

The Message of the Old Testament

A Book-by-Book Study

Isaiah

Isaiah's Opening Word

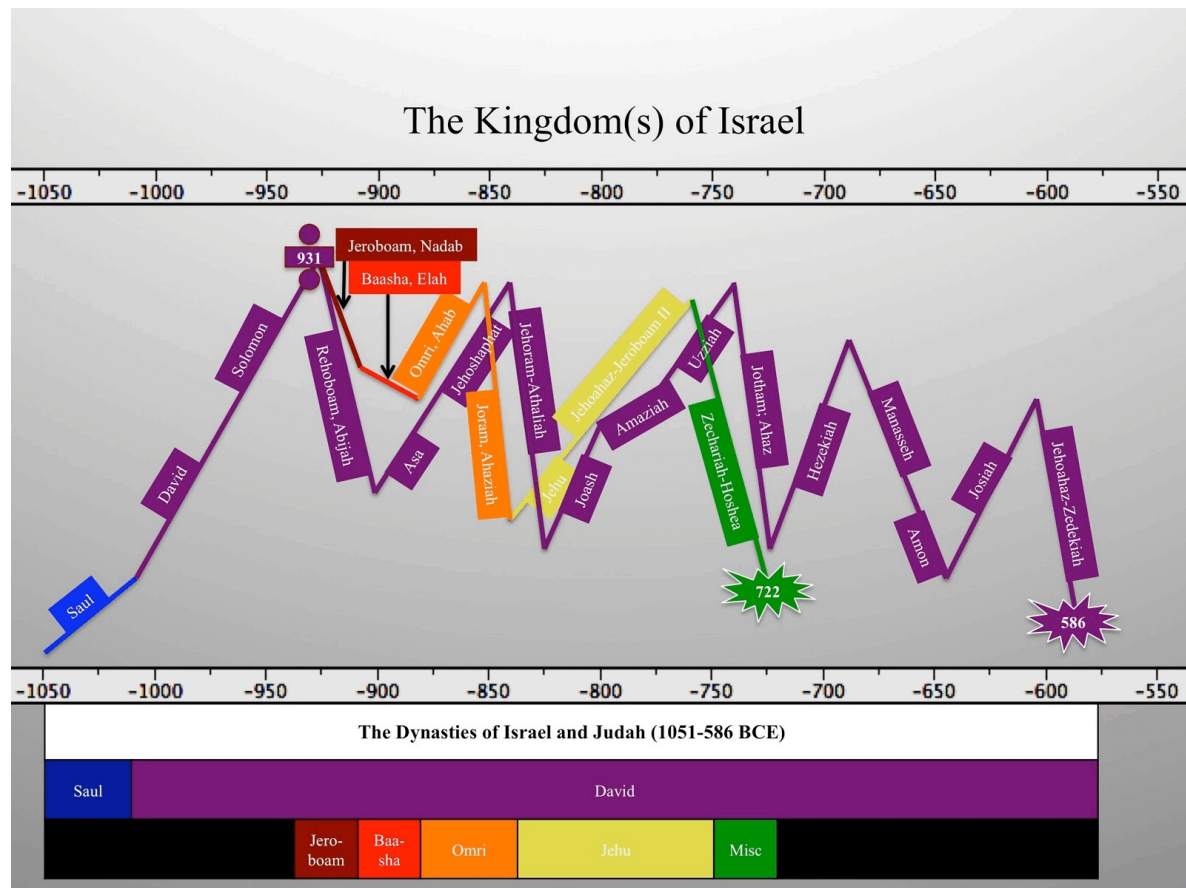
The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. 1:1

Background

Isaiah is the first of the _____ prophets.

What is the difference between major and minor prophets? _____ of their recorded prophecies.

Isaiah prophesied during the second half of the eighth century B.C. (approximately 750-700 B.C.) during that time five kings reigned in the southern kingdom of Judah. He came on the scene at the end of the reign of King Uzziah.



Uzziah reigned for 52 years.

- ▶ 200 years after _____
- ▶ During Uzziah's reign . . .
 - ▶ Power and splendor of nation _____ to an extent
 - ▶ Egypt was faltering
 - ▶ Assyria was occupied with other interests

Uzziah was followed by _____ who reigned 16 years. Continued his father's programs.

