

The Book of the Prophet Isaiah

Introduction and Isaiah 1

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The Prophets sent by God to Israel

- Elijah 870
- Elisha 850
- Jonah 800-753
- Amos 760-753
- Hosea 750-715
- **Fall of Israel 722**

Prophets we will look at oriented toward Judah

- Isaiah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Zephaniah
- Jeremiah
- Ezekiel
- Daniel

Prophets we will look at oriented toward Judah (Cont)

- Ezra
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Nehemiah
- Malachi

Isaiah - 740-680 BC Pre Ex

- ***Isaiah*** means “salvation is Yahweh”
 - **YAH** or **IAH** is the first part of the name **Yahweh**
 - Many OT names incorporate the name of God into a person, city or location’s name
 - **Isaiah**, **Jeremiah**, **Hezekiah**
 - Also, the name **Elohim** – Hebrew for gods or deity is also contained in Hebrew names
 - **Ezekiel**, **Daniel**
- This idea that *Yahweh* is salvation, (the savior) becomes a major issue at this point in the history of *Israel*

Isaiah (Cont)

- ***Isaiah***

- Born around **765 BC**
- Married and had at least two sons
- A resident of *Jerusalem* during the reigns of kings *Uzziah* through *Hezekiah*
- Received prophetic visions while in the temple in Jerusalem (**Isaiah 6**)

Isaiah (Cont)

- Began to prophesy in **740 BC** at the **age of 25** at the very end of the reign of King *Uzziah* of Judah (792-**740 BC**)
- Proclaims the **fall of *Israel*** and ***Judah*** as punishment for both nations infidelity
- His book prophesies about many events beyond his lifetime

Isaiah (Cont)

- **Historical context**

- **Isaiah 1-8** (2nd Kings 15-16)

- Syria and Samaria rise to power over Judah
 - Judah seeks assistance from Assyria and become a vassal

- **Isaiah 9-37** (2nd Kings 17-19)

- Judah under Hezekiah join with Egypt and Babylon to withstand Assyria
 - Assyria moves south through Gaza and then conquers Egypt
 - Assyria then returns and attacks Judah
 - The historical context for the Book of Isaiah stops right in the middle of 2nd Kings
 - We will leave the rest of his historical period for the later prophets

Isaiah (Cont)

- The thrust of his message is “judgment on sin”
- Nothing is known about him after **700 BC**
- He may have been martyred at a later date under King *Manasseh* (697-642 BC)
- He prophesied against:
 - **King *Pekah* in Israel** (740-732 BC) although not mentioned by name (Is 1)
 - **King *Uzziah* in Judah** (792-740 BC)
 - **King *Jotham* in Judah** (750-732 BC)

1st Isaiah (Cont)

- **King *Ahaz* in Judah** (735-715 BC) by trying to get him not to form an alliance with the King of Assyria
- **King *Hezekiah* in Judah** (715-686 BC) forming an alliance with Egypt against the Assyrians (Is 28-32)

Israelite Kings Date Chart

(Based on the chronology of John Bright)

Dennis Bratcher

The United Monarchy			
Dates (BC)	Kingdom of the Israelites		
1020-1000	Saul		
1000-961	David		
961-922	Solomon		
The Divided Kingdoms			
Dates (BC)	Israel (Northern)	Judah (Southern)	Dates (BC)
922-901	Jeroboam I	Rehoboam	922-915
901-900	Nadab	Abijah	915-913
900-877	Baasha	Asa	913-873
877-876	Elah	Jehoshaphat	873-849
876	Zimri Tibni		
876-869	Omri		
869-850	Ahab		
850-849	Ahaziah	Jehoram	849-843
849-843	Joram (Jehoram)	Ahaziah	843
843-815	Jehu	Athaliah (non-Davidic Queen)	843-837
815-802	Jehoahaz	Joash	837-800
802-786	Jehoash (Joash)	Amaziah	800-783
786-746	Jeroboam II →	Uzziah (Azariah)	783-742
746-745	Zachariah →	Jotham (co-regent)	750-742
745	Shallum	Jotham (king)	742-735
745-737	Menahem		
737-736	Pekahiah	Ahaz	735-715
736-732	Pekah →		
732-724	Hoshea		
721	Fall of Samaria	Hezekiah	715-687
	→	Manasseh	687-642
		Amon	642-640
		Josiah	640-609
		Jehoahaz	609
		Jehoikim (Eliakim)	609-598
		Jehoiachin (Jeconiah)	598-597
		Zedekiah (Mattaniah)	597-587

Isaiah (Cont)

- Many scholars believe, because of the difference in language, that the **Book of Isaiah** was written by at least three different authors:
 - **1st Isaiah - Is 1- 39 (740 – 690 BC) The Book of Judgment**
 - Bad News
 - Judgment
 - Breaking of the Covenant
 - Curses of Deuteronomy from Moses

Isaiah (Cont)

- **2nd Isaiah - Is 40- 55 (550- 525 BC) The Book of Consolation – Good News**
 - Restoration
- **3rd Isaiah - Is 56-66 (525- 500 BC) focus on reconstruction after the Exile**

Isaiah (Cont)

- Others believe that:
 - There is only **one author** who uses different language when speaking about bad versus good things and that he was given a glimpse into “divine providence” spanning the entire history of the exile and return
- The important issue is that if there was one or three authors, all of the writings were inspired and their teachings are valid

Isaiah (Cont)

- **Major themes of Isaiah 1-39:**
 - *Yahweh* is king of all the earth
 - The central importance of the city of *Jerusalem*
 - The failures of *Judah* when they turned their backs on God
 - The people disobey God who is not pleased
 - The universalistic men of *Yahweh* as Lord

Isaiah (Cont)

