

# An Introduction to Isaiah

## Leon Mauldin

**Text:** John 12:41: These things Isaiah said, because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.

### Introduction:

- I. **The Prophets:** Men of God; spokesmen for God.
  - A. Homer Hailey's definition of a prophet (*Minor Prophets*, 15-16).
    1. A speaker for God.
    2. Primarily a mouth, as illustrated by Ex. 4:16; 7:1 and then Deut. 18:9-22.
  - B. Also called a seer (1 Sam. 9:9).
  - C. Summary.
    1. The principle word used to designate the prophets was *nabhi* (Young, *My Servants*, 65).
    2. The seer is the *ro'eh*.
    3. Young: "Herein lies the difference. The word *nabhi* stresses the active work of the prophet, in speaking forth the message from God. The word *ro'eh*, on the other hand, brings to the fore the experience by means of which the prophet was made to 'see' that message." (*Ibid*).
    4. On occasion the word *hozeh* was used. It is synonymous with *ro'eh* (*Ibid*).
- II. 1Peter said, "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:19-21). In his book, *My Servants The Prophets*, Edward Young addresses the psychological conviction of the prophets. "There is, in other words, a seriousness in the claims of the prophets, which appears nowhere else" (171). He went on to use Isaiah as an example, and gave nearly four pages of verses which show Isaiah's claim to the reciprocity of revelation. "From all of this it appears that the prophet believed that he had been the recipient of an objective revelation. He did not think that he was uttering words which had found their origination in his own mind, but rather that he had received a message which God had given to him (175). [See Appendix A].

### Body:

- I. **Background and Setting of Isaiah**
  - A. Solomon died about 931 B.C., thus beginning the period of the "Divided Kingdom."
    1. Isaiah's ministry began about 740 B.C., nearly two centuries later.
    2. The **kings of Judah** listed in Isaiah are Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah (1:1). All of these were good kings, except Ahaz (2 Chron. 28:1-4).
    3. In **Judah**, Uzziah (791-740 B.C.) in a large measure restored the borders of that country, and prosperity reached a peak not enjoyed since Solomon's day. Even during the reigns of these good kings, the hearts of the people were not inclined toward God. The people forgot God and credited their prosperity and well-being to the idols to which they turned.
    4. Smith: "Under Uzziah the political position of Judah had greatly recovered from the blows suffered under Amaziah: the fortifications of Jerusalem itself were restored: castles were built in the country: new arrangements in the army and equipments of

defensive artillery were established; and considerable successes in war gained against the Philistines, the Arabians, and the Ammonites. This prosperity continued during the reign of Jotham, except that, towards the close of this latter reign, troubles threatened from the alliance of Israel and Syria. The consequence of this prosperity was an influx of wealth, and this with the increased means of military strength withdrew men's confidence from Jehovah, and let them to trust in worldly resources (1150-1151).

5. Contemporary with Isaiah was **Micah**. He was of Moresheth, located 20 miles SW of Jerusalem. Bro. Hailey concluded that Micah preached in the towns and villages, the "country preacher," while Isaiah did his prophetic work primarily in Jerusalem.
- B. Meanwhile in the northern kingdom, under the leadership of Jeroboam II (782-745 B.C.) **Israel's** borders had been largely restored (2 Kings 14:25), and the period was characterized by a prosperity unknown there since the days of Solomon.
1. Idolatry was rampant in Israel. Israel was cursed with two forms of idolatry.
    - a. There was the false worship of Jehovah introduced by Jeroboam I (931-909 B.C.) and Baal worship introduced by Jezebel and Ahab (873-852 B.C.).
  2. Prophets during this period include **Amos** (755 B.C.), and **Hosea** (750-725 B.C.), both sent to Israel. Hosea said, "because there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land...There is nought but swearing and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery; they break out, and blood toucheth blood" (4:1-2).
  3. It was also during this general time that God sent **Jonah** to Nineveh. (Jonah is referenced in the 2 Kings text above).
- C. Geographically, Israel was situated between the two great world powers of that day: **Egypt** and **Assyria**.
1. Isaiah's task was to hold the people to Jehovah, not to one of the nations.
  2. Assyria rising to power, Egypt living in the glory of her past, led to constant conflict. Judah was right in between.
  3. Some were drawn to Assyria, others to Egypt.
  4. This resulted in three parties: Pro-Egypt (30:1-5; 31:1ff; 36:6), pro-Assyria (7; 2 Kgs. 16:7-9), and Jehovah, led by Isaiah.
    - a. "**Wait for Jehovah**" is one of Isaiah's strong statements. Put your faith and trust in Jehovah, and he will deliver us.
    - b. He was preaching faith in Jehovah, while the other two parties were pulling against him.
- D. Assyrian Kings:
1. Tiglathpileser III (745-726). This king demanded and received heavy tribute from Menahem, king of Israel (2 Kgs. 15:17-22).
  2. Shalmaneser V (726-722). Invaded Samaria, the capital of Israel.
  3. Sargon II (722-705). Conquered the city 722 BC.. Mentioned in Isa. 20:1.
  4. Sennacherib (705-681). Invaded Judah 701 BC. Threatened Jerusalem but God intervened.
- E. Egyptian Rulers

1. Piye (750-712 BC)
  2. Sabaka [Some identify him with the Biblical “So” of 2 Kgs. 17:4] (712-698 BC)
  3. Shebitku (698-690 BC)
  4. Tarhaqa (690-664 BC)
- F. With Paul we might ask, “Who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Cor. 2:16). Certainly no one acting in his unaided strength could meet the challenge of the times.
1. Only a prophet, raised up by God, who spoke the very words which God had placed in his mouth, would do. Isaiah proved to be equal to the task.
  2. Young: “Isaiah exercised his prophetic ministry at a time of unique significance, a time in which it was of utmost importance to realize that salvation could not be obtained by reliance upon man but only from God Himself. For Israel it was the central or pivotal point of history between Moses and Christ.” (1:4)
  3. The Lord is Salvation!

