

Isaiah

- Thematic comments
 - God alone will be exalted.
 - Isaiah is the core book to understand if you want to understand the New Testament. Depending on where you look it is quoted or alluded to something like 420 times in the NT and is the most referenced OT book. Further it provides the entire framework for what is happening in Jesus ministry and the church.
 - This is the first prophetic book we are looking at together and it brings up a core issue in understanding the Bible as a whole- the idea of literal vs. figurative interpretation. Now I think from the outset those terms are very unhelpful- the reason is because all of us, every day, use language in a huge variety of ways and even within a single sentence we speak both figuratively and literally. **The real issue is trying to understand what the author meant.** There is lots more to say on this, but we will mainly try to flesh it out as we go through the book. The core concept to keep in mind is what Isaiah intended by what he said.
 - Isaiah understands history to be divided into two categories- the ages before the messiah and the messianic age (there is a lot of opinions on this among wise bible interpreters and I'm just going to present my view as best I can, and it will agree at some points and disagree at others with various interpreters). Isaiah refers to the age of the messiah as "the latter days." This appears to be an eternal period that is inaugurated with the birth of "Immanuel" and characterized by a continual increase of his rule (government) that leads to a restoration of humanity and even the natural world.
 - Isaiah is strangely almost an anti-prophet. His ministry is to preach to people knowing his message will only harden them in their sin.
 - Because we often don't study the OT very carefully (and because the OT is hard!) we don't understand why the destruction of the temple is such a massive deal (Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah all focus on this- that's 166 chapters or 14% of the entire Bible!!!)- but we have to understand, Israel is the center of the nations and Jerusalem is the center of Israel and the temple is the center of Jerusalem and it is from the temple that the only hope of fixing this world resides- the glory of Yahweh. **If you lose the temple (God's presence) you lose all hope of this world being restored.**
 - On "the many" in 53 and elsewhere
 - In Isaiah, the servant does not simply rise from the dead for his own benefit. The prophet says that he will have "offspring" (Isa. 53:10) and, at least in the Greek version of Isaiah, that he will "inherit many" (53:12 NETS).¹⁰ As we saw in chapter 2, moreover, it is likely that Isaiah's reference to "many" here echoes his reference to the "many nations" in 52:15 that the servant will "sprinkle" with

sacrificial blood. Isaiah's servant gathers his "offspring" and his inheritance of many people, therefore, from all the nations of the earth. The servant's resurrection, moreover, signals the beginning of the removal of the veil of death from his offspring. Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 61 hl-color:: yellow

- Isaiah, then, envisions the pathway by which God will fulfill his promise to bless all the nations of the earth through Abraham. God will do this despite Israel's failure to rise above the level of the rest of fallen humanity in its trusting obedience to God. Israel, and all the disobedient peoples of the earth, will pass through a time of judgment for the violence, injustice, oppression, and idolatry that characterize their societies, but then God will bring to Israel a great servant-king from the line of David. God's Spirit will be on this royal servant, and he will be the mediator of a covenant between God, Israel, and the nations of the earth. He will be wise, just, and compassionate. His servanthood will extend to the point that, although totally innocent of wrongdoing himself, he will die for the sins of both Israel and the nations. He will embody Israel's vocation (cf. Ex. 19:5–6), bringing the light of God's teaching to the nations and calling all, whether within Israel or the nations, to turn from their transgression. Eventually, under his reign, God will restore all creation to the security, peace, and abundance of the garden in Eden, and God himself will be present there with his human creation. (Thielman New Creation)
- Isaiah was martyred by being sawn in two by Manasseh but Manasseh repented (think about Isaiah's "success" or lack thereof)
- Not "high" and "low"- key throughout the book. Especially in relation to the "the servant"
- Note in particular Is.14 vs. Is.53 (in 14 he wants to be a new adam but in 53 we meet the real new adam)
- servant used 7 times in 49-54- the corporate servant fails so the individual servant as the corporate head of the servant makes servants
- On prophetic hermeneutics---
- I have found it useful to think about hermeneutics by considering how jokes mean what they mean. Jokes mean "intertextually," that is, only in relation to presupposed texts and discourses and cultural practices that are present in the joke only as a "trace." *Shrek *is a great example; nothing in the film is funny if you don't know fairy tales, nursery rhymes, popular culture, previous films, pop music, and so on. If you don't have access to these prior "discourses," you simply miss the intended meaning of the film's authors.
 - The analogy between jokes and texts-in-general has some other important implications:
 1. It highlights the limitations of hermeneutical method, particularly if hermeneutical method is developed along the lines of a "scientific" model. Humor is notoriously difficult to analyze, and it suffers from the

ironic fate of losing its *raison d'être *through analysis; an analyzed joke is no longer a joke. Getting it is not an output that comes at the end of a set of technical operations. Good biblical interpretation in particular depends on wide knowledge of the Bible, and on having the knack for bringing the right texts into connection with each other, so that each can catalyze the other.

- 2. This analysis thus properly places emphasis on the character of the interpreter. If hermeneutics is a science, then it is possible to train interpreters in the proper methods and techniques, and this can occur without much if any attention to the character of the interpreter. But what do you say about someone who is tone deaf to humor? Are there techniques for developing a sense of humor? An interpreter who doesn't get it might improve with wider knowledge and by imitating the example of a good interpreter. But something like a conversion needs to take place. To lack a sense of humor is not an intellectual vice; it is a symptom of a contracted soul. And so is bad, unimaginative, interpretation.
- 3. Finally, this paradigm gives us a way to characterize the experience of good interpretation. On the side of the interpreter, the experience of arriving at a satisfying interpretation is an experience of intellectual release and satisfaction, like the experience of hearing a good joke. An interpreter might literally laugh when he arrives at a satisfying interpretation (I have). The same goes for the one who reads or receives the interpretation. The nearly audible "click" as pieces fall into place is very similar to the sudden joy of hearing a well-timed joke. The glad "aha" evoked by a good interpretation is even a criterion (not the only one) of a good interpretation.

- Structure

- Grouped into Seven (!) Sections (from Leithart and Dorsey) (think 7 days of creation)
 - A. Condemnation, pleading, promise of future restoration, 1:1-12:
 - B. Oracles to the nations, 13:1-26:21
 - C. Woes, 27:1-35:10
 - D. Historical narrative, 36:1-39:8 (day 4- sun moon and stars)
 - C'. Yahweh triumphs over idols, 40:1-48:22 (day 5- swarming creatures, birds and sea creatures)
 - B'. Servant Songs, 49:1-54:17 (6th Day- the new Adam and his bride)
 - A'. Condemnation, pleading, promise of future restoration, 55:1-66:24 (7th day- rest, jubilee, new creation)
- Following from Leithart again--