- **Other themes include:**

- The importance of faith
- A remnant will be spared with a messiah for its king
- The just man as one like the “poor of Yahweh”
- Use of formal court room language
 - The *rib* or law suit
 - God as a prosecutor

Isaiah (Cont)

- Imagery of the vineyard
- Punishment will conclude with exile
- God as holy and righteous
- Return to **2nd Kings 14** and review the historical context that Isaiah presents in **Isaiah 6**
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2nd Kings 14-16

- **2nd Kings 14**

- Depicts the rise to power of *Jeroboam II* in Israel (North)

- **2nd Kings 15**

- *Azariah (Uzziah)* reigns in *Judah* as a monotheist but acquires leprosy after illegally offering incense within the temple
- The kingdom of *Assyria* rises to power and starts moving into the region
- *Syria* and *Israel* join forces to attack *Judah*
- *Uzziah* dies and his son, *Jotham*, reigns in *Judah* as a good monotheist
- He is followed by his evil son, *Ahaz*

2nd Kings 14-16 (Cont)

- **2nd Kings 16**

- **Ahaz**, a pagan and polytheist, reigns in the ways of the kings of *Israel*
- He commits **abominable practices of the nations** that the **Lord had driven out of the Promised Land** by His chosen people
- The author of **2nd Kings** prepares us for where this story is going as it serves as an “echo” back to God’s words in the books of **Deuteronomy** and **Joshua** concerning the people inhabiting the Promised Land

2nd Kings 14-16 (Cont)

- The people of *Israel* and *Judah* had no real claim on the land except for God's promise to *Abraham* that his descendants would inherit the Promised Land
- But God warned in **Deuteronomy** and **Joshua** that if they became like the people that their ancestors had driven out, He would drive them out
- If however, they later repented He would allow them to return
- This language will come up again during the reign of ***Manasseh***, the next king of *Judah*

2nd Kings 14-16 (Cont)

- The very wicked King *Manasseh* will push the people of *Judah* over the edge resulting in their removal from the land
- The author of **2nd Kings** will show how his actions will be the trigger for the “Babylonian Exile”
- Meanwhile, *Ahaz*, a full blown pagan, establishes a treaty with *Assyria* to prevent *Israel* and *Syria* from conquering *Judah*
- He pays the king of *Assyria* money in exchange for his protection

2nd Kings 17

- *Ahaz* mimics the paganism in *Damascus* as he sends the blueprints of the pagan altar in *Damascus* to *Jerusalem* where he directs modification to the Temple
- Next, we see the conquest of *Israel* by the king of *Assyria* who initiates the “Assyrian Exile”
- We will see this in the calling of *Isaiah*’s prophecy in **Isaiah 6**
- But first we begin with a look at **Isaiah 1-5** which historically occurs after the calling of *Isaiah* in chapter 6

Isaiah (Cont)

- Is 1 - Sinfulness of *Israel*
 - As seen within the royal courtroom
- Is 2-3 - Sins of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*
 - As seen within the royal courtroom
- Is 4 - Messianic branch
 - The prophet is like God's prosecutor

Isaiah (Cont)

- Is 5 – Vineyard song
 - A judgment parable
 - Justice is served when the vineyard is torn down
 - The vineyard is the house of *Israel*
 - God is just in his punishment of exile for their breaking of the covenant
- Is 6 – The call of Isaiah

Isaiah (Cont)

- Is 7 – The beginning of the prophecies against *Judah* with the birth of Immanuel
 - The people of *Judah* should not be afraid because God will protect them (**2nd Sam 7**)
 - Ahaz (a polytheist) does not believe this and will not ask for a sign from God
 - God is with us (Immanuel)
 - Matthew will build on this message

Isaiah (Cont)

- Is 8 - The transition from prophecies against *Israel* to those against *Judah*
 - The symbol of a little bubbling stream (the two kings of the north) versus the massive river (*Assyria*)
 - As proof of *Ahaz's* stupidity *Assyria* will fill the land like a massive river
- Is 9 The prophecies against *Judah* continue

Isaiah 1

- The alternating themes in Isaiah I
 - Isaiah 1:1-15 – death and destruction
 - Isaiah 1:16-20 – Hope
 - Isaiah 1:21 – death and destruction
 - Isaiah 1:24-26 – restoration

Isaiah 1 (Cont)

- **Isaiah 1:1**

- Do not confuse Isaiah's father *Amaz* with the prophet *Amos*
- According to this passage *Isaiah's* intended audience is the people of Judah and Jerusalem in the days of king *Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah* of Judah
- But it is possible that this introduction may be a general introduction that was tacked on at a later date and this section is oriented toward the Northern Kingdom
- Contrary to the beliefs of some, his prophecies are not pointed to events during contemporary American presidential Administrations! *

Isaiah 1 (Cont)

- **Isaiah 1:2-3**

- The use of the words “heavens” and “earth” are a personification of natural elements that are permanent and unchangeable
- The sky and the earth under our feet is permanent
- The use of this imagery was a common practice in the ancient world
- The same night sky exists today as at the time of *Abraham*
- There are many biblical references to “heaven and earth”, in prophetic literature as a witness to the covenant

Isaiah 1 (Cont)

- *Joshua* takes a great “stone” and places it under the oak in the sanctuary as a witness against the people lest they deal falsely with God (**Joshua 24:25-28***)
- A rock does not change, but the people do
- God and His covenant will not change, but the people of *Israel* change while the rock remains as a witness to the covenant
- The people of *Israel* are the sons of God
- Isaiah points out that even a dumb ox knows its own

Isaiah 1 (Cont)

- To know and to understand are big themes in *Isaiah*
- But the people of *Israel* who are sons of God do not know or understand Him *