## II. 1 Authorship

### A. Isaiah 1:1 affirms that Isaiah is the author.

1. Isaiah the man: Married to a prophetess; two sons have symbolic names.
2. Career spanned 40-50 years.
3. Isaianic authorship confirmed by N.T.

### B. Negative Criticism: Multi-authorship theories.

1. In his book, *Who Wrote Isaiah?*, Young defined negative criticism: “When, therefore, we speak of negative or destructive or divisive criticism, we have in mind a criticism in which the critic prefers his own judgment or the judgment of some man to the express declaration of the written Bible.” (15).
2. A. B. Davidson, himself a liberal critic, said in his book, *Old Testament Prophecy*, p. 244, “For nearly twenty-five centuries no one dreamt of doubting that Isaiah, the son of Amoz, was the author of every part of the book that goes under his name.” (Quoted by Robinson, 59). But as the Baptist handbook says, “now it is different.” Among the critics there is considerable disagreement. The group referred to by Robinson as the moderate section of the critical school, which includes Davidson, “practically agrees that the following chapters and verses are *not Isaiah’s*: 11:10-16; 12:1-6; 13:1-14:23; 15:1-16:12; 21:1-10; 24-27; 34-35; 36-39; 40-66. That is to say, some forty-four chapters out of the whole number, sixty-six, were *not* written by Isaiah” (59).
3. The group Robinson designates as “the radical wing of the critical school” retains “the following only as the *genuine product of Isaiah and his age*: 1:2-26, 29-31; 2:6-19; 3:1, 5, 8, 9, 12-17, 24; 4:1; 5:1-14, 17-29; 6:1-13; 7:1-8:22; 9:8-1:9; 10:13, 14, 27-32; 14:24-32; 17:1-14; 18:1-6; 20:1-6; 22:1-22; 28:1-4, 7-22; 29:1-6, 9, 10, 13-15; 30:1-17; 31:1-4. That is, only about 262 verses out of the total 1292 are allowed to be genuine” (59-60). Thus, only roughly 20% was actually written by Isaiah, according to this critical school of thought.
4. Smith: “As we are seeking for objective evidence, we may neglect those wild hypotheses which some have indulged in, respecting an original work and its subsequent modifications: for since they originate in the denial of divine inspiration conjoined with reliance on a merely subjective appreciation of the several writings,

such hypotheses must be assigned to the region of fancy rather than of historic investigation.” (1150).

5. Smith went on to say, “The first writer who ever breathed a suspicion that Isaiah was not the author of the last twenty-seven chapters was Koppe, in remarks upon ch. 1 in his German translation of Lowth’s *Isaiah*, published in the years 1779-1781. This was presently after followed up by Doderlein, especially in his Latin translation and commentary in 1789; by Eichhorn, who in a later period most fully developed his views on this point in his *Hebraischen Phopheten*, \*\*\*1916-1819; and the most fully and effectively by Justi. The majority of the German critics have given in their adhesion to these views: as Paulus (1793), Bertholdt (1812), Ed Wette (1817), Gesenius (1820, 1821), Hitzig (1833), Knobel (1838), Umbreit and Ewald (1841)...The catalogue of authors who gainsay Isaiah’s authorship of this second part is, in point of numbers, of critical ability, and of profound Hebrew scholarship, sufficiently imposing. Nevertheless when we come to inquire into their grounds of objection, we soon cease to attach much value to this formidable array of authorities. The circumstance mainly urged by them is the unquestionable fact that the author has to a considerable view taken his standing-point at the close of the Babylonish Captivity as if that were his present, and from thence looks forward into the subsequent future...” (1160).
6. Further: “Their judgment in the critical question before us is determined, not by their scholarship, but avowedly by the prepossessions of their unbelief.” (*Ibid.*, 1161).
7. Jackson refers to the infidelic bias against the concept of predictive prophecy of the so-called “higher critics.” (Christian Courier, May, 1989).

#### C. The “Critical” Outline

1. First Isaiah 1-39 (mostly written by Isaiah, with added supplements)
2. Second Isaiah 40-54 (some unknown scribe in Babylon ca. 549-538 BC).
  - a. Young states, “This view was popularized in 1889 by George Adam Smith, whose lectures on Isaiah have passed through many editions and have exerted a tremendous influence throughout the English-speaking world.” (*Who Wrote Isaiah*, 19).
3. Third Isaiah 55-66 (unknown scribe. 5<sup>th</sup> century BC).
  - a. This view championed by Bernhard Duhm, professor of theology in Basel. Maintained the author of chapters 56-66 were written before the period of Nehemiah’s activity, probably in Jerusalem, by the “third” Isaiah (*Ibid.*).

