

A STUDY ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE PROPHET ISAIAH

An Introduction to the Prophets in General and Isaiah in Particular (Lesson #1)

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHETS IN GENERAL

A. Words to denote a prophet

1. **aybn** (*nabhi*) one who speaks a message which God has given him.
Jer. 1:4-8; 2:1-2
2. **haor** (*ro'eh*) commonly translated "seer." Same function as a *nabhi*, but the emphasis is on the actual seeing of the message/revelation.
3. **hzoj** (*hozeh*) also translated "seer." Synonymous with *ro'eh*.

B. The Office of Prophet

1. Moses stands as the fountainhead of the prophetic ministry
 - a. Moses was unique as a revelatory spokesman (Num. 12:1-8; cf. Ex. 33:11; Deut. 34:10; 18:15-19)
 - b. Moses established the standards for all the prophets of Israel (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:18-22)
 - c. Constant reference, "Moses and the Prophets"
2. The prophet was chosen and commissioned directly by God
 - a. Contrast to the priesthood
 - b. OT example: Jer. 1:5 "The Word of the LORD came to . . . saying, "Go and prophesy. . . ""
 - c. The danger and warning to false prophets (Deut. 13:5; Jer. 14:14-15; 23:25-40).
3. The prophet had God's Word in His mouth and thus he spoke authoritatively for God.

C. The Function of the Prophet

1. The prophet was the Covenant-Enforcer and Prosecutor
 - a. The covenant was in the form of a vassal treaty
 - b. There was blessing for obedience and

- cursing for disobedience (Deut. 4:15-28; 28:1-32:42 and Lev. 26:1-39).
- c. The prophets spoke concerning coming judgement for disobedience, preached repentance and covenant loyalty. And also announced God's restoration and grace to a fallen people.
2. The prophetic ministry sees a dramatic increase after the kingdom is divided because of the gross apostasy, which eventually leads to judgment and exile (2 Kings 17:13-15, 21-23).
- D. The Four Major Prophets
1. Isaiah (primarily to Judah, 740-700 B.C., before the exile)
 2. Jeremiah (to Judah, 627-580 B.C., before exile, sees exile)
 3. Ezekiel (to Judah, 593-570 B.C., during exile)
 4. Daniel (to Judah, 605-530 B.C., during exile)
- E. The Twelve Minor Prophets
1. Hosea (to Israel 760 B.C., before exile)
 2. Joel (debated, 835 B.C./500 B.C.)
 3. Amos (to Israel, 767-753 B.C., before exile)
 4. Obadiah (debated, 850/500 B.C.)
 5. Jonah (to Ninevah, 770-760 B.C., before exile)
 6. Micah (to Judah, 737-690 B.C., before exile)
 7. Nahum (to Ninevah, 663-612 B.C., before exile)
 8. Habakkuk (to Judah, 630-605 B.C., before exile)
 9. Zephaniah (to Judah, 520-518 B.C., before exile)
 10. Haggai (to Judah, 520 B.C., after exile)
 11. Zechariah (to Judah, 520-518 B.C., after exile)
 12. Malachi (to Judah, 432 B.C., after exile)
- F. A Note on the Two Non-Literary Prophets
1. Elijah (1 Kings 17-19; 21; 2 Kings 1-2)
To Israel, 9th century B.C.
 2. Elisha (1 Kings 19; 2 Kings 2-9; 13)
Successor to Elijah, to Israel, 9th century B.C.

Recommended reading for the Prophets in General:

Beecher, Willis J. The Prophets and the Promise (Baker reprint, 1963).

Van Gemeren, Willem, Interpreting the Prophetic Word (Zondervan, 1992).

Young, Edward J. My Servants the Prophets (Eerdmans, 1952).

II. AN INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH

A. His Name: Yahweh is salvation

B. His Times

1. The Kings: (dates fluctuate between 5-10 years)
Uzziah (792-740 B.C.) Cf. 6:1; Jotham (740-732);
Ahaz (732-716); Hezekiah (716-687)

2. Political Scene

*Assyria was an emerging power which created numerous problems.

*Israel (northern kingdom) made an anti-Assyrian alliance with Aram (Syria).

*Judah, under Ahaz, refuses to join the alliance and Israel and Aram attack (Syrian-Ephraimitic war).

Under this threat, Ahaz makes a fatal alliance with Assyria. Assyria destroys Aram and Israel, putting in a puppet king (Hoshea).

*Hoshea rebels (721-22) and Assyria destroys the northern kingdom and Samaria falls.

*Under Hezekiah, Judah successfully wards off a siege and gains strength as Assyria declines.

Assyrian kings (Tiglath-Pileser, Shalmaneser, Sargon, Senncherib)

C. The Message of the Prophet

Isaiah is about sin and judgment, grace and restoration, and final triumph through God's King, Servant and Anointed Conqueror.

In many ways it is a plea to trust in God and His promise.

D. The General Structure of Isaiah (following Alec Motyer)

1. The Book of the King (1-37)
2. The Book of the Servant (38-55)
3. The Book of the Anointed Conqueror (56-66)

E. The Justification of Calling the Book "The Gospel According to the Prophet Isaiah"

The gospel: God's promise to deliver His people through His Son

1. The gospel has existed since sin came into the world (Gen. 3:15)
2. Abraham had the gospel (Gal. 3:8)
3. Moses had the gospel (Rom. 10:5-10)
4. The children of Israel had the gospel (Heb. 4:2, 6)
5. Mark 1:1-2 calls Isaiah the "beginning of the gospel"

6. Isaiah is saturated with gospel promises

Recommended Commentaries on Isaiah

Alexander, J.A. The Prophecies of Isaiah (Kregel, reprint).

Leupold, H.C. Exposition of Isaiah (Baker, 1968).

Motyer, J. Alec The Prophecy of Isaiah (IVP, 1993).

Ridderbos, J. Isaiah (Zondervan, 1995).

Young, E.J. The Book of Isaiah, 3 Volumes (Eerdmans, 1965).

THE BOOK OF THE KING (1-37)

ISIAH'S PREFACE: A DIAGNOSIS AND PROGNOSIS FOR JUDAH (1:1-5:30)

Overview of first major section, chapters 1-5. *Details subject to change.*

I. The People of God Exposed Before the Court of Heaven (1:1-31)
Title (1:1)

A. National Apostasy Exposed (1:2-9)

B. Religious Apostasy Exposed (1:10-20)

C. Degeneration and Restoration (1:21-31)

II. Ideal Jerusalem Contrasted with Actual Jerusalem (2:1-4:6)
Title (2:1)

A. The Ideal Jerusalem (2:2-4)

B. The Actual Jerusalem Filled With Pride (2:6-22)

C. The Actual Jerusalem Filled with Wicked Leaders (3:1-12)

D. God Stands to Judge (3:13-4:1)

E. The New Jerusalem (4:2-6)

III. Judgment Against the Worthless Vineyard (5:1-30)

A. The Parable of the Vineyard (5:1-7)

- B. Judgement Against the Abuse of Material Blessing (8-17)
- C. Judgement for Moral and Spiritual Obligations (18-30)