- A/A': Both condemn empty liturgical practices, liturgical practice without justice (1:12-15; 58:1-14; 66:3). In both, Yahweh threatens to hide away because the hands of the people are full of blood (1:15; 59:1-3). Both sections also speak of briars and thorns. In A, the references to thorns and briars all have to do with the Lord turning the land desolate, with the desertification of the garden land (Isaiah 5:6; 7:23, 24, 25; 9:8), while in the A' the Lord promises to replace the thorns with cypress and thus to restore the land to its prosperity (55:13).
- Both refer to Sabbaths (1:13; 56:2, 3, 6; 58:13; 66:23) – eight references in all, and framing the entire book. Both refer to the reconciliation of wolf and lamb, lion and ox, and the end of harm on Yahweh's holy mountain (11:6; 65:25).
- Both sections speak of gardens (1:29-31; 66:17) and shame (1:29; 66:5), and both use the image of unquenchable fire (1:31; 66:24). In both, righteous/wicked separated, and in A' the righteous are given new names (65:15; cf 1:26). There is a progression from A to A': The latter has a cosmic scope that is lacking in the first section of the prophecy.
- B/B': The B section is a series of ten oracles against various Gentile nations, which are divided into two cycles of 5. The sequence begins with two chapters about Babylon, emphasizing the pride of Babylon and its eventual fall; Babylon comes back in the middle of the section (21:1-17), and then again at the end, this time described as the "lofty city" (24:1ff).
- Dorsey notes various other connections: B predicts the end of singing and the beginning of mourning (chs. 15-16), while in the B' section the people are full of rejoicing at the Lord's restoration of the nations (49:13; 51:3, 11; 52:7-10; 54:1); both include exhortations to those who are dead (26:19; 51:9, 11; 52:1). Both refer to Sheol or the pot (14:15, 19; 51:14); nature rejoices at the end of Babylon (14:7-8; 49:12-13); Babylon's children are cut off (14:20-22), while Israel's children are restored (49:19-23); Babylon does not let his prisoner's go (14:17), while Yahweh calls prisoners out (49:9).
- C/C': Both of these sections warn against the misplacement of trust. C includes warnings against going to Egypt to find help against the Assyrians or Babylonians (31:1-3); in the C' section, the warning is specifically against trusting idols. The connection indicates that the reliance on Egypt is itself a kind of idolatry.
- Several verbal connections link together these sections: Isaiah warns against relying on the "help" ('*zr*) of Egypt (30:5, 7; 31:1, 2, 3) and the later section warns against trusting in the help ('*zr*) of idols (41:10, 13, 14); Egypt's help brings no "profit" (30:5-6), and neither does idolatry (44:9-10); trusting Egypt will lead to shame (30:3, 5) and so will trusting idols (42:17); Egypt is merely human and not God (31:3), and the idols are also not-gods (44:6, 8-11); the vanity/vaporousness of Egypt's help (30:7) is parallel to the emptiness of idols (41:44, 12, 24 29; 44:9).
- Both use the image of the potter and clay (29:16; 45:9; cf. 64:8). Chapters 35 and 40 are woven closely together by a series of verbal parallels: wilderness/desert (35:1;

40:3); way through wilderness (35:6-7; 40:3-4); flowers (35:1-2; 40:6-7); Lebanon (35:2; 40:16); "our God" (35:2; 40:3, 8); glory of Yahweh (35:2; 40:5); a highway or road in the desert (35:6-8; 40:3).

- D: The central narrative section is embedded between these two passages about trust, about political trust and about liturgical trust. They are linked by the message from the Assyrians, who urged Hezekiah and his people to abandon trust in Yahweh to deliver them from their political threats. Hezekiah trusts Yahweh, and the city is delivered.
- The Following visual chart is credit Aaron Schrock who drew on Leithart and Dorsey
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**Seeing the Glory of God's Salvation and Judgment
Isaiah 1–12**

<p>Introduction: Israel's Sin Results in God's Judgment, with seed of salvation (1:1–31)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed Theme: The children of God have proven themselves to be false sons • Format: A courtroom scene where God judges Israel for unacceptable worship • Nations: God will judge Zion with foreign armies (e.g., Assyria, Babylon, etc.) 		
<p><i>Glorious Zion (2:1–5)</i> <i>Judgment on Israel</i> <i>Glorious Zion (4:2–6)</i></p>	<p>A Glorious Future, After An Immediate Judgment (2:1–4:6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed Theme: God will purify Zion, so that she can bear true children (2:1–5; 4:2–6) • Format: Oracles of judgment on proud men (2:6–22) and haughty women (3:16–4:1) • Nations: Judgment comes from the nations <i>and</i> the nations enter Zion to worship God 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed theme: The children of God have born bad fruit, but the judgment is not final (six woes, not seven) • Format: Six woes are pronounced are on the vineyard of God (Zion) • Nations: <u>Yahweh whistles for the nations to come (5:26)</u> 		<p>Coming Destruction on Jerusalem (Isaiah 5)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed theme: From the stump of Jesse will come a holy seed (6:13) • Format: God calls Isaiah to pronounce a word of judgment on Zion • Nations: The glory of God will cover the earth (6:3) 		<p>The Glory of God in Heaven and the Call of Isaiah on Earth (Isaiah 6)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed theme: The sign is a seed of the woman (7:14) • Format: God gives a sign of salvation in the midst of cursed vineyard (7:23-25) • Nations: <u>Yahweh whistles for the nations to come (7:18)</u> 		<p>Coming Destruction, with the promise of savior (Isaiah 7–8:18)</p>	
<p><i>A Glorious King(dom) (9:1–7)</i> <i>Judgment on Israel and Assyria (9:8)</i> <i>A Glorious King(dom) (11:1–9)</i></p>	<p>A Glorious Future, After An Assyrian Judgment (9:1–11:9)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed theme: The son of Jesse will become the prince of peace • Format: Oracles of judgment on Samaria (9:8–21) and Assyria (10:5–28) • Nations: Israel and the nations will receive the light of God, and creation will experience salvation 	
<p>Conclusion: God's Judgment Results in Salvation Joy (11:10–12:6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed theme: The true children of God (from all nations) will rejoice in their Savior • Format: The people's jubilation replaces the Lord's judgment, by way of the Lord's salvation. • Nations: All the earth will know the salvation of the Lord 		

Ten Oracles of Judgment (Isaiah 13–27)

In Isaiah 13–27, the section of judgment on the nations is organized around ten oracles of judgment (ch. 13–24) and seven days of salvation. In Isaiah 13–19, the judgment of God is mixed with promises of salvation for a remnant. In Isaiah 21–24, the judgment of God is unmixed. Instead, salvation, which is described in Isaiah 24–27 comes after the judgment is complete. And all of this centers a chiasmic structure around the historical sign of Isaiah’s nakedness in chapter 20.

Isa 13–19: Five Oracles That Alternate Judgment and Salvation (13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promises of Salvation are scattered throughout (e.g., 14:32; 16:5; 17:7–8; 18:7; 19:16–25) • The conclusion of the section is future vision of warring nations coming to Zion (19:18–25) 			
Babylon Prophecy (13:1–14:32)	Typological opening starts in the East and expands to the world		
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #a4c6e0; width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Four Historical ‘Prophecies’ 1 Philistia (14:28–32) 2 Moab (15:1–16:13) 3 Damascus (17:1–14) and Cush (18:1–7) 4 Egypt (19:1–25) </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Promises of Salvation 14:32 – God’s afflicted will find comfort in Zion 16:5 – David’s throne will be established 17:7–8 – Men from Damascus will forsake idols 18:7 – The people of Cush will come to Zion 19:16–25 – Assyria and Egypt will worship the God of Israel </td> </tr> </table>	Four Historical ‘Prophecies’ 1 Philistia (14:28–32) 2 Moab (15:1–16:13) 3 Damascus (17:1–14) and Cush (18:1–7) 4 Egypt (19:1–25)	Promises of Salvation 14:32 – God’s afflicted will find comfort in Zion 16:5 – David’s throne will be established 17:7–8 – Men from Damascus will forsake idols 18:7 – The people of Cush will come to Zion 19:16–25 – Assyria and Egypt will worship the God of Israel
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The Central Message: Don’t Trust in Earthly Kings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isaiah recounts an historical event, where • The LORD came to Isaiah and told him to dress naked • This would serve as a sign to not trust in Egypt, Cush 	Isaiah 20: Historical Sign		
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #a4c6e0; width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Four Sarcastic ‘Prophecies’ 1 Wilderness by the Sea (21:–10) 2 Dumah (21:11–12) 3 Arabia (21:13–17) 4 Valley of Vision (22:1–19) <i>“Historical” Promise of Salvation (22:20–25)</i> </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Mocking names Wilderness by the Sea = Babylon Dumah = Edom Arabia = ?? Valley of Vision = Jerusalem </td> </tr> </table>	Four Sarcastic ‘Prophecies’ 1 Wilderness by the Sea (21:–10) 2 Dumah (21:11–12) 3 Arabia (21:13–17) 4 Valley of Vision (22:1–19) <i>“Historical” Promise of Salvation (22:20–25)</i>	Mocking names Wilderness by the Sea = Babylon Dumah = Edom Arabia = ?? Valley of Vision = Jerusalem
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Tyre Prophecy (23:1–24:23)	Typological conclusion that starts in the West and expands to the world		
Isa 21–24: Five Oracles That Only Pronounce Judgment (21:1, 11, 13; 22:1; 23:1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no escape from God’s judgment in these oracles • Salvation will not come until after the judgment • Isaiah 24–27 is the solution to the problem of judgment 			