#### D. Internal Evidence: Book of Isaiah

1. The denial of Isaiah’s authorship of chapters 40-66 is based upon the claim that the historical background reflects the time of the Babylonian captivity, and there are supposedly differences in linguistic style. These assertions are highly subjective and speculative. They will not stand the light of careful examination.
2. The nature of prophecy is that the prophet could describe a coming event as if it had already taken place while at the same time declaring that he is speaking of the future.
  - a. “To this vivid way of describing future events is due a feature of the Biblical style which is called the Prophetic Perfect.” (Allis, 29).
  - b. Isa. 9:1ff has a series of perfects. Cf. 28:2; 43:14; 46:1f.

- c. “The use of the Prophetic Perfect is very striking in certain of the Psalms” (*Ibid.*, 32). cf. Psalm 2.
3. Isa. 66:1-6 what is here said of the temple does not fit the period of exile.
4. The “reproaches not only on account of idolatry but also of the immolation of children, 57:1-13, and of enormous corruption of morals, 58:6-9; 59:1-8, are entirely at variance with the times of the captivity” (Horne, 4:167). It is well known that the Jews did not practice idolatry after the fall of Jerusalem!
5. The geographical language of the latter chapters does not fit Babylon. The idolaters were “slaying the children in the valleys, Under the clefts of the rocks” (57:5). This is descriptive of features of Palestine, not Babylon.
6. Further, the first part of the book foretold the captivity (6:11-13). The meaning of Shear-Jashub, Isaiah’s son, is, “a remnant shall return” (7:3).
7. It is argued that there is such a difference of style in the latter chapters from the earlier, that a “modern” author is demanded for those last twenty-seven chapters.
  - a. Consider: “On the contrary, the purity of the language, the sublimity of the style, and the elegance of the composition, are such as could not be expected from the leaden age of Hebrew literature; but show their origin to have been in the silver age. The difference of style in the two parts is not greater than the difference of Micah 1-5 from 6-7, and is less than that which may be observed in Hosea 1, 3 compared with 2, 4-14, or in Amos 1-6 compared with 7, 8, or in the different psalms of David.” (Horne, 171).
  - b. Further: “all the difference is, that the prophet, who in the first part was censuring wickedness, in the latter endeavours rather to teach and console, as the nature of the subject required: yet even here, he sometimes inveighs against different vices (56:9-57:12; 58:1-7; 59:1-8; 65:11-14.” (*Ibid.*, 172).
8. The expression “Holy One of Israel” is found thirty-two times in Scripture. Twelve occurrences are in Isaiah 1-39, and fourteen in chapters 40-66.
9. The prophecy of the “Highway” is found in the different sections of Isaiah (11:16; 19:23; 35:8; 40:3; 62:10).
10. Also, see Vine, [Appendix 2] for what he called “the details that bind together the two parts of the book.”

#### E. Historical and Archaeological Evidence.

1. **Josephus** attributes the prophecy of Cyrus’ decree for the return to his “reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies...” “This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished.” (*Antiquities* 11:1:2).
2. **Archaeological Evidence.** Consider the evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the “Isaiah Scroll” chapter 40 begins on the very last line of the column which contains 38:9-39:8. “Obviously the scribe was not conscious of the alleged fact that an important change of situation, involving an entire change of authorship begins with chapter 40.” (Allis, 40).

#### F. The New Testament and Isaiah

1. The New Testament provides a thorough refutation of the multi-authorship theory.

- a. In the New Testament there are more quotations from the book of Isaiah than all other prophets combined.
- b. “There are 308 quotations from or references to, Isaiah in the New Testament, and these involve forty-seven of the sixty-six chapters in the book. The prophet is cited by name twenty-two times, and each of the so-called independent segments is attributed to Isaiah.” (*Christian Courier*, May 04).

## 2. Testimony of Matthew

- a. Regarding the work of John the Immerser, Matthew records, “For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!’” (3:3). The quotation is from Isa 40:3, one of those sections not penned by Isaiah, according to the critics.
- b. In Matthew 8:17, the context is that of the numerous healing miracles one evening at Capernaum, when Isaiah is again quoted: “in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES, AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES.” This quotation is from Isaiah 53:4.
- c. A passage that sums up the manner in which Jesus went about His ministry is found in Matthew 12:17-21: “in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, might be fulfilled, saying, BEHOLD, MY SERVANT WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN; MY BELOVED IN WHOM MY SOUL is WELL-PLEASED; I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT UPON HIM, AND HE SHALL PROCLAIM JUSTICE TO THE GENTILES. HE WILL NOT QUARREL, NOR CRY OUT; NOR WILL ANYONE HEAR HIS VOICE IN THE STREETS. A BATTERED REED HE WILL NOT BREAK OFF, AND A SMOLDERING WICK HE WILL NOT PUT OUT, UNTIL HE LEADS JUSTICE TO VICTORY. AND IN HIS NAME THE GENTILES WILL HOPE.” This quotation is from Isa. 42:1-4.

## 3. Testimony of Mark

- a. Like Matthew, Mark (1:2-3) quotes from Isaiah 40:3 to show the divine mandate for John’s ministry. While the KJV and NKJV read “as it is written in the Prophets”, almost all others, following the NU, read “Isaiah the prophet.”
- b. Mark 7:6, 7 records Jesus’ use of Isaiah 29:13 to condemn the Pharisees’ hypocrisy and vain worship.