Jotham was followed by _____ who reigned 16 years.

_____ empire had grown in strength and imperial ambition; overtook northern kingdom and pushed to within 8 miles of Jerusalem's walls.

Ahaz made a treaty with the Assyrian emperor.

- ▶ Paid tribute
- ▶ Sent Israelites to Assyria to learn and bring back worship styles to Jerusalem.

_____ followed his father Ahaz. Unlike his father, he was one of Judah's best kings.

- ▶ Reigned _____ years.
- ▶ Assyrian empire laid siege against Jerusalem. Accounted in Isaiah 36-37.
- ▶ In a sense Hezekiah provoked the siege of Jerusalem exactly because he was a _____ king. He would not abide the false worship or false gods of his father's reign any longer. Instead, he led the nation in putting their hope once more in the Lord by refusing to pay tribute to the foreign king. In response, almost 200,000 Assyrian troops descended upon the land of Palestine. They wiped out fortified city after fortified city until Jerusalem was fairly well alone and surrounded. (Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament*, 569-570.)

Hezekiah's son Manasseh followed his father. Unlike his father, he was among Judah's most _____ kings. Reigned 55 years.

Tradition has it that early in Manasseh's reign, the king captured and imprisoned _____ because he hated Isaiah's prophecies against the false worship that Manasseh encouraged. Tradition also says that the king had Isaiah _____ in two, which may have been what the author of Hebrews refers to when he speaks of great individuals of the faith being sawn in two. (Dever, 570)

Isaiah: How we got here

God made the world

God's special creature, man, rebelled and turned away.

God promised Abraham a people and a land

Moses led the people to the land

Joshua led the people to conquer the land

Judges sets before us life in the land

Samuel anoints Israel's first kings.

Kings takes us from the hope of a strong, enduring kingdom to the reality of a kingdom that is demolished and introduces us to those who speak to the people for God, the prophets.

Basic Divisions of Isaiah

The organizational structure is far from precise. Themes weave their way in and out through the chapters of the book. They are not in a precise chronological order. Still we can offer a rough outline similar to that put forward by Paul House in *Old Testament Theology* (275-276).

God Calls and Condemns (1-12)

Israel's Rebellion Against God

Isaiah's Call to the Ministry

The Promise of a Davidic King

God Eliminates Proud Nations (13-27)

The Pride of Israel

The Pride of Surrounding Nations

God Secures the Remnant (28-35)

Woe to the Wicked
Hope for the Future

Siege of Jerusalem (36-39)

Jerusalem is delivered from a dire crisis
Hope flows from God alone
Babylon will invade

God's Suffering _____ (40-55)

Pain and Hope intersect
God saves through suffering
God sends a servant to bring salvation

New Heavens and New Earth (56-66)

God renews creation
He is the only hope for a bright future
Only the creator can be the re-creator

Themes in Isaiah: _____

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken: "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have _____ against me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand." 1:2-3

► The rebellion of God's people is _____.

Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly _____. 1:4

► The rebellion of God's people is _____.

Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel? The whole _____ is sick, and the whole _____ faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds; they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil. 1:5-6

► The rebellion of God's people is _____.

Your country lies desolate; your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence foreigners devour your land; it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners. And the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. 1:7-8

► The rebellion of God's people has brought _____.

Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! "What to me is the multitude of your _____? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. 1:10-11

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul _____; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Isaiah 1:14-15

➡ The rebellion of God's people has made their worship _____.

"Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Isaiah 1:18-20

➡ The stain of the rebellion of God's people can be _____. The people must repent.

In Isaiah 5, God depicts his people as an unprofitable vineyard. He planted it and did everything that could be done to expect a perfect vineyard. "What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it?" (5:4)

But when he looked for fruit he found only bad grapes. God "looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold only an outcry (cry of distress)." (5:7)

➡ Judah's rebellion was a determined resistance against God despite all He had done for their welfare.

But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. Isaiah 59:2

Isaiah 59:7-8

Isaiah 64:6-7

➡ This is the nature of the people to whom God called Isaiah to preach. Isaiah preached to them the nature of their problem as well as the solution for it and whether there was any ultimate hope.

Themes in Isaiah: The Problem

The problem in Judah was that the people trusted the wrong things.