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Ten Oracles of Judgment (Isaiah 13–24)

The Lord is perfect in his justice, and the intricate detail of these first five oracles of judgment is evidence of that.

1. Oracle #1: Judgment to the North (Babylon)

The LORD's Holy Preparation for Judgment (13:1–5)
The Day of the LORD: Babylon's Kingdom (13:6–22)
Security in Zion (14:1–2)
The Day of the LORD: Babylon's King (14:3–23)
The LORD's Holy Plan for Judgment (14:24–27)

2. Oracle #2: Judgment to the West (Philistia)

Rejoice Not, O Philistia (14:29–30)
A Glimmer of Hope (14:30a)
Wail, O Philistia (14:31)
A Growing Hope (14:32)

3. Oracle #3: Judgment to the East (Moab)

Moab's Ruin (15:1)
Moab's Grief (15:2–4) . . . The LORD's Grief (15:5–9)
Moab's Plea (16:1–4a)
Zion (16:4b–5)
Moab's Pride (16:6–7)
The LORD's Grief (16:8–11) . . . Moab's Grief (16:12)
Moab's Ruin (16:13–14)

4. Oracles # 4–5: Judgment to the South (Syria, Egypt, Ethiopia)

Ruin of Syria & Israel (17:1–11)
Fall of Ethiopia (17:12–18:3) – *Rivers, Waters, Nile*
Remnant from Ethiopia (18:4–7)
Fall of Egypt (19:1–15) – *Rivers, Waters, Nile*
Redemption of Nations + Israel (19:26–25)

The Lord is also universal in his judgment, as the second five judgments indicate.

1–3	Oracle #6	Isaiah 21:1–10 – Babylon (Wilderness of the Sea)	North
	Oracle #7	21:11–12 – Dumah (Edom)	East
	Oracle #8	21:13–17 – Arabia	South
4	Oracle #9	22:1–25 – Jerusalem (Valley of Vision)	
	Oracles #10	23:1–18 – Tyre	West

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Seven Days of Salvation

The ten oracles of judgment are followed by seven “in that day’s” of salvation (see 24:21–23; 25:9; 26:1; 27:1, 2, 12, 13). Together, these chapters form a pattern of salvation that anticipates the ascension of Christ, his mission of salvation, his universal worship, and his defeat of Satan, coupled with the final harvest. In order, the chapters look like this:

1. The Lord Exalted Over the Earth (24:21–23) – Ascension
2. Salvation Proclaimed (25:9) – Mission
3. Song of Salvation (26:1) – Worship
4. Satan Defeated (27:1, 2) & Harvest Gathered (27:12, 13)

As with ten oracles, these four sections demonstrate careful arrangement.

Judgment on the Whole Earth

People like Priest (24:1–3) *Earth 8x*
Curse on Earth (24:4–6)
No Singing in Zion (24:7–11)
City is Desolate (24:12–13)
Singing Returns (24:14–16)
Earth is Crushed (24:17–20) *Earth 8x*
Priest is Come (24:21–23)

The Banqueting Feast of the Lord and His People

Proud Humbled (25:1–2)
Joy in the Lord (25:3–5)
Blessings on Mount Zion (25:6–8)
Joy in the Lord (25:9–10)
Proud Humbled (25:11–12)

The Song of Salvation

Secure in Peace (26:1–4)
Down to the ‘Dust’ (26:5–6)
Divinely Smoothed Pathway (26:7–9)
Blindness (26:10–11)
Divinely Ordained Peace (26:12–15)
Out of the ‘Dust’ (26:16–19)
Secured from Wrath (26:20–21)

Satan Defeated (27:1, 2) & Harvest Gathered (27:12, 13)

The Great Sword (27:1)
Pleasant Vineyard (27:2–5)
Global Fruit (27:6)
Purified Field (27:7–11)
The Great Trumpet (27:12–13)

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Trust in the Lord, The Promises of God Incarnate (Isaiah 28–35)

<p>The PROMISE of a NEW COVENANT . . .</p> <p>Isaiah 28:1–29 "Woe . . ." (28:1)</p>	<p>. . .</p> <p>Isaiah 29:1–24 "Woe . . ." (29:1) "Woe . . ." (29:15)</p>	<p>. . .</p> <p>Isaiah 30:1–18 "Woe . . ." (30:1)</p>	<p>Isaiah 30:19-33</p> <p>The prose center</p>	<p>. . .</p> <p>Isaiah 31:1–9 "Woe . . ." (31:1)</p>	<p>** There appears to be a chiasmic structure here !!!</p> <p>Isaiah 32:1–33:24 "Behold" . . . (32:1) "Woe . . ." (33:1)</p>	<p>. . . The ARRIVAL of a NEW CREATION</p> <p>Isaiah 34:1–35:10 "Draw Near" . . . (34:1)</p>
Judgment on Ephraim (28:1, 3)	Judgment on Zion	Do Not Trust Egypt	TRUST IN YAHWEH	Do Not Trust Egypt	Salvation for Zion	Judgment on Edom and New Creation for All (34:5, 6, 9)
Woe . . . to the Drunkards of Zion Isa. 29:1–13	Woe . . . to Zion Isa. 29:1–10	Do not trust Egypt!! Isa. 30:1–7	Returning Leads to Refreshing Isa. 30:19-26	Do Not Trust in Egypt!! Isa. 31:1-3	The King Reigns Isa. 32:1–8	The Judgment of Heaven Comes to Earth Isa. 34:1–14
A Word of Hope: A New Cornerstone and a New Covenant Isa. 28:14–22	An Unknown Word No one can read the Word Isa. 29:11–12	A Word of Warning: Judgment is coming, but also salvation Isa. 30:8–17	A COMING WORD: THE LORD'S NAME AND SPIRIT ARE COMING ISA. 30:27–28	The Word Comes The Lord comes to Zion Isa. 31:4-5	The Word Speaks: Women are under judgment Isa. 32:9–14	The Word of Hope: The Lord will gather all Isa. 34:16–17
A Wise Judgment for all kinds of seeds Isa. 28:23–29	I will do wonders Isa. 29:13–14	The Lord waits to be gracious to you Isa. 30:18	Rejoicing in the Wrath of God Isa. 30:29–33	The Lord will remove idols and Assyrians Isa. 31:6–9	The Land lives . . . as the Spirit poured out Isa. 32:15-20	New Creation Comes Isa. 35:1–10
	Woe . . . to those who walk in darkness Isa. 29:15–17	<p align="center">The Literary Structure of Isaiah 28–35*</p> <p>A Judgment on Samaria (28:1–29)</p> <p>B Judgment on Zion with a Hope of Salvation (29:1–24)</p> <p>C Do Not Trust in Egypt (30:1–14)</p> <p>D Trust in Yahweh (30:15-33)</p> <p>C' Do Not Trust in Egypt (31:1–9)</p> <p>B' Salvation for Zion through Judgment (32:1–33:24)</p> <p>A' Judgment on Edom (34:1–35:10)</p> <p><small>*Adapted from David Dorsey, <i>The Literary Structure of the Old Testament</i>, p. 223.</small></p>			A PRAYER: O LORD, BE GRACIOUS Isa. 33:1-6	New Creation Comes Isaiah 35:1–10
	In that day . . . The deaf will hear Isa. 29:18–21				The Land Languishes . . . as the Spirit leaves Isa. 33:7-9	A Glory has come to earth (1–2)
	Shame taken away Isa. 29:22-24				The Word Speaks: Women will bear again Isa. 33:10–16	B The Living God (3–4)
		The King in His Beauty Isa. 33:17-24	X LIFE (5–6b)			
		Forgiveness (v. 24)	B' Living Water (6c–7)			
			A' The Highway to Glorious Zion (8–10)			
			<small>Adapted from Alec Motyer, <i>Isaiah</i>, p. 272.</small>			