## 4. Testimony of Luke

- a. Luke also links John’s ministry to Isaiah’s prophecy: “as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet” (3:4), quoting Isaiah 40:3-5.
- b. Consider also Luke 4:17-21: “ And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written, THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE DOWNTRODDEN, TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD. And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” He is citing the text of Isa. 61:1-2.

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Apparently Luke was unaware of the theory that the prophet Isaiah did not pen this portion of the book.

- c. In Luke's second volume, the book of Acts, he relates the conversion of the Ethiopian nobleman. We are told that Queen Candace's treasurer was "reading Isaiah the prophet" (8:30). The text he was reading is Isaiah 53:7-8. Again, the critics would say that this passage was not authored by Isaiah.

#### 5. Testimony of John

- a. John the apostle quotes the words of John the Baptist, who made reply to those who queried, "What do you say about yourself?" "He said, I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,' as Isaiah the prophet said." (John 1:22-23). Again, that quotation is from Isa. 40:3.
- b. Later in John 12, John makes a "summary statement" about the ministry of Jesus, as to how people responded. In vv. 38-41 John specifically mentions Isaiah by name three times: "that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, 'LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED? For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES, AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART; LEST THEY SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED, AND I HEAL THEM. These things Isaiah said, because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.'" Note that the first quotation is from Isaiah 53:1. Then John says, "Isaiah said again" and next quoted from Isa 6:9-10, thus identifying Isaiah as the author of both passages

#### 6. Testimony of Paul

- a. To the Jews in Rome who were not persuaded as Paul solemnly testified of the kingdom of God (Acts 28:23-24), Paul said, "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, saying, GO TO THIS PEOPLE AND SAY, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES; LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.' Let it be known to you therefore, that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen." (Acts 28:25-28). The quotation is from Isa. 6:9-10.
- b. Consider the book of Romans. Romans 9:27: "Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel," regarding the "remnant" to be saved. This is from Isaiah 10:22-23. In the same remnant context, "And as Isaiah said before" (Rom. 10:29), quotes from Isa. 1:9.
- c. Then in Romans 10:16, "However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?" This is from Isa 53:1. Next is v. 20, "And Isaiah is very bold and says, I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO SOUGHT ME NOT, I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME." This quotes Isa. 65:1. Romans 10 concludes with one more quotation: "But as for Israel He says, ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE

STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE” (v. 21). This is from Isa. 65:1.

- d. Finally, in Romans 15:12 Paul quotes from Isa. 11:10 regarding the hope of the Gentiles in Christ, and attributes the prophecy to the prophet Isaiah. Clearly the apostle Paul did not think there were different authors to these passages, including those which are disputed by the critics as belonging to Isaiah.

7. **The Testimony of Jesus**

- a. In answering the disciples’ question as to why Jesus was speaking in parables, Jesus said, “Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM” (Matt. 13:13-16). This quotation is from Isa. 6:9-10.

III. **Themes**

- A. In large measure the themes contained in Isaiah are reflected in the subjects assigned in this conference.
  1. The Messiah and His kingdom.
  2. The Virgin Birth: God with us!
  3. God is the God of all the earth: the Judge of all the nations.
  4. He is incomparable: a contrast with the worthless, impotent idols.
  5. The “Servant Songs” will give fascinating detail about Jesus, His suffering and work.
- B. **Purpose of Book.**
  1. To detect, reprove, and condemn the sins of the Jewish people especially, and also the iniquities of the ten tribes of Israel, and the abominations of many Gentile nations and countries; denouncing the severest judgments against all sorts and degrees of persons, whether Jews or Gentiles.
  2. To invite persons of every rank and condition, both Jews and Gentiles, to repentance and reformation, by numerous promises of pardon and mercy.
  3. To comfort all the truly pious (in the midst of all the calamities and judgments denounced against the wicked) with prophetic promises of the true Messiah (Home, 174-175).
- C. **What we should look for.**
  1. Conditions of prophet’s time. How it was met. Isaiah emphasized the holiness and the righteousness of God.
  2. God’s judgment of the nations. Heathen nations round about.
  3. Establishment of the spiritual kingdom and kingdom never destroyed.
  4. Universal rule of Jehovah.

## D. Preparation for 2 things:

1. Return from captivity
2. Messiah
  - a. Names Cyrus as the one through whom God will bring them back from captivity.
  - b. The Servant through whom He will redeem them spiritually.
    - 1) Sometimes the two will blend together.
    - 2) When seeking to understand a difficult passage, look for something in NT that serves as an anchor.

## E. Emphasis on Messianic Theme.

1. 7:14: The virgin birth; Immanuel
2. 9:6-7: For unto us a Child is born...
3. 11:6-11: The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb.
4. 40:3: Work of John
5. 42:1-4: The way Jesus went about His ministry
6. 49:8-9: More on Jesus' ministry.
7. 53:1-12: Jesus' suffering and death; what would be accomplished.
8. 61:1-2: The Anointed of the Lord.

## F. Captivity

1. Caused by wickedness of God's people.
2. Will deal with Assyria, and God's use thereof.
3. But captivity will be Babylonian, not Assyrian (39:6ff).

