

Introduction to Isaiah: Prophet of Punishment and Promise

Texts: Various

Date: 5-24-20 Drive-In Service

Amos gives us the status of the day in the nation: The nation then became predominately wealthy yet worshipped false gods. The people no longer learned about Yahweh and His moral law in the Torah. “Ethics and morality were replaced by empty rituals and man-made ceremonies. The consequence of this godless, human-centered religion combined with a new ethically-lacking upper class fostered a fertile breeding ground for terrible acts of injustice” (Jones 73). These were the days of Amos.

I. The person of Isaiah.

Isaiah is one of the most beloved persons and prophets in the Scripture. He is sometimes called the **evangelical prophet because he writes much on the coming Redeemer of the nation.** His name means “Yahweh is salvation” or “Yahweh saves.”

He was the son of Amoz (1:1) which is not to be confused with Amos. According to Jewish tradition his father was a brother of King Amaziah, which would make Isaiah a cousin to Uzziah. (Amaziah was Uzziah’s father.) Isaiah was married and had 2 sons (7:3; 8:1-4).

According to Hebrew tradition Isaiah was sawn asunder during the reign of the wicked King Manasseh (Heb. 11:37).

One of the biggest factors in support of the book being written by one man is that Jesus quoted both sections of the book and attributed it to Isaiah. Quotations are found in Matt. 3:3; 12:17-21; Luke 3:4-6; Acts 8:28; Rom. 10:16, 20. In John 12:38-41 we find quotations from Isa. 6:9-10 and 53:1 together. These are both credited to Isaiah who saw the Lord in the Temple vision of chapter 6.

II. The background to Isaiah’s ministry.

Isaiah prophesied mainly in the area of Jerusalem and Judah, the southern kingdom (1:1).

1. The historical background.

As seen in the book of Amos, we find both physical prosperity and moral degradation. Israel was further along in its sinfulness with not one good God-fearing king. Meanwhile the nation of Judah, who had several godly kings, watches as its counterpart goes into captivity. Yet, Judah doesn’t learn the lessons from the moral failure of the northern kingdom (Jer. 3:6-11), and ends up following Israel into a life of unfaithfulness to God.

The prosperity led to the usual social and moral evils along with religious woes. The wealth, materialism, and military success of the day formed a prideful attitude, self-confidence, and fake security.

In other words Judah would follow in the apostasy of its northern counterpart. Assyria would capture and destroy Israel in 722 BC.

One of the underlying principles in the book is that judgment can be avoided if true repentance is manifested in the forsaking of sin and a return to righteous conduct.

Another important truth is that Isaiah often speaks of a remnant (1:9) through which God always works.

2. The kingly background

The reigns of these kings (including coregencies) were: Uzziah (790–739), Jotham (750–732), Ahaz (735–715), and Hezekiah (715–686).

Uzziah/Azariah: He began his reign at age 16 and reigned for 52 years. He was a good king and followed the Lord, but he failed to rid the land of the high places and false sacrifices. As long as he followed the Lord, he prospered (II Chron. 26:5). He fought the Philistines and commanded an army of over 300,000 soldiers with lots of weapons including catapults. He built cities, dug wells, and became very rich. He became famous and strong.

He then sinned against God by burning incense on the altar. He then became a leper and never recovered all the while living alone. His son Jotham co-reigned until he died. II Kings 15:1-7; II Chron. 26:1-23

Jotham: He began his reign at age 25 and ruled for 16 years. He followed the Lord. He built cities and fortresses and waged war against the Ammonites. He was said to be successful “because he prepared His ways before the Lord his God” (II Chron. 27:6).

He left the high places and allowed incense and false sacrifices to continue. II Kings 15:32-38; II Chron. 27:1-9

Ahaz: He began to reign when he was 20 years old and ruled for 16 years (II Kings 16:2). He was a wicked king that followed the ways of the Israelite kings of the northern kingdom. He offered his own children as burnt sacrifices in the valley of Hinnom (Molech – II Chron 28:3). II Kings 16:5 tells us that Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel attacked him. In the battle with Pekah, 120,000 were killed in one day (II Chr. 28:5-6). This led Ahaz to ask the king of Assyria to help him in battle and form an alliance. Ahaz went to Assyria to pay tribute to the king and that is where he saw an idol he liked. He told Uriah the high priest to build a replica back home. See II Kings 16:10-16. He then cut up the Temple’s articles and closed its doors (II Chron. 28:24). During Ahaz’s reign, the last king of Israel, Hoshea ruled. He made graven images for Baalim. II Kings 16:1-20; II Chron. 28:1-27

Hezekiah: We will discuss Hezekiah in Isaiah chapters 36-39. Ruled for 29 years beginning at age 25 (II Chron. 29:1).

Manasseh: He began to rule when he was 12 years old and reigned for 55 years. He rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had torn down. He led idol worship and sacrificed his own children (II Chron. 33:4-6). He was taken to Babylon where he repented of his sin. He then returned to rule in Jerusalem. He then established true worship again in the city (vs. 13-16). II Kings 21:1-18

3. Other nation's background

Explanation: King Ahaz would foolishly look to Assyria for protection even though Isaiah told him that Israel would fall to Assyria shortly (8:3-4). Hezekiah would foolishly seek Egypt's help in foreign matters. Egypt though first fell to King Sennacherib of Assyria and it was only because of God's intervention that Judah was spared from defeat (37:36-37) (Ryrie study notes).