Faith, Hope, and Love: Three Questions of Life and Death
Isaiah 36–39

FAITH: Who Do You Trust? (Isaiah 36)

36:1–3	The Threat. The Rabshekah vs Eliakim, Shebna, Joah <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah . . . (701 BC) (v. 1)</i> • The Washer’s Field (v. 2) recalls another encounter with Ahaz (Isa. 7:3) 	
	36:4–10	Trust Doubted? The Rabshakeh Questions the Leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do you trust? (vv. 4–5) • <i>Egypt</i> is a Broken Reed (vv. 6; cf. ch. 30–31) – Truth • <i>Hezekiah</i> has Broken Yahweh’s Altars (vv. 7) – Half-truth • <i>Assyria</i> is Your Only Hope (vv. 8–10) – Lie
		36:11–12 The Taunt: Fearful Managers + a Taunting Rabshakeh <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliakim, Shebna, Joah attempt to manage the situation (v. 11) • The Rabshekah is seemingly more forthright (v. 12)
	36:13–20	Trust Denied! Rabshakeh Tears Down the Leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not trust in Yahweh or listen to Hezekiah (vv. 13–16a) • Eat my food and drink my water (vv. 16b–17) • What God can save you? (vv. 18–20)
36:21–22	The Trial. Eliakim, Shebna, Joah offer nothing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The managers of Jerusalem have no answer (v. 21) • The king has no answer (v. 21) • All the leaders their clothes in fear and lamentation (v. 22) 	

HOPE: To Whom Do You Call? (Exodus 37)

37:1–7	The LORD speaks to the King of Assyria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story continues from ch. 36 – Hezekiah tears his clothes too (v. 1) • Hezekiah sends for Isaiah – this is entirely different than Ahaz (v. 2) • The source of the mockery is not the messenger, but the king of Assyria (vv. 4, 6) • The LORD takes personally the words of Rabshakeh (v. 6) 	
	37:8–13	Sennacherib’s Letter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The King speaks, boasting in his nation’s prowess (vv. 10–13) • The competition is one of divine gods – who is greater!?!)
		37:14–20 Hezekiah’s Prayer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to Sennacherib’s threat, he seeks God • Hezekiah shows his loyalty to Israel’s God
	37:21–32	Isaiah’s Prophecy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LORD hears Hezekiah and sends Isaiah (v. 21) • The LORD is doing what he said he would do (v. 26; cf. Isaiah 10) • Notice: The nation of Assyria knew the prophecy (cf. 36:10)
37:33–38	The LORD speaks to the King of Assyria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I will defend this city for the sake of David” (v. 35) • 185,000 soldiers killed (v. 36) • Sennacherib is killed in his own house (v. 38) • The LORD he is God, so hope in him 	

Faith, Hope, and Love: Three Questions of Life and Death
Isaiah 36–39

FAITH: Who Do You Trust? (Isaiah 36)

36:1–3	The Threat. The Rabshekah vs Eliakim, Shebna, Joah <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah . . . (701 BC) (v. 1)</i> • The Washer’s Field (v. 2) recalls another encounter with Ahaz (Isa. 7:3) 	
	36:4–10	Trust Doubted? The Rabshakeh Questions the Leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do you trust? (vv. 4–5) • <i>Egypt</i> is a Broken Reed (vv. 6; cf. ch. 30–31) – Truth • <i>Hezekiah</i> has Broken Yahweh’s Altars (vv. 7) – Half-truth • <i>Assyria</i> is Your Only Hope (vv. 8–10) – Lie
	36:11–12	The Taunt: Fearful Managers + a Taunting Rabshakeh <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliakim, Shebna, Joah attempt to manage the situation (v. 11) • The Rabshekah is seemingly more forthright (v. 12)
	36:13–20	Trust Denied! Rabshakeh Tears Down the Leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not trust in Yahweh or listen to Hezekiah (vv. 13–16a) • Eat my food and drink my water (vv. 16b–17) • What God can save you? (vv. 18–20)
36:21–22	The Trial. Eliakim, Shebna, Joah offer nothing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The managers of Jerusalem have no answer (v. 21) • The king has no answer (v. 21) • All the leaders their clothes in fear and lamentation (v. 22) 	

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LOVE: Who Will Save You? (Exodus 38–39)

38:1–6	Immanuel: The LORD comes to Hezekiah <ul style="list-style-type: none">• God afflicts Isaiah with sickness (38:1)• Hezekiah cries for mercy (38:2) – he cries bitterly (cf. Luke 22:62)• God hears Hezekiah’s prayer (38:4–5)• God promises salvation (38:6)
	38:7–21 Hezekiah’s Testimony of God’s Love (see outline below) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hezekiah’s testimony is prompted by two signs (vv. 7, 21)• The movement is from death to life (vv. 9–13, 18–20)• Hezekiah’s Prayer is Answered with Salvation (vv. 14–17)• Praise to God is the purpose (vv. 18–20)• Health is restored for the sake of the soul (vv. 16–17; cf. 3 John 2)• Forgiveness of sins is the only way to life (38:17)
39:1–8	No Immanuel: Hezekiah is not the One (cf. 2 Chron. 32:24–26) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upon his recovery, Hezekiah returns to his own self-reliance (39:1)• The Babylonians arrive to see the temple (39:2) and Hezekiah foolishly shows them (39:4)• Isaiah forewarns of the coming exile (39:5–7), which sets up Isaiah 40–66• Hezekiah wickedly comforts himself with no pain in his generation (39:8)

Hezekiah’s Testimony

⁷ “This shall be the **sign** to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he has promised: ⁸ Behold, I will make the shadow cast by the declining sun on the dial of Ahaz turn back ten steps.” So the sun turned back on the dial the ten steps by which it had declined.