## G. Promise of a remnant (1:9; 10:20-22; 11:11, 16; 37:31, 32).

## H. Wait for Jehovah (8:17; 30:18; 40:31; 49:23).

I. **Holy One of Israel** (1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19; 30:11, 12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14; 45:11; 47:4; 48:18; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; 60:9, 14).J. **Summary of sins** of Judah discussed in Isaiah:

1. Idolatry (2:5-8; 8:19; 65:3, 4, 11)
2. Immorality (1:15; 3:9-11; 5:8, 11, 18-23; 10:1-2)
3. Bloodshed and injustice (59:1-15)
4. Ritualism, outward and empty ceremonial form (1:11-15; 66:1-3)
5. Vanity (3:16-24; 5:11-12).

IV. **Structure of the Book**

## A. Two Divisions

1. ASSYRIAN PERIOD: CONFLICT AND VICTORY (1-39)
  - a. Discourses and Prophecies Centering in Jerusalem and Judah (1-12).

- b. Oracles of Judgment Against Individual Nations (13-23)
- c. World Judgment and Deliverance of God's People (24-27)
- d. Jerusalem-Zion: Warnings and Promises (28-35)
- e. Historical Link (36-39)
- 2. HOPE FOR TROUBLED TIMES (40-46)
  - a. Introduction (40)
  - b. Contest Between Jehovah and the Idols (41-48)
  - c. The Servant and the Glory of Zion (49-57)
  - d. National Sins, Redemption by Jehovah, and Future Glory (58-66)

#### B. 1 Overview of Isaiah

- 1. Judgments from God (1-35)
- 2. Historical Interlude (36-39)
- 3. Comfort from Jehovah (40-66)

#### C. Chapter groupings.

- 1. Chapters 1-12 deal with prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
- 2. Chapters 13-27 contain God's judgments upon the nations.
- 3. Chapters 28-35 deal with warnings, woes and promises to Jerusalem.
- 4. Chapters 36-39 are an historical link.
- 5. Chapters 40-66 give hope for troubled times.
  - a. Chapter 40 introduces this section with words of comfort. Focus is placed on the incomparable greatness of Jehovah.
- 6. Chapters 41-48 set forth a contrast between the true God and the idols. Also these chapters deal with deliverance from Babylonian captivity by God's shepherd, Cyrus.
- 7. Chapters 49-57 contain the "Servant Songs." God's Suffering Servant, and what He would accomplish.
- 8. Chapters 58-66 deal with national sins, redemption by Jehovah, and the glory of the Messianic age.

#### D. Further Discussion:

- 1. **Chapters 1-12 deal with prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem.** The almost utter destruction of the Hebrew people, with yet a purified remnant. Condemnation of their idolatry; lack of inward godliness, and other corruptions. Grievous threatenings to the impenitent and gracious promises of better times.
  - a. Chapter 2, the kingdom of the Messiah & admission of the Gentiles.
  - b. Chapter 7 begins with an historical account of the occasion of the prophecy.
  - c. Some years elapse between chs. 6 and 7 and the political scenery has greatly altered. The Assyrian power of Nineveh now threatens the Hebrew nation. Tiglath-pileser invaded Israel.