Explanation: In addition to prophecy against Judah, Isaiah prophesies against Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, Edom, Arabia, Jerusalem, and Tyre. See chapters 13-23.

Chapters 24-25 speak of judgment in the future on the world.

III. The timing of Isaiah's prophecies.

The years of Isaiah's prophecies were from c. 740-680 BC.

IV. A general overview of the book.

Isaiah primarily prophecies against Judah and Jerusalem calling them back to repentance and obedience to God. If they do not follow through God will surely judge them by destroying the nation and sending the people into captivity. The primary reasons are iniquities, oppressions, foreign alliances, pride, and religious hypocrisy. He minces no words and boldly decries the nation's sins (chapter 1; 7:13). He predicts the defeats of Israel and Judah to Assyria and Babylon respectfully.

V. The divisions of the book.

Part 1 – Chapters 1-35 - Indictments on the Nations

Part 2 – Interlude 36-39 – Hezekiah's Incidents

Part 3 – Chapters 40-66 – God's Plan for the Future from his time and our time now.

Isaiah speaks heavily about the Messiah's first and second comings in the book.

VI. Key verses: 1:18; 2:4; 6:3, 8; 7:14; 9:6-7; 11:9; 26:3; 35:1; 40:3; 48:16; 57:15; 59:1; 61:1-3

VII. Key truths:

1. God is still on the throne. Sovereign
2. True hope comes via God's ways.
3. The faithful followers of God always have blessing from God.
4. The answer to sin is the Suffering Servant, the Savior.
5. Future prophecies remain unfulfilled but only for a short while longer.

VIII. Key People: God the Sovereign and Christ the Redeemer

KINGS OF ISRAEL & JUDAH		
KINGDOM/KING <small>Bold type=basically good king</small>	YEARS OF REIGN	REFERENCE
United Kingdom		
Saul	32	1 Samuel 9:1-31:13
David	40	2 Samuel
Solomon	40	1 King 2:1-11:43
Southern Kings (Judah)		
Rehoboam	17	1 Kings 12:1-14:31; 2 Chronicles 10:1-12:16
Abijam	3	1 Kings 15:1-8; 2 Chronicles 13:1-22
Asa	41	1 Kings 15:9-24; 2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14
Jehoshaphat	25	1 Kings 22:41-50; 2 Chronicles 17:1-20:37
Jehoram	8	2 Kings 8:16-24; 2 Chronicles 21:1-20
Ahaziah	1	2 Kings 8:25-29; 2 Chronicles 22:1-9
Athaliah (queen)	7	2 Kings 11:1-16; 2 Chronicles 22:1-23:21
Joash	40	2 Kings 11:17-12:21; 2 Chronicles 23:16-24:27
Amaziah	29	2 Kings 14:1-22; 2 Chronicles 25:1-28
Uzziah (Azariah)	52	2 Kings 15:1-7; 2 Chronicles 26:1-23
Jotham	16	2 Kings 15:32-38; 2 Chronicles 27:1-9
Ahaz	16	2 Kings 16:1-20; 2 Chronicles 28:1-27
Hezekiah	29	2 Kings 18:1-20:21; 2 Chronicles 29:1-32:33
Manasseh	55	2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 33:1-20
Amon	2	2 Kings 21:19-26; 2 Chronicles 33:21-25
Josiah	31	2 Kings 22:1-23:30; 2 Chronicles 34:1-35:27
Jehoahaz	3 months	2 Kings 23:31-33; 2 Chronicles 36:1-4
Jehoiakim	11	2 Kings 23:34-24:7; 2 Chronicles 36:5-8
Jehoiachin	3 months	2 Kings 24:8-16; 2 Chronicles 36:9-10
Zedekiah	11	2 Kings 24:18-25:21; 2 Chronicles 36:11-21
Northern Kings (Israel)		
Jeroboam I	22	1 Kings 12:25-14:20; 2 Chronicles 10:1-12:16
Nadab	2	1 Kings 15:25-31
Baasha	24	1 Kings 15:32-16:7
Elah	2	1 Kings 16:8-14
Zimri	7 days	1 Kings 16:15-20
Tibni	3	1 Kings 16:21-22
Omri	11	1 Kings 16:21-28
Ahab	22	1 Kings 16:29-22:40
Ahaziah	2	1 Kings 22:51-53; 2 Kings 1:1-18
Jehoram	12	2 Kings 2:1-8:15
Jehu	28	2 Kings 9:1-10:36
Jehoahaz	17	2 Kings 13:1-9
Joash	16	2 Kings 13:10-25
Jeroboam II	41	2 Kings 14:23-29
Zechariah	6 months	2 Kings 15:8-12
Shallum	1 month	2 Kings 15:13-15
Menahem	10	2 Kings 15:16-22
Pekahiah	2	2 Kings 15:23-26
Pekah	20	2 Kings 15:27-31
Hoshea	10	2 Kings 17:1-41