⁹ A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, after he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness: ¹⁰ I said, In the **middle of my days** I must depart; I am consigned to **the gates of Sheol** for the rest of my years.

¹¹ I said, I shall not see the LORD, the LORD in the **land of the living**; I shall look on man no more among the inhabitants of the world. ¹² **My dwelling is plucked up and removed** from me like a shepherd’s tent; like a weaver I have rolled up my life; he cuts me off from the loom; from day to night you bring me to an end; ¹³ I calmed myself until morning; like a lion he breaks all my bones; from day to night you bring me to an end.

¹⁴ Like a swallow or a crane I chirp; I moan like a dove. My eyes are weary with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; be my pledge of safety! ¹⁵ What shall I say? For he has spoken to me, and he himself has done it. I walk slowly all my years because of the bitterness of **my soul**.

¹⁶ O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these is the life of **my spirit**. Oh restore me to health and make me live!

¹⁷ Behold, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, **for you have cast all my sins behind your back**.

¹⁸ **For Sheol** does not thank you; death does not praise you; those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness.

¹⁹ **The living, the living**, he thanks you, as I do this day; the father makes known to the children your faithfulness.

²⁰ The LORD will save me, and we will play my music on stringed instruments **all the days of our lives**, at **the house of the LORD**.

²¹ Now Isaiah had said, “Let them take a cake of figs and apply it to the boil, that he may recover.” ²² Hezekiah also had said, “What is the **sign** that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?”

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Fear Not, The Servant is Coming to Remove Idols (Isaiah 40–48)

Isaiah 40:1–11 . . . introduce a number of key themes in Isaiah 40–48.		
<p>Comfort, Comfort . . . Jerusalem’s Iniquity is Pardoned (1–2) (Wilderness) A Voice Cries: Make way for the LORD (3–5) A Voice says, ‘Cry!’: All flesh is grass (6–8) (A High Mt.) Lift Your Voice: ‘Behold Your God’ (9–10) Behold, Behold . . . The Shepherd will carry his flock (11)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yahweh is going to forgive sins • Yahweh is going to lead a new exodus—he will bring his people out of the wilderness to the mountain of God by way his Word • Yahweh is a shepherd who will carry his people to safety
Isaiah 40:12–31 . . . highlight the difference between the God of Israel and the gods of the nations		
<p>The Nations are Nothing (12–17) God is not like an idol-maker (18–20) God is the True King (21–24) God is creator and not like his creation (25–26) Flesh is Nothing (27–31)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The supremacy of the LORD is immediately highlighted • As is a comparison between God and his creation • The nations and their gods cannot save, but God who never tires can
Isaiah 41:1–29 . . . indicts the nations and Israel, all the while promising a salvation for God’s people		
<p>The LORD stirs up the nations (1–7) Fear Not, My Servant, Israel (8–13) . . . Fear Not, for I, the LORD your God help you (13) Fear Not, You Worm, Jacob (14–20) The LORD brings the works to nothing (21–27)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In stirring up from the East (2) and North (25), Isaiah hints at the coming of Cyrus • The tension of the covenant is seen here: Israel is God’s chosen people (8–13), who have become a worm (14) • ‘Fear not’ repeats 3x (10, 13, 14)
Isaiah 42:1–25 . . . introduces the Servant of the LORD and the salvation God will bring through him		
<p><u>The Beloved Servant</u> of the LORD (1–9) A Song of Rejoicing (10–17) <u>The Rebellious Servant</u> of the LORD (18–25) ** The three promises of the servant – a new order (1–4), a new covenant (5–6), a new creation (7–9)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are two servants: 1 obedient, individual servant vs. 1 disobedient, national servant • The Servant Song is the first of four (cf. Isa. 49:1–7; 50:4-9; 52:13–53:12) • A new servant brings a new song (10–17)
Isaiah 43:1–44:5 . . . offers a simple pattern of the gospel in parallel sections.		
<p><u>Section 1 (43:1–15)</u> New Exodus (43:1–7) Makes Alive (43:8–13) God the King (43:14–15)</p>	<p><u>Section 2 (43:16–44:5)</u> New Exodus (43:16–21) Forgives Sin (43:22–28) People of God (44:1–5)</p>	<p><u>The Gospel Pattern</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LORD leads his people through and exodus . . . where he • Forgives sin (justification) and makes alive (regeneration) • This salvation is found in the formation of a covenant

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Isaiah 44:6–23 . . . marks the center of Isaiah 40–48 and calls for repentance and return.

<p>The Lord and his people (44:6–8) The idolater and his idol (44:9) The Idol is nothing (44:10–17) The idolater and his idol (44:18–20) The Lord and his people (44:21–23)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like Isaiah 6:1–13, 19:16–20:6, 30:19–33, 37:14–20 the prose marks the center • Idolatry is the major the problem in Isaiah 40–48, and . . . • The main point of the section is an action item—Repent and return.
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Isaiah 44:24–45:19 . . . introduces the “shepherd” who will deliver Israel from Babylon

<p><u>Cyrus</u>: The Anointed Shepherd of the Lord (44:24–28) The Exodus Confirmed (45:1–10) <u>The LORD</u>: The Savior of Israel (45:11–19)** ** The LORD is Savior of the World (45:22–23)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thus says LORD (44:24; 45:1, 11, 14, 18) • This is a new exodus (cf. Jer. 16:14–15) • The Shepherd leads God’s people, just like Moses led Israel • Cyrus is like David, who builds God’s temple
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Isaiah 45:20–46:13 . . . contrasts the power of God to save and the impotence of the idols

<p>Only LORD saves (45:20–21)** The LORD is incomparable (45:22–25) Idols Can’t Save / Carry (46:1–2) God Will Carry and Save (46:3–4) Who is like the LORD? (46:5–7) The LORD is incomparable (46:8–11) Salvation will come to Zion (46:12–13)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God alone can save – “carry” • The concept of “carrying” stands at the center; this is the difference between God and the idols, grace and works • The concept of “carrying” goes back to Isaiah 40:11, 27–31 and Exod. 19:1–4 • Salvation has a place – Mount Zion <p>** This outline found in Dorsey, 225.</p>
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Isaiah 47:1–15 . . . watches the Lord bring Babylon down in humiliation

<p>“Sit down” (1) . . . Babylon (47:1–4) Sit . . . You Said – “I shall be mistress” (47:5–7) Sit/Securely . . . You said – “I am who I am” (47:8–9) Felt Secure . . . You said – “No one sees” . . . my evil (47:10–11) “Stand” (12, 13) . . . in your idols and see if they save you (47:12–15)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LORD is going to bring Babylon down • He invites Babylon to stand by their idols, so that his judgment can be clear • This downward movement mirrors the exaltation of Zion (40:1–11) • The downfall of Babylon is a type of all judgment
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Isaiah 48:1–22 . . . concludes this section with judgment and a promise salvation after the exile.