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- 1) Smith: “After the Assyrian army was withdrawn, the Syrian kingdom of Damascus rises into notice; its monarch Rezin combines with the now weakened king of Israel...Ahaz keeps aloof, and becomes the object of attack to the allies; he has been already twice defeated (2 Chron. 28:5, 6); and now the allies are threatening him with a combined invasion. The news that ‘Aram is encamped in Ephraim’ (Isa.7:2) fills both king and people with consternation...” (1152-1153).
  - d. Smith: “As the Assyrian empire began more and more to threaten the Hebrew commonwealth with utter overthrow, it is now that the prediction of the Messiah, the Restorer of Israel, becomes more positive and clear.” (1153) cf. Mic. 5:23.
  - e. 9:8-10:4 “has no relation to the preceding or to the following prophecy, but is exclusively addressed to the kingdom of Israel” (Horne, 177).
  - f. 10:5ff. Foretells the invasion of Sennacherib and the destruction of his army.
  - g. Chapter 11 is Messianic, as we see from a “this is that” text in Romans 15:12.
2. **Chapters 13-27 contain God’s judgments upon the nations.**
- a. God is the God of all the world. All are accountable before Him. These chapters set forth the sins of the nations and their punishment.
  - b. 13-14:23 foretell the destruction of Babylon by the Medes (21:1-10).
  - c. Each of these utterances is styled a “burden.” Date of Philistia prophecy is given as the year that King Ahaz died (715 BC) (14:28). Fulfillment: 2 Kgs. 18:8.
  - d. Regarding the burden of Moab, chs. 15-16, cf. Num. 21:27-30.
  - e. Chapters 19-20 are a prophecy against Egypt. Contains Messianic promise (19:18-25).
  - f. Smith: “In the midst of these ‘burdens’ stands a passage [ch.20] which presents Isaiah in a new aspect, an aspect in which he appears in this instance only. It was not uncommon both in the O.T. and in the New (comp. Acts 21:11) for a prophet to add to his spoken word an action symbolizing its import...Isaiah was commanded to appear in the streets and temple of Jerusalem stripped of his sackcloth mantle, and wearing his vest only with his feet also bare. ‘Thus shall Egyptians and Ethiopians walk, captives before the king of Assyria.’ For three years was he directed (from time to time we may suppose) thus to show himself in public view, to make the lesson the more impressive by constant repetition.” (1155).
  - g. In the “burden of the valley of vision” (22:1-14) it is Jerusalem that is intended. Smith: “... in the hostile army are named Elam and Kir, nations which no doubt contributed troops both to the Ninevite and to the Babylonian armies. The latter is probably here contemplated.” (1156).
  - h. The text of 22:15-25 is unique in Isaiah as prophesying against an individual, Shebna.
  - i. The cause specified for the judgment upon Tyre is her pride (23). Smith: “But this was not the only ground. The contagion of her idolatry reached Jerusalem (1 Kgs. 11:5, 23; 2 Kgs. 11:18; 23:13).” (1156). The chapter ends on apparently a Messianic note (v. 18).
  - j. Note the number “seventy” in vv. 15 and 17.
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- k. Smith: “The next four chapters, 24-27, form one prophecy essentially connected with the preceding ‘burdens’ (13-23), of which it is in effect a general summary; it presents previous denunciations in one general denunciation which includes the theocratic people itself, and therewith also the promise of blessings, especially Messianic blessings, for the remnant. It no longer particularizes (Moab, 25:10, represents all enemies of God’s people, as Edom does in 63:1), but speaks of judgments upon lands, cities, and oppressors in general terms, the reference of which is to be gathered from what goes before” (1156).
  - l. In 27:1, “Leviathan the fleeing serpent and Leviathan the twisting serpent , and the dragon in the sea,” are perhaps Nineveh and Babylon -- two phases of the same Asshur -- and Egypt (comp. v. 13); all, however, symbolizing adverse powers of evil (1156). In vv. 12-13 the return from captivity is anticipated.
  - m. These chapters frequently use paronomasia.
3. **Chapters 28-35 deal with warnings, woes and promises to Jerusalem.** Rebukes and promises regarding Israel’s future.
- a. 28:1-6 is predictive of Shalmaneser’s invasion of Israel. But then the people of Judah are addressed, (vv. 7ff). The priests and prophets were described as drunkards, who err in vision and stumble in judgment. They scoffed at Isaiah’s teaching, mocking his words (v. 13). Verse 16 is applied to Jesus numerous times in the NT.
  - b. 29, the danger posed to Jerusalem.
  - c. 30:1-2, the policy of courting the help of Egypt against Assyria.
  - d. The name of the Lord coming near (v. 27f).
  - e. In chapter 34, though reference is made to Edom (vv. 5, 6), “we are however led, both by the placing of the prophecy and by 63:3 to take it in a general sense as well as typical.” (Smith, 1157).
  - f. Horne: “But it has not been disproved that Isaiah is speaking of another calamity, to be inflicted in Idumaea by the Assyrians, of which Amos, 1:11-15, had spoken before him.” (170).
  - g. Chapter 35: Messianic fulfillment.
4. **Chapters 36-39 are an historical link.**
- a. Smith: “Chs. 38, 39 chronologically precede the two previous ones; but there seems to be a two-fold purpose in this arrangement; one ethical, to illustrate God’s discipline exercised over his most favored servants, and the other literary, to introduce by the prediction of the Babylonian Captivity the second part of the book. As the two preceding chapters look back upon the prediction of the first part, and therefore stand even before 38, so 39 looks forward to the subsequent prophesyings, and is therefore placed immediately before them.” (1158).
  - b. Chapter 36, the invasion of Sennacherib; miraculous destruction of his army.
5. **Chapters 40-66 give hope for troubled times.**
- a. “This portion of Isaiah’s predictions constitutes the most elegant part of the sacred writings of the OT.” (Horne, 181). “The proclamation of the Messiah is the inexhaustible source of consolation among the prophets.” (Mc & Str., 4:677).
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- b. In this section Isaiah generally appears as the “tender and compassionate comforter of the pious and afflicted; whereas before he appears rather as accuser and denouncer.” (Smith, 1159). This last section is composed of three parts, the first and second ending with the refrain, “There is no peace, saith Jehovah, (or “my God”) to the wicked; and the third concludes with the same thought.
  - c. Chapter 40 introduces this section with words of comfort. Focus is placed on the incomparable greatness of Jehovah.
  - d. **Chapters 41-48 set forth a contrast between the true God and the idols.** Also these chapters deal with deliverance from Babylonian captivity by God’s shepherd, Cyrus.
    - 1) Chapter 42: Coming and work of the Messiah.
    - 2) Chapter 44: The power of foretelling the future is insisted upon as the test of deity.
    - 3) Chapter 48: Jews rebuked for their unfaithfulness; deliverance foretold (v. 20).
  - e. **Chapters 49-57 contain the “Servant Songs.”** God’s Suffering Servant, and what He would accomplish.
    - 1) Chapter 55: an invitation to partake of the blessings of the Gospel.
  - f. **Chapters 58-66 Deal with national sins, redemption by Jehovah, and the glory of the Messianic age.**
    - 1) Jehovah’s servant “no longer appears as suffering, but only as saving and avenging Zion. The section is mainly occupied with various practical exhortations founded upon the views of the future already set forth.” (Smith, 1160).
    - 2) Chapter 58: What God wanted in fasting was not for a man to bow down his head like a reed, but rather to loose the bonds of wickedness.
    - 3) Chapter 59 identifies Judah’s problem as sin, and the consequence as that of being separated from God. “Your hands are defiled with blood.” The chapter makes confession of national sin, and contains the promise of the Redeemer who would come to Zion.
  - g. **Chapters 60-66 describe the new, glorified Zion.**
    - 1) Chapter 60: They shall call you The City of the Lord.
    - 2) Chapter 61: The voice of the Messiah is heard, telling of his work: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor...”
    - 3) Chapter 62: To be called by a new name: Hephzibah, and Beulah.
    - 4) Chapter 63: Jehovah will preserve Zion in the midst of the nations. Also mention is made of the “Angel of His Presence.”
    - 5) Chapter 64: “We are like an unclean thing, our righteousnesses are like filthy rags...but a cry for mercy: Do not be furious, O Lord, Nor remember iniquity forever; Indeed, please look -- we all are Your people!”
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- 6) Chapter 65: Verses here quoted by Paul: 65:1 in Rom. 10:20; 65:2 in Rom. 10:21. Attitude of some “For I am holier than you!” v. 5; promise of the new order of things v. 17 (also cf. 66:22)
- 7) Chapter 66: God looks for those who have a contrite spirit, and who tremble at His word. A promise of blessings, but also of judgment: “For behold, the Lord will come with fire And with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire” (v. 15).