1. They trusted other _____.

When threatened by the Assyrians, they wanted to trust the king of Egypt who had chariots and horsemen.

But Isaiah warned:

"Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel." (31:1)

The Egyptians are man, and not God, and their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord stretches out his hand, the helper will stumble, and he who is helped will fall, and they will all perish together. (31:3)

They trusted the king of Assyria. Ahaz made a treaty with the king of Assyria to protect them. (2 K 16)
That failed miserably.

Then they trusted the king of Babylon. (Isaiah 39)

2. They trusted other _____.

Isaiah 2:6, 8

For you have rejected your people, the house of Jacob, because they are full of things from the east and of fortune-tellers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners.

Their land is filled with _____; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made.

To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move.
Isaiah 40:18-20

Unlike the idol which is fashioned by men, God is the One who made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them.

Isaiah 44:9-17

They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?" He feeds on ashes; a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"
Isaiah 44:18-20

3. They trusted _____ . Isaiah 22:8-11

In that day you looked to the weapons of the House of the Forest, and you saw that the breaches of the city of David were many. You collected the waters of the lower pool, and you counted the houses of Jerusalem, and you broke down the houses to fortify the wall. You made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool. But you did not look to him who did it, or see him who planned it long ago.

Themes in Isaiah: The Solution

The solution for Judah was to trust _____ and Him alone.

Isaiah 40:18-26

The solution is to trust God because He cannot be compared to _____. In fact no one and nothing may be compared with Him. He is incomparable! He is _____.

Isaiah 6:1-7

"This is the One whom God's people should have always trusted in. It was never to be a great political leader like Uzziah, as godly as he may have been. After all, he died! That's not an insignificant fact. God called them to trust himself alone, and he used Isaiah to show that he alone was uniquely worthy of their trust." Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament*, 577

Trusting God means believing what he says about coming _____.

"The Lord has a day of vengeance." (34:8)

Chapters 13-24 warn of God's judgment upon the nations, namely, Babylon, Assyria, Moab, Damascus, Cush, Egypt, Babylon again, Edom, and Arabia. Judgment is spoken on Jerusalem in chapter 22 then Tyre in 23. It reaches an epic display in chapter 24.

Isaiah 24:1-3

Trusting God means trusting His coming Deliverance and Salvation

Dever points out that "Immediately before the thunder of God's judgment sounds in chapter 13, Isaiah lets us hear a song that will be sung on a future day of deliverance: 'Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; and he has become my salvation.'" (12:2)

Isaiah 33:22 also says, "For the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king; he will _____ us."

God demonstrates in dramatic fashion in the Assyrian siege how he promises to save, and then keeps his promise.

With 185,000 troops surrounding the city, the Assyrian commander was threatening Jerusalem, shouting so that the people could hear him,

"Beware lest Hezekiah mislead you by saying, "The Lord will deliver us." Has any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?"

Isaiah 36:18-20

Isaiah 37:21-23, 29

And the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home and lived at Nineveh. And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword. And after they escaped into the land of Ararat, Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place. Isaiah 37:36-38

God's Deliverance in Christ

The hope of deliverance and salvation to which the book of Isaiah points becomes more and more focused on _____ particular person.

"Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste.'

☛ This particular person would be a _____ preeminent above all other kings.

"Behold, a king will reign in righteousness," (32:1)

Isaiah 9:6-7

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. Isaiah 11:1-2

☛ This particular person would not only be a king but also a _____.

What Isaiah says about the servant:

1. The servant would have the Spirit of God upon him (just as the king.)

Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.

(42:1)

2. The servant would save _____ Jews and Gentiles bringing salvation to the ends of the earth. 49:1-7

3. The servant would listen to God but not everyone would listen to _____. 50:4-10a

4. The servant would bear the sin of the many.

Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. 53:11

5. The servant would be _____.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn 61:1-2

Hundreds of years later Luke wrote in 4:14-21

The Message of Isaiah

The message of Isaiah is that God's people are rebels by nature. They trust everything but him who has done everything for them. He will judge the nations including the one he chose for His own. Their judgment will be as severe as their disobedience. There is hope for rescue from the judgment in the servant king alone—the one who said, "I did not come to be served but to serve and to give my life a ransom for many.

The Invitation of Isaiah

55:1-9