<p>Hear this . . . Jacob Israel is a False Son (1–2) Israel’s Former Sin (3–6b) Israel to See a New Thing (6c–8) The LORD’s Motives (9–11)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel is not true to God • He must do something new • All that the Lord wants to do, . . . he does effectively 	<p>Listen to Me . . . Jacob The LORD is God (12–13) The LORD Calls to assemble (14–16) The LORD “Grieves” (17–19) The LORD Redeems (20–22)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LORD’s judgment is mixed with sorrow • The final verdict: There is no peace for the wicked 	<p>Overview of Chapter 40–48</p> <p>Zion is Exalted (40–41)</p> <p>The Servant + His Salvation (42–43)</p> <p>The Folly of Idols (44)</p> <p>The Shepherd + God’s Salvation (45–46)</p> <p>Babylon is Thrown Down (47–48)</p>
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The Servant-King Who Sacrifices Himself to Redeem His Bride (Isaiah 49–54)

1 The Promise: A Servant Will Restore Mother Jerusalem and Her Children (49:1–26)	
<p>49:1–7 – The LORD’s Servant (Yahweh says, vv. 5, 7) 49:8–13 – The Fruit of the Covenant (Yahweh says, v. 8) 49:14 – Zion Speaks – “The LORD has forsaken!” 49:15–21 – The Promise of Restoration (Yahweh still speaks) 49:22–26 – The LORD Saves (Yahweh says, vv. 22, 25)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two servants – Israel (3) + Savior-King (5ff) • Zion cries out (14); Isa 50–54 will resolve • The solution to Zion’s problem includes the inclusion of the nations (49:6–7, 15–21) • True servant brings peace (cf. 48:22; 54:10)

2 The Servant Who Listens, Suffers, and Begins a New Israel (50:1–51:11)	
Chiasm Help: Peter Leithart, Lectures on Isaiah 49–54	
<p>50:1–3 – The LORD is leading a new exodus to comfort his people 50:4–6 – The LORD awakens the Servant to listen 50:7–11 – The LORD vindicates his Servant 51:1–3 – The Lord Begins With One 51:4–8 – Give Attention to My Salvation (Servant) 50:7–8 – Listen to me, I will vindicate you 51:9–11 – Awake, Awake, put on strength, a new exodus has come</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This sections begins and ends with exodus imagery (50:1–3 51:9–11) • The LORD awakens the servant (50:4–6) and later the people (51:4–8) • The awakening theme has an Edenic background (see Gen. 2:18–25)

3 Jerusalem, O Jerusalem: The LORD Will Rescue His People (51:12–52:12)	
<p>51:12–16 – Wake yourself . . . Stand up Jerusalem 51:17–20 – Wake Jerusalem from drunkenness 51:21–23 – THE LORD: Jerusalem’s Cup 52:1–6 – Wake Jerusalem, get ready for marriage 52:7–12 – Hear the Good News and Sing for Joy, Jerusalem . . .</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It’s all about Jerusalem • Jerusalem’s condition is about the change • The awakening theme is like that of Eve, when Adam was put to sleep • The result of God’s salvation is singing at the foot of Mount Zion (Heb 12:22–24)

2’ The Servant Who Suffers, Dies, and Rises Again to Establish a New Covenant (52:13–53:12)	
<p>52:13–53:12 – Servant-King introduced among kings of the nations 53:1–3 – Humble origins of the Servant-King 53:4–6 – Sacrifice of the Servant-King 53:7–9 – Obedience of the Servant-King 53:10–12 – The posterity of the Servant-King are here</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section, which focuses on the Servant, matches Isa 50:1–51:11 • The movement goes from high (13–15), to low (1–9), to higher (10–12) • The center is a great exchange (4–6) • The sacrifice results in a new cov.

1’ The Completion: A New Covenant Restores Children to Mother Jerusalem (54:1–17)	
Chiasm Help: https://www.chiasmusxchange.com	
<p>54:1–3 – Zion will no longer be barren 54:4–8 – Zion as a bride will be married 54:9–10 – YHWH: “I have sworn to you a new covenant” 54:11–14 – Zion as a city will be secure 54:15–17 – The LORD will defend Zion with her ‘servants’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The movement is from desolation to defense, danger to security • Zion is a bride and a city (cf. Rev. 21) • The LORD’s covenant promise (9–10) responds to Zion’s concern (49:14, cf. Song of Songs)

THE ANOINTED SERVANT WILL GATHER THE NATIONS AND RESTORE ZION (ISAIAH 55–66)¹

<p>All Nations Invited to Join God's Covenant Family (55:1–56:12)</p>	<p><u>Salvation</u>: Invitation to the poor to come and eat (55:1–3) – “all, every” Covenant promises to foreigners (55:3b–5) – everlasting covenant; Gentiles included A call to seek the LORD, to find pardon from God (55:6–9) → The Promise of a Fruitful Harvest (55:10–13) A call to do justice, because salvation is coming (56:1–2) Covenant promises to foreigners (56:3–8) – the covenant people will be gathered <u>Judgment</u>: Invitation to false shepherds (beasts) to come and eat (56:9–12) – “all, every”</p>	
<p>57:3–5 Masc Plural 57:6–13a Fem Sing. 57:13b Masc Sing.</p>	<p>Humanity Divided (57) <i>The Proud and Exalted</i> v. <i>The Lowly and Contrite</i></p>	<p>The righteous enters into peace (57:1–2; cf. Ps 116:15) The <i>offspring</i> of wickedness will be judged (57:3–5) The harlot city will be removed (57:6–13a) – <i>high & lofty</i> (v. 7) → Those who seek the LORD will live (57:13b) The faithful children revived (57:14–15) – <i>lowly & contrite</i> (v. 15) The peaceful healing of an <i>offspring</i> (57:16–19) There is no peace for the wicked (57:20–21; cf. Isa. 48:22)</p>
	<p>The Lord will Rebuild Zion (58:1–59:15a) <i>Removing Sin</i> + <i>Creating Righteousness</i></p>	<p>Hidden sins are exposed by the LORD (58:1–2) <u>False fasting</u>: injustice + violence = God's silence (58:3–5) <u>True fasting</u> – not self-serving (58:6–7) → Blessings in Obedience = Zion rebuilt (58:8–12) <u>True Sabbath</u> –not self-serving (58:13–14) <u>False living</u>: injustice + violence = God's absence (59:1–8) Visible sins are magnified before the LORD (59:9–15a)</p>
<p>The Spirit-Anointed Servant Restores Zion (59:15b–61:4) 1. Incarnation (59:14–21) 2. Ministry (61:1–4) 3. Salvation (61:10–62:7) 4. Judgment (63:1–6)</p>	<p>The LORD becomes the SERVANT (59:15b–21) – after he saw no man (v. 16) God's Light Will Dawn on You (60:1–3) Nations will bring gifts to Zion (60:4–7) Foreigners will bring their children (60:8–9) → Yahweh will restore Zion (60:10–13) Children of foreigners will come to Zion (60:14–16) Nations will bring gifts to Zion (60:17–18) Yahweh will be your Light Forward (60:19–21) The SERVANT brings the Jubilee (61:1–4) – the man has come (Luke 4:18–19)</p>	
	<p>Salvation will come to Zion (61:1–63:14) <i>Salvation + Judgment</i></p>	<p>The LORD establish a covenant in Zion (61:5–9) The SERVANT will SAVE God's people (61:10–62:1) <i>Zion will be married (62:2–5)</i> → The Arm of the Lord will save (62:6–9) <i>Zion will not be forsaken (62:10–12)</i> The SERVANT will JUDGE the nations (63:1–6; Rev. 19:15) The LORD establishes a new exodus (63:7–14)</p>
	<p>A Prayer for God to Rend the Veil and Come Down (63:15–64:12) <i>The truly exalted One will down and save the lowly</i></p>	<p>The LORD is dwelling in his holy habitation (63:15) <i>Father, remember Us (63:16)</i> We are like those who have not <u>called on your name</u> (63:17–19) → A Prayer for God to Come (64:1–5) We do not have any who <u>calls on your name</u> (64:6–7) <i>Father, restore Us (64:8–9)</i> Will you let your holy temple be destroyed? (64:10–12)</p>
<p>The Children of Zion Come, and the LORD makes a final judgment (65–66)</p>	<p>The LORD readies himself to come and judge (65:1–7) – <i>This responds to 64:10–12</i> Remnant saved (65:8–12) – The “servants” of the SERVANT (8–10) vs the accursed (11–12) The great divide (65:13–16) – servants blessed v wicked cursed (verse by verse) → New Creation (65:17–25) – The Mountain of the LORD is made new The divide continues (66:1–6) – the humble (1–2, 5a) vs the unholy (3–4, 5b–6) Blessings of the remnant (66:7–14) – Zion is filled with obedient children The LORD will come and make a final judgment (66:15–24)</p>	

¹ Outline partially adapted from David Dorsey, *Literary Structure of the Old Testament* and www.chiasmusxchange.com.