### Conclusion:

- I. Truly, “These things Isaiah said, because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.”
- II. Today we have the hope of all the ages!
- III. 2 Pet. 1:10-12: “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.”
- IV. May God richly bless us as we carefully and reverently study this great book of His servant Isaiah.

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## 1Appendix A

Isaiah	1:1:	the vision...which he saw
	1:2:	for the Lord hath spoken
	1:10:	hear the word of the Lord give ear unto the law of our God
	1:18:	saith the Lord
	1:20:	for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken
	1:24:	therefore, thus saith the Lord
	2:1:	the word which.. . he saw
	2:15:	saith the Lord
	2:16:	moreover the Lord said
	5:24:	rejected the law of the Lord of hosts despised the word of the Holy One of Israel
	6:1ff:	the entire chapter contains words spoken by God to the prophet
	7:3:	the Lord said to Isaiah
	7:7:	thus saith the Lord
	7:10:	and the Lord spake again
	8:1:	and the Lord said unto me
	8:3:	and the Lord spake unto me
	8:11:	for the Lord spake unto me with a strong hand
	9:8:	the Lord sent a word
	10:24:	thus saith the Lord
	13:1:	the burden . . . which Isaiah . . . saw
	14:22:	saith the Lord of hosts

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14:24: the Lord hath sworn, saying  
14:27: Lord hath purposed  
14:28: was this burden  
15:1: burden of Moab  
16:13: this is the word that the Lord hath spoken  
17:1: burden of Damascus  
18:4: thus hath the Lord said unto me  
19:1: burden of Egypt  
19:17: purpose of the Lord  
20:2: at that time the Lord spake  
20:3: and the Lord said  
21:1: burden of wilderness of sea  
21:10: that which I have heard from the Lord  
21:11: burden of Dumah  
21:13: burden upon Arabia  
21:17: for the Lord hath spoken  
22:1: burden of valley of Vision  
22:12: the Lord did call  
22:14: revealed Himself in my ears  
22:15: said the Lord  
22:25: saith the Lord of hosts  
23:1: burden of Tyre  
23:11: the Lord hath given commandment concerning Canaan  
24:3: the Lord hath spoken this word  
25:8: the Lord hath spoken it  
28:13: shall the word of the Lord be unto them  
28:16: thus saith the Lord  
28:22: have I heard from the Lord  
28:26: his God doth instruct him  
28:29: cometh from the Lord  
29:10: Lord hath closed your eyes  
29:13: and the Lord said  
29:22: saith the Lord  
30:1: saith the Lord  
30:2: asked at my mouth  
30:6: burden of the beasts of the south  
30:8: go! write  
30:12: thus saith the Holy One  
30:15: thus saith the Lord God  
31:4: saith the Lord to me  
36:10: the Lord said unto me  
37:6: thus saith the Lord  
37:21: thus saith the Lord  
37:22: this is the word which the Lord hath spoken  
37:33: therefore thus saith the Lord  
38:4: then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah  
38:5: thus saith the Lord  
39:8: good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken  
40:1: saith your God  
40:5: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it  
40:25: saith the Holy One  
41:13: saying unto thee  
42:5: thus saith God the Lord  
43:1: thus saith the Lord  
43:10: saith the Lord  
43:14: saith the Lord

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43:16: thus saith the Lord  
 44:2: thus saith the Lord  
 44:6: thus saith the Lord  
 44:24: thus saith the Lord  
 44:26: confirmeth the word of his servant  
 44:27: that saith  
 44:28: that saith of Cyrus  
 45:1: thus saith the Lord  
 45:11: thus saith the Lord  
 45:13: saith the Lord of hosts  
 45:14: thus saith the Lord  
 45:18: for thus saith the Lord  
 48:17: thus saith the Lord  
 48:22: saith the Lord  
 49:1: the Lord hath called me  
 49:3: and he said to me  
 49:5: saith the Lord  
 49:6: he saith  
 49:7: thus saith the Lord  
 49:8: thus saith the Lord  
 49:18: saith the Lord  
 49:22: thus saith the Lord  
 49:25: thus saith the Lord  
 50:1: thus saith the Lord  
 50:5: hath opened my ear  
 51:22: thus saith thy Lord and thy God  
 52:3: for thus saith the Lord  
 52:4: for thus saith the Lord  
 52:5: saith the Lord  
 54:17: saith the Lord  
 56:1: thus saith the Lord  
 56:4: for thus saith the Lord  
 57:15: for thus saith the high and lofty one  
 57:19: saith the Lord  
 57:21: saith my God  
 58:14: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it  
 59:20: saith the Lord  
 59:21: saith the Lord  
 my words which I have put in thy mouth  
 61:1: anointed me to preach good tidings  
 63:8: for he said  
 65:8: thus saith the Lord  
 65:13: thus saith the Lord  
 66:1: thus saith the Lord  
 66:5: hear the word of the Lord  
 66:9: saith the Lord  
 66:12: for thus saith the Lord  
 66:20: saith the Lord  
 66:21: saith the Lord  
 66:22: saith the Lord

