

## The Book of Isaiah

### The Title, Author, and Date of Isaiah

- Title: Isaiah
  - Hebrew — ישעיה = “The Lord is Salvation” – similar to Joshua, Elisha
  - Greek — HsaiaV
- Author: Isaiah
  - Prophet of YHWH during the reigns of four Kings. 740-680 B.C. 1.1
    - Prophesied primarily to Judah. 6.9-13
    - Contemporary of Hosea and Micah
    - Died sometime after 681 B.C. under King Manasseh. cf. *He 11.37*
    - Writing style: No rival: “versatility of expression, brilliance of imagery, richness of vocabulary.”
  - Married. From an important family, socially. Two sons.
- Date: c. 681 B.C.
- Note: Quoted directly over 65x in the NT. Mentioned by name over 20x in the NT.

### The Background and Setting of Isaiah.

- Uzziah – 790-739 – Judah strengthened commercially, militarily, weakening spiritually. n.b. *2 Ch 26.16-21*
- Jotham – 750-731 – Assyria rising to power, trouble with Syria and Israel (*2 Ki 15.37*). No spiritual recovery.
- Ahaz – 735-715 – Allied with Assyria to fight northern threat (thus helping Assyria defeat Israel!). By doing this, he introduced heathen religions. cp. *2 Ki 16.10-16; 2 Ch 28.3*
- Hezekiah – 715-686 – *Began* reformation (*2 Ki 18.4, 22; 2 Ch 30.1*). Dealt with threat of Assyria by paying tribute. Eventually rejected Assyria and God protected them.
- Alive during the Assyrian exile 722 B.C.

### The Purpose and Message of Isaiah

- The purpose of the book of Isaiah is to **focus the people on YHWH’s *chesed*** (loyal love)—focusing on His promises, holiness, faithfulness, and purposes for His people—so they will reject sin and idolatry, and wholly trust in *their* God and His covenant promises for their blessing . . . and will love and obey Him.
- The message of the book of Isaiah is **salvation**
  - Show YHWH’s people that *His wrath* brings *judgment*, while *His grace* gives *salvation*.
  - YHWH *looks* to bless His people, but He will not tolerate sin. So, repent and follow Him!
- Some key verses: *1.18-20; 2.2-4; 2.11, 22; 5.3; chapter 6; 6.8-13; 7.14; 8.11-13; 9.6-7; chapter 14; 8.11-12*
- Some central chapters: *chapters 1-2; 6 Call as Prophet; 7 Prophecy of Virgin Birth; 9 Names of Christ; 11 Peace among animals in Kingdom; 14 Five “I will”s of Satan; 28 Tongues; 35 Productive Earth in Millennium; 45 Cyrus; 53 Suffering Messiah; 65 Millennium*
- Verses fulfilled in Messiah’s First Advent: *7.14; 8.14-15; 8.17, 18; 9.1-2; 6a; 11.1; 12.3; 25.8; 28.11, 16; 29.18+35.5; 40.3-5; 42.1-3, 6; 42.7; 50.6, 7; 53.1, 4; 7-9; 11; 54.13; 55.3; 61.1-2a; 62.11*

### The Structure of Isaiah

- Wrath and Judgment of God - *1.1-35.10*
- Historical Narrative Interlude - *36.1-39.8*
- Salvation of God: Restoration and Blessing - *40.1-66.24*

### The Themes of Isaiah

- Messiah - Isaiah writes more about Messiah than any other writer.
- The Abrahamic Covenant - Shows YHWH’s *faithfulness* to His covenant nation. *chs. 39-66*
- Day of the Lord – Isaiah writes more about the Day of the Lord than any other writer.
- Israel as a nation set apart for God; Warnings against Idolatry and Apostasy - *1.10-15; 40.18-20*
- Prophecy
  - Literal fulfillment-in his day- of prophecies Isaiah preached, established the veracity and calling of Isaiah, and gave assurance of further future prophecies being fulfilled. e.g. *7.14*
  - Prophecy contemporaneous to Isaiah’s day. *37.6-7, 36-38; 38.5; 44.28; 45.1*
  - Future prophecies concerning Messiah and Abrahamic Covenant – *7.14; 9.6-7; 53*

d. “Prophetic foreshortening” – Telescoping of near and far. 7.14

### **Interpretive Issue – Has God replaced Israel? i.e., Is the church the “New Israel”?**

1. John MacArthur: “Isaiah has too much to say about God’s faithfulness to Israel, that He would not reject the people whom He has created and chosen (43:1).” *MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 935
2. n.b. 49.16; 55.10-12

### **The Position of Isaiah in the Canon**

1. Structure of the OT Prophets
  - a. Hebrew Bible - Total of 24 books in 3 sections
    - 1) The Law (*Torah*) – Genesis-Deuteronomy
    - 2) The Prophets (*Nebiim*)
      - a) Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings
      - b) Latter Prophets:
        - (1) Major – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel.
        - (2) Minor (all one book) – Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
    - 3) The Writings (*Kethubim*)
      - a) *The Book of Truth* – Psalms, Job, Proverbs
      - b) *The Megilloth* – Ruth, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther
      - c) Daniel, Ezra & Nehemiah (one book), Chronicles (both).
  - b. Greek and English Bible - Total of 39 books in 4 sections
    - 1) Law
    - 2) History
    - 3) Poetry
    - 4) Prophecy (Prophets)
      - a) Major Prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
      - b) Minor Prophets – Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
2. Organization of the prophetic books
  - a. Pre-Babylonian Exile (before 605 B.C.)
    - 1) Major Prophets – Isaiah, Portions of Jeremiah
    - 2) Minor Prophets – Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah
  - b. During Babylonian Exile (605–539 B.C.)
    - 1) Major Prophets – Portions of Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Most of Daniel
    - 2) Minor Prophets – None
  - c. Post-Exile (after 539 B.C.)
    - 1) Major Prophets – Daniel 6
    - 2) Minor Prophets – Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
  - d. n.b. Not all of God’s prophets left a written canonical record. e.g. Elijah, Elisha, etc.
3. Purpose of the Prophets
  - a. Their primary purpose was to guide and keep God’s people on track. cp. *1 Ti 4.2; 2 Ti 3.16-17*
  - b. Specifically
    - 1) Reprove and rebuke God’s people for sin and apostasy. i.e. Expose sin,
    - 2) Call God’s people to repentance and return to God – to live holy and blessed lives.
    - 3) Give God’s people hope of fulfillment of God’s covenant – to encourage and comfort them.
    - 4) Reveal the coming of God’s judgment and kingdom (Day of the Lord).