• Exegetical Notes

• Isa. 1-4 (Exile and Coming Kingdom)

- They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged. (Isa. 1:2–4) This stinging criticism of Jerusalem underscores the failure of the people to be righteous. By forsaking the Lord, they were no better than the ancient inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa. 1:10).

So sinful and misguided were the rulers of Jerusalem that even their sacrifices and religious practices were abhorrent to God (Isa. 1:11–15). Ironically, the very sacrifices that were meant to atone for the people's sins offended God. Underlying God's antipathy toward the people of Jerusalem, especially their leaders, was their moral failure to ensure justice for the socially marginalized. Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 94 hl-color:: yellow

- Isaiah's first four chapters provide a helpful introduction to the pattern of judgment and renewal that characterizes the whole book.⁶ Israel, Isaiah says, neither knows nor understands the Lord who reared and brought it up, like a Father taking care of his child (Isa. 1:2). This puzzling obtuseness has affected Israel from head to toe and inside out. They are "laden with iniquity" and are "utterly estranged" from the Lord: "The whole head is sick, / and the whole heart is faint" (1:4–5). As a result, their destruction at the hands of the Assyrians has been almost total (1:7–8). The problem is that although Israel has been enthusiastic about the outward mechanics of their devotion to the Lord—offering sacrifice and observing sacred days— they have abandoned justice, practiced oppression, and neglected the needy (1:10–17, 23). Some of them, at least, have also been playing false with the Lord and trying their hand at worshiping other gods in the oak groves and gardens where the shrines of those gods are located (1:29–30). They have turned from worshiping the Creator to worshiping the natural world he has created.⁷ There is, nevertheless, hope, not simply for Israel but for all the world, through Israel's future faithfulness. Although Israel's sins in Isaiah's time are "like scarlet," one day they will be "as white as snow" (1:18), and one day the Lord will "smelt away" all the injustice, rebellion, and idolatry in Israel, restoring righteousness there so fully that Jerusalem will be "called the city of righteousness, the faithful city" (1:25–26). Jerusalem will be such a model of justice that the nations of the world will take notice and want to imitate its citizens' way of life. It will be as if the hill on which the temple in Jerusalem is located suddenly becomes the highest mountain on earth and "all the nations" (2:2) stream toward it, saying, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the L◆◆◆, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. (2:3) In the end, justice and peace will prevail so thoroughly that the nations will "beat their swords into plowshares, / and their spears into pruning hooks" (2:4). Rather than war, there will be the peaceful pursuit of agriculture, a thought that recalls the safety and abundance of the garden in Eden. Just as Deuteronomy ends its vision of a renewed Israel with a call to "choose life, that you and your offspring may live" (Deut. 30:19), so Isaiah ends this cycle of judgment and hope with a call to Israel to take the step necessary for the wonderful vision he has just described to become reality: "Come," he says to them, "let us walk / in the light of the L◆◆◆" (Isa. 2:5). Isaiah then repeats the

same judgment-and-blessing pattern, and once again, his rebuke gives way to a vision of abundance and safety that recalls the safety of the garden of Eden and the ideal description in Leviticus 26:3–12 of God’s blessings for the obedient: In that day the branch of the L^o shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel. 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 L^o 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. There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain. (Isa. 4:2–6). Here Isaiah envisions Israel as a holy people, purified of their wickedness and living in a land of abundance and safety. Crops will be fruitful. The Lord will “create” again, just as he did when he created the heavens and the earth. In this instance, what the Lord will create recalls the time when he led Israel out of slavery in Egypt and provided them with a cloud of shade by day and a guiding pillar of fire by night.⁸ These echoes of Israel’s rescue from slavery communicate that in the future time of restoration, God will be present with his people and will provide for them, just as he was present and provided during the exodus and in the garden of Eden before the first couple’s disobedience. (All from Thielman New Creation)

- Isa. 5:1–12:6 (Root of Jesse Brings Blessing)
 - Isaiah 7 begins by noting how Jerusalem is protected by God when threatened by a coalition involving Aram and the northern kingdom of Israel: “In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah the king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not yet mount an attack against it” (Isa. 7:1). While this opening verse reassuringly indicates that Jerusalem will be secure from the threat posed by a Syro-Ephraimite alliance, much of the material in Isaiah 7–11 is highly critical of King Ahaz and his failure as a Davidic king to trust the Lord. Yet, in spite of this criticism of Ahaz, chapter 12 offers a very positive statement of what God will do in the future for Jerusalem: You will say in that day: “I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me.” Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.” With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: “Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.” Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth.

Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel." (Isa. 12:1–6) Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 98 hl-color:: yellow

- Isaiah's second major cycle of judgment and eventual restoration (Isa. 5:1–12:6) begins by drawing an analogy between untrusting and disobedient Israel and an unfruitful vineyard (5:1–7). Like a disappointed farmer who finds bad fruit in a vineyard he has worked hard to tend, God looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, an outcry! (5:7) A little later in the section, the Lord gives a sign to the unbelieving King Ahaz, a descendant of the greatest king of the united kingdom of Israel, King David. A "virgin," he says, "shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (7:14). "Immanuel" is Hebrew for "God is with us." Later still, Isaiah describes the birth of a child who will bring an end to the contempt that "the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali" in the region of Galilee (9:1) felt after "Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came and captured" them during Isaiah's time (2 Kings 15:29). This child, however, is no temporary or even temporal ruler. He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, and of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end. He will rule "with justice and with righteousness" forever (Isa. 9:6–7).¹⁰ Isaiah ends this series of descriptions of judgment and blessing with another, lengthier description of the coming Davidic king (11:1–12:6).¹¹ Since David's father was Jesse, Isaiah calls this great Davidic descendant poetically "a shoot from the stump of Jesse" (11:1; cf. 6:13). The idea of new growth from the stump of a downed tree implies that the new king will arise from the devastation Israel has experienced through its disobedience to God at the hands of the Assyrians (and, eventually, the Babylonians and the Romans). At the time of this king's coming, Israelites whom the Assyrians had uprooted from their homeland and settled in their own region will stream in large numbers back to Judah. Just as in 4:5, Isaiah compares this period of redemption to the exodus from Egypt: There will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant that remains of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt. (11:16) The great Davidic king will possess two main character traits, the second arising from the first. First, he will have such a profound spiritual connection to the Lord that he will fully understand the Lord's will in any given instance and know precisely how to act in the most prudent way from the Lord's perspective (11:2). Second, he will be a perfectly fair, just, and equitable judge and decision maker. He will not favor the attractive or be swayed by the rumor mill (11:3). As a result, the poor and marginalized of the earth will receive a just verdict in court rather than a verdict tilted against them (11:4). Righteousness and honesty will be such an important part of this king's character that Isaiah speaks of these virtues poetically as a belt around the king's waist (11:5). They will be like part of his clothing. This king will rule with such