## Appendix 2

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APPENDIX

Some of the details that bind together the two parts of the book:

1. God's abhorrence of mere formal worship, 1: 11, 13, and 66: 3.
2. The Lord's Throne in the high and holy place, 6: 1, and 57: 15; 66: 1.
3. His regard for the lowly soul, 6: 5-7, and 57: 15; 66: 2.
4. His House and Mountain as a resort, 2: 2, 3, and 56: 7; 60: 12 -14.
5. His making every high thing low, 2: 11, 17; 5: 15, 16, and 40: 4.
6. His overruling of human pride and violence, 10: 5, 7; 37: 26, and 47: 6; 54: 16, 17.
7. The chastisement of rebellious Israel, 1: 2, 5; 31: 1, 2, and 63: 8, 10.
8. The sickness and healing of the nation, 1: 5, 6; 6: 10, and 57:18, 19.
9. People and land forsaken, 6: 12; 17: 9; 27: 10; 32: 14, and 49: 14; 54: 6, 7; 62: 4, 12.
10. Judicial deafness and blindness, 6: 10; 29: 18; 32: 3; 35: 5, and 42: 7, 18.
11. A remnant saved, 1:27 (marg.); 4:2,3; 10: 20, 22; 37: 31, 32, and 59: 20; 65: 8, 9.
12. A sign or covenant concerning the sure mercies of David, 7: 14; 9: 6, 7, and 55: 3, 4.
13. The Spirit of the Lord resting upon Messiah, 11: 2, and 61: 1.
14. Israel fruitful by the Spirit of God, 32: 15, and 44: 3, 4.
15. Waiting for God, who has hidden His face, 8: 17, and 64: 4, 7.
16. The setting up of a standard, 5: 26; 11: 10, 12; 18: 3, and 49: 22; 62: 10.

### Appendix 3

#### 1 Chapter Content

1. Rebellion of God's people; God's appeal to them.
2. The mountain of the Lord's house; return to present reality.
3. Judgment on the Leaders of Judah.
4. The Branch of the Lord; a remnant prepared.
5. Parable of the vineyard; Woes for the wicked.
6. Isaiah's vision of the holy God; his mission as prophet.
7. The Syro-Ephraimitic Uprising; the Immanuel prophecy.
8. Isaiah's son; Confidence in God.
9. Birth and reign of the Messiah; Punishment of Samaria.
10. Assyria, God's chastening rod; Return of the remnant.
11. The King, His subjects, and the remnant.
12. A hymn of thanksgiving.
13. Judgment against Babylon
14. A taunting song of triumph over Babylon (also, fall of Assyria, Philistia)
15. Judgment against Moab
16. Moab's destruction, continued.
17. Judgment against Syria.
18. Judgment against Ethiopia.
19. Judgment against Egypt.
20. The Sign against Egypt and Ethiopia.
21. Judgment against Babylon, Edom and Arabia.
22. The Valley of Vision—Jerusalem as one of the nations.
23. Judgment against Tyre.
24. Judgment on the Earth.
25. Hymn of Praise and Thanksgiving to God for Divine Mercy
26. Song of Trust in God's Protection.
27. Deliverance/restoration of Israel.
28. Ephraim's captivity predicted; Jerusalem is warned.
29. Woe to Ariel, to those who seek to hide their counsel from God.
30. Reliance on Egypt is worthless.
31. Help is not in Egypt but in the Lord.
32. Reign of the Righteous King.
33. The judgment of God; a prayer in deep distress.
34. Judgment upon the Nations.
35. The future glory of Zion; the Highway of Holiness.

36. Sennacherib's threat to Jerusalem.
37. God's answer to Hezekiah.
38. Hezekiah's sickness and recovery.
39. Babylonian captivity foretold.
40. The Incomparable Greatness of Jehovah.
41. Israel encouraged; the futility of idols.
42. The Servant of the Lord.
43. Encouragement and consolation.
44. God's blessings on Israel.
45. Prophecy of Cyrus, God's instrument.
46. Babylon's idols and the True God.
47. The humiliation of Babylon .
48. Israel's Obstinacy.
49. The Light to the Gentiles.
50. The Servant as a Suffering Prophet
51. Exhortation/encouragement to Israel.
52. Your God reigns.
53. Vicarious suffering of God's Servant.
54. My covenant of peace.
55. The Great Invitation--Free mercy for all.
56. Salvation for the Gentiles; rebuke of blind watchmen.
57. Wickedness and idolatry rebuked.
58. Fasting that pleases God; keeping the Sabbath.
59. Sin: separation from God.
60. Glorified Zion
61. Exaltation of the afflicted; good news of salvation.
62. Called by a new name.
63. God's Vengeance on the nations.
64. Prayer for mercy and help.
65. The righteousness of God's judgment; New heavens and a new earth.
66. True and false worship; Glorious future.

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