



The Bible Challenge

A daily guide to reading the Bible in a year

Isaiah

Chapters 1-12

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.

--Isaiah 1:1

Intro: The Prophet of the King

Isaiah the Prophet served as a prophet during the reigns of four kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. His main service was to THE king, The LORD God of Hosts. The Prophet's role is to serve the Lord of Hosts by challenging/ inspiring/ judging the kings of the House of Judah.

The purpose of the book centers around the vision of God for Judah and Israel and the world. The ideal is that the reign of God on Earth would begin with Israel and draw

the nations of the world into the Kingdom's blessing. The ultimate vision and earthly reality are two different things. Isaiah holds out the hope of the ideal of Kingdom expansion under the reign of the God of Hosts, while sternly pronouncing judgment on the present sinful state of affairs.

Kings of Judah	Years of Reign
Uzziah	767-740 b.c.
Jotham	750-735
Ahaz	735-715
Hezekiah	715-686

Structure of Isaiah ³⁴	1-66
The Book of the King	1-37
The Book of the Servant	38-55
The Book of the Anointed Conqueror	56-66

The dramatic announcement of the Book of Isaiah is that The LORD God of Hosts will bear his arm as a paradoxical suffering servant and an anointed conqueror. The general literary shape of the book of Isaiah bears this out.

³⁴ J Alec Motyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and a Commentary



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*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government
shall be upon his
shoulder, and his name
shall be called*

*Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace.*

*Of the increase of his
government and of
peace there will be no
end, on the throne of
David and over his
kingdom, to establish it
and to uphold it with
justice and with
righteousness from this
time forth and
forevermore.*

*The zeal of the LORD of
hosts will do this.*

--Isaiah 9:6-7

The Book of the King (1-37)

The unifying theme of the first 37 chapters of Isaiah is "the King". Overall the Lord God of Hosts is King (6:1,5). The reign of God is primary; he will establish his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. The present concern is the earthly king reigning over Judah (7:1-2); he has chosen to establish the kingdoms of this world over the kingdom of God. Isaiah holds out hope of a messianic future king who is yet to come (9:6-7); he will establish the reign of God.

The Book of the King	Isaiah 1-37
Preface: Judah Diagnosis and Prognosis	1:1-5:30
The Triumph of Grace	6:1-12:6
The Universal Kingdom	13:1-27:13
The Lord of History	28:1-35:10
The Rock of History	36:1-37:38

The Preface: Judah Diagnosis and Prognosis (1-5)

The opening chapters of the Book set the tension between the realities on the ground in Israel in comparison with the ideal of God's reign on earth. In chapter one, the Lord laments over the sorry state of affairs in nation of Israel. Though the Lord treated them like favored children they have rebelled against the Lord and his goodness.

*"Children have I reared and brought up,
but they have rebelled against me...*

*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 estranged." --Isa. 1:2-4*



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It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

--Isaiah 2:2-3

The people of Israel have themselves become as corrupt as the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (1:9-10; cf. Gen. 18:20-19:29). Their corruption requires immediate repentance and amendment of life. (1:16-17) With repentance comes restoration; the Lord desires to forgive Israel and renew them. (1:18-19) However, if they refuse to listen, judgment will surely follow (1:20)

Unfaithful City vs. Ideal City: Jerusalem Revealed (1:21-2:5)

The Lord has a tremendous vision for Jerusalem and the role of the people of God for the world. However, the people have become unfaithful to the call and vocation of their heavenly King. (1:21-23) Therefore the Lord will refine his city through judgment; he will purge it of unrighteousness and evil so that it can again become the city of God. (1:24-31)

The dream of God is for Jerusalem to rise to prominence among the kingdoms of this world so that all of the peoples and nations will look to the House of the Lord and the Kingdom of God for instruction and teaching. The way of the Lord will bring unity and peace on earth.

