-30
The Messiah's blood would be shed to make atonement for all mankind.	Isa 52:15	Rev 1:5
The Messiah's own people would reject Him.	Isa 53:1	John 12:37-38
The Messiah would grow up in Nazareth.	Isa 53:2a	Matt 2:21-23
The Messiah would appear as an ordinary man.	Isa 53:2b	Phil 2:7-8
The Messiah would be despised.	Isa 53:3a	Luke 4:28-29
The Messiah would be rejected.	Isa 53:3b	Mat. 27:21-23
The Messiah would suffer great sorrow and grief.	Isa 53:3c	Luke 19:41-42; Mat. 26:37-38; Matt 27:46
Men would deny association with the Messiah.	Isa 53:3d	Mark 14:50-52; Mat. 26:73-74

Isaiah Prophecies	Scripture	NT Fulfillment
The Messiah would have a heal many.	Isa 53:4a	Luke 6:17-19; Matt 8:16-17
The Messiah would bear the sins of the world upon Himself.	Isa 53:4b	1 Pet 2:24; 1 Pet 3:18
Many would think the Messiah to be cursed by God.	Isa 53:4c	Mat. 27:41-43
The Messiah would bear the penalty of death for man's sins.	Isa 53:5a	Luke 23:33; Heb 9:28
The Messiah's would be bruised for our iniquities.	Isa 53:5b	Col 1:20; Eph. 2:13-18
The Messiah's back would be lashed at His trial.	Isa 53:5c	Matt 27:26; 1 Pet 2:24
The Messiah would be the sin-bearer for all mankind.	Isa 53:6	Gal 1:4
The Messiah would be oppressed and afflicted.	Isa 53:7a	Mat. 27:27-31
The Messiah would be silent as a lamb before His accusers.	Isa 53:7b	Mat. 27:12-14
The Messiah would be God's sacrificial lamb.	Isa 53:7c	John 1:29; John 19:14-18
The Messiah would be condemned and persecuted.	Isa 53:8a	Mat. 26:47-27:31
The Messiah would be judged.	Isa 53:8b	John 18:13-22; Mat. 26:57-66; Matt 27:1; Matt 27:22; Luke 23:11
The Messiah would be killed.	Isa 53:8c	Matt 27:35
The Messiah would die for the sins of the world.	Isa 53:8d	1 John 2:2
The Messiah would be buried in a borrowed rich man's tomb.	Isa 53:9a	Matt 27:57
The Messiah would be completely innocent.	Isa 53:9b	Mark 15:3
The Messiah would have no deceit guile in His mouth.	Isa 53:9c	John 18:38; Luke 23:33-34; 1 Pet 2:21-22
God's will would be that the Messiah should die for all mankind.	Isa 53:10a	John 18:11; Rom 3:23-26
The Messiah would be a sin offering.	Isa 53:10b	Matt 20:28; Eph 5:2
The Messiah would be resurrected and live forever.	Isa 53:10c	Mark 16:16; Rev. 1:17-18
The Messiah would prosper.	Isa 53:10d	John 17:1-5; Rev 5:12
God would be completely satisfied with the suffering of the Messiah.	Isa 53:11a	John 12:27; Matt 27:46
The Messiah would be God's servant.	Isa 53:11b	Rom 5:18-19
The Messiah would justify man before God.	Isa 53:11c	Rom 5:8-9
The Messiah would be the sin offering for all mankind.	Isa 53:11d	Heb 9:28
The Messiah would be exalted by God for his sacrifice.	Isa 53:12a	Matt 28:18
The Messiah would freely lay down His life to save mankind.	Isa 53:12b	Luke 23:46
The Messiah would be counted with the criminals.	Isa 53:12c	Luke 23:32
The Messiah would be the sin offering for all mankind.	Isa 53:12d	2 Cor. 5:21
The Messiah would intercede for man to God.	Isa 53:12e	Luke 23:34
The Messiah would be resurrected by God.	Isa 55:3	Acts 10:40-41; Acts 13:34
The Messiah would be a witness.	Isa 55:4	John 3:10-12; John 18:37
The Messiah would come to provide salvation for all mankind.	Isa 59:15-16a	John 6:40; 1 Thess. 5:8-10
The Messiah would intercede between God and man.	Isa 59:15-16b	Mat. 10:32-33; Rom 8:34
The Messiah would come to Zion as their Redeemer.	Isa 59:20	Luke 2:38; John 10:11
The Messiah would have the Spirit of God upon Him.	Isa 61:1	Matt 3:16-17
The Messiah would preach the gospel of "Good News".	Isa 61:1-2	Luke 4:18-21
The Messiah would come to provide salvation.	Isa 63:5	John 3:17; Col. 2:13-15
The Messiah would be revealed to a people who were not seeking Him.	Isa 65:1	Mat. 15:22-28; Rom 10:18-20
The Messiah would be rejected by His own (Jews).	Isa 65:2	John 5:37-40