The exhortation to Judah is to be the faithful people that will realize this dream of the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

*O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk
in the light of the LORD. --Isaiah 2:5*

The Day of the Lord (2:6-3:26)

Sadly, in Judah has become a reflection of the nations around them rather than a light to the nations which reflects the kingdom of God. Therefore the Lord pronounces a coming day of judgment and refining for Jerusalem.

In human pride, the Lord's sovereignty and might have been ignored by not only Israel but all people. Mankind has presumed upon the grace and mercy of the Lord. But on that Day the Lord will judge not only Israel but all the peoples of the world for their haughtiness and pride in rejecting the sovereign reign of God.



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The judgment will begin with Jerusalem and Judah and its wicked leaders. Their pride, violence, oppression of the poor will be brought to an end. The sign of this will be in the shame of the women and warriors of Israel. Beauty will be turned into disgrace (3:16-24), mighty men will fall by the sword (3:25).

But, the Lord will preserve and restore his remnant.

The Righteous Remnant (4-5)

Following the judgment, restoration comes. The Lord will preserve a righteous remnant, called "the branch of the Lord":

And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning. Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy.

--Isaiah 4:3-5

*For the vineyard of the
LORD of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah
are his pleasant
planting;
and he looked for
justice, but behold,
bloodshed;
for righteousness,
but behold, an outcry!*

--Isaiah 5:7

So, the preface of the Book of Isaiah moves back and forth from judgment of the present corrupt regime in Israel, to the hope of a glorious future for the righteous remnant. The preface concludes with a parable of judgment in chapter 5.

Israel is described as a beloved vineyard of the Lord which was carefully stewarded by the Lord. He looked for good fruit but found sour "wild grapes". (5:2) The inhabitants of the vineyard have failed to fulfill the Lord's vision for the vineyard.

Isaiah pronounces a series of six prophetic "Woe" oracles on the House of Judah for their pride and corruption. The light of God pronounced in 2:5 and 4:3-5 is for the time being darkened by the thick clouds of Divine Judgment.



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The Triumph of Grace (6-12)

The preface ends with the light of the Lord obscured by the clouds of divine justice. In chapters six through twelve, a ray of hope shines through the prophetic oracles of Isaiah. The ray of hope is in a messianic future king who will establish an everlasting kingdom through a righteous remnant of Israel.

Isaiah's Call: Holy Severity and Divine Grace (6)

Isaiah is given a unique vocation to be the prophet of the Divine Messiah King. Who among men is worthy for such a task? Not even Isaiah!

In a glorious vision he is brought into the heavenly throne room of the LORD of Hosts. He is "undone" by the Holiness of God and the overwhelming awareness of his own sin and defilement.

Yet God in his mercy, purges the lips of Isaiah to be his divine mouthpiece. Isaiah would be the one to bring a message from the King. God will judge the current corrupt regimes. Like a mighty tree, they will be felled in their haughtiness. However, there is hope to be found in the preservation of a righteous remnant: The Holy seed, the Stump. (6:13)

King Ahaz's Unholy Alliance with the King of Assyria (7:1-12:6)

Verses 7:1 -10:4, reveal the heart of the problem with the current rulers of Judah. In the face of the unholy Syrian-Israelite alliance, King Ahaz of Judah has forsaken the offer of the Lord for help, instead he has sought the support of a foreign empire--the King of Assyria.

In spite of the rebellion of Ahaz, God remains "with his people". A sign is given of a child named "Immanuel" which means God with us. (7:14) This sign will be manifest in Ahaz day, but this oracle will find its ultimate fulfillment in the birth of Jesus Christ. (Matt. 1:23, Luke 1:31, 34). Though God will use these foreign rulers as instruments of judgment over the House of Israel and Judah, Isaiah holds out hope in the birth of the Messiah king. (Isa. 9:1-7)

The King of Assyria's reign of terror will not stand. (10:5-19) God will preserve his righteous remnant (10:20-12:6).

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government
shall be upon his
shoulder,
and his name shall be
called
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.
--Isaiah 9:6*