wisdom that creation will be restored to the peaceful existence it had before human disobedience. The nonviolent vegetarianism that Genesis 1–2 describes will again characterize the earth. The wolf, the leopard, the lion, and the bear will lose their appetite for meat and dwell in peace with the easiest catch of their natural prey—the lamb, the kid goat, the calf, and the fattened cow (Isa. 11:6–8). Wild and vicious animals will be domesticated to such an extent that a “little boy” (NASB) can herd them, and even the mighty lion will be satisfied with hay (11:6–7). The enmity between the serpent and humanity (Gen. 3:15) will end so that venomous snakes pose no threat to babies and toddlers (Isa. 11:8). Peace in the animal world will be matched by peace at the societal level as the nations of the earth look to the great Davidic king for governance (11:9–16). Israel will be reunited, the nations that oppressed God’s people will be conquered, and exiled Israelites will be restored to their homes. This life of restoration and peace will not be Israel’s alone, moreover, but the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the L as the waters cover the sea. (11:9) Israel itself will voice its praise to God before all the nations of the earth for the glorious things that he has done (12:4–5). (Thielman New Creation)

- Confronting King Ahaz, Isaiah challenges him regarding his failure to trust the Lord when confronted by a SyroEphraimite alliance. By looking to Assyria for assistance, rather than to God, Ahaz exacerbates the crisis. Against the background of Ahaz’s faithlessness as God’s vice-regent, Isaiah 9:1–7 anticipates the coming of a new and better Davidic king Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 105 hl-color:: yellow
- An overview of Isaiah 7–11 reveals that God will punish the house of David for its failure to rule appropriately as his vice-regent. Yet God will not abandon completely the Davidic dynasty; he will renew it through raising up a Spirit-filled king who will govern with wisdom and justice and will bring peace to the world. The hopes associated with this future Davidic king resonate strongly with Isaiah’s visions of a renewed Jerusalem. This future Davidic king will exercise universal influence, bringing back to Jerusalem those who have been scattered among the nations (Isa. 11:10–12). Moreover, the rule of this righteous king is linked to the transformation of the natural environment (Isa. 11:6–9; cf. 65:25). “The future kingdom is described as something similar to a paradise with peace and security, even the removal of the original curse on the relationship between man and the animals (Gen 3:14–19). Natural enemies in the animal kingdom will live together, feed together, and play together, but the strong or poisonous beasts will not harm anyone.”¹³ Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 108 hl-color:: yellow
- Isa. 13:1–27:1 (Blessing to Nations & Death of Death)
 - Near the end of the third cycle of judgment and restoration (Isa. 13:1–27:13), Isaiah develops a similar vision of Israel, its people, and its land occupying the

center of a renewed earth. Speaking of Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, Isaiah says this: On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the LORD God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. (25:6–9; cf. 26:19) Just as in the garden before the first couple's disobedience, God will provide plentiful food for his human creatures, and they will no longer be subject to the curse of death (Gen. 2:17; 3:17–19) with the sense of loss and sadness that death brings to those left behind. Just as God said to Abraham, moreover, all the nations of the earth will be blessed through Abraham's descendants as Israel emerges from the period of rebellion against God and his judgment of Israel through the oppression of the surrounding nations. A few paragraphs later Isaiah says, In days to come, Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit. (Isa. 27:6)

- Chapters 13–23 consist mainly of oracles against the nations, but even here occasional glimpses of hope are given, reflecting God's ongoing commitment to Jerusalem. Isaiah 14:32 affirms, "The LORD has founded Zion, / and in her the afflicted of his people find refuge." Similarly, Isaiah 18:7 records: "At that time tribute will be brought to the LORD of hosts / from a people tall and smooth, / from a people feared near and far, / a nation mighty and conquering, / whose land the rivers divide, / to Mount Zion, the place of the name of the LORD of hosts." A further statement of God's commitment to Zion comes in Isaiah 24:23: "Then the moon will be confounded / and the sun ashamed, / for the LORD of hosts reigns / on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, / and his glory will be before his elders." To these, Isaiah 28:16–17 adds the expectation of God's building up Zion through a future "cornerstone," a metaphor for a promised king. God's protection of Zion in the face of foreign foes is mentioned in Isaiah 29:5–8, and the restoration of exiles to Zion is graphically described with vivid images of new life in Isaiah 35:1–10. With "everlasting joy" "the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing" (Isa. 35:10). The positive picture of God restoring exiles to Zion in Isaiah 35 is immediately followed by two episodes that focus on the divine rescue of King Hezekiah, first from the Assyrians (chaps. 36–37) and then from illness (chap. 38). God's deliverance of the king and Jerusalem from the Assyrians takes on added significance in the light of how the Assyrians decimated the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC.⁶ These expressions of hope scattered throughout the book of Isaiah are exceptionally important. The book of Isaiah radiates a confidence that, in spite of the abject failure of eighth-century Jerusalem to be the city of God, the Lord will accomplish his plan to construct a

temple-city on a holy mountain. Yet the expectation of forthcoming divine punishment remains a real threat if the people continue to desecrate God's dwelling place through idolatry and injustice. Unfortunately, Isaiah's predictions of chastisement become a reality in the sixth century BC. Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 99 hl-color:: yellow

- Isa. 28:1–35:10 (Righteous King and Peace)
 - Within his fourth major section of judgment and blessing (Isa. 28:1–35:10), Isaiah moves back to a description of the great king who will enact this whole new order. Once again, the prophet emphasizes the righteousness of this king, although now he adds that there will be righteous "princes" underneath him who will also rule justly (32:1). The king and his subordinates will preside over a society in which those who have experienced injustice and oppression will find shelter as if from a strong wind or a storm (32:2). Fools and deceivers will no longer prevail against the poor and needy (32:3–8). God will pour out his Spirit on his people, and the justice and righteousness that will characterize society will be matched by fruitful fields, peace, righteousness, quietness, trust among people, and life "in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (32:15–19). Recalling the scene of peaceful vegetarianism in Genesis 1–2, Isaiah says that people will "sow beside all waters" and will "let the feet of the ox and the donkey range free" (32:20). At the end of the section, Isaiah describes God's rescue of Judah from the oppression of Edom, a vassal state of Assyria during this period and a traditional enemy of Judah on its southern border.¹² Edom had taken advantage of Judah's weakness in the late eighth century to carry away some of its people as captives, but God promised that such oppression would not last. Eventually, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. (35:5–6) Here, too, the imagery describes an idyllic setting in which physical affliction is healed.
 - Further oracles come in Isaiah 28–39 linked to the reign of Hezekiah, Ahaz's successor. These also present a less than hopeful picture regarding the Davidic dynasty in the eighth century BC, for Hezekiah is warned against the danger of trusting in Egypt when threatened by the Assyrians. Jerusalem, however, is spared from destruction when God intervenes, an event that underlines God's special commitment to both Zion and the Davidic dynasty. The defeat of the Assyrians is merely a temporary reprieve, however, for Isaiah 39 contains a divine oracle that warns of a future deportation of the royal family to Babylonia. The contents of chapter 39 are noteworthy, because they create a remarkable bridge between the first part of Isaiah and chapters 40–48. Chapters 1–39 concentrate mainly on the eighth-century reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah, but chapters 40–48 look to the future, anticipating how in the late sixth century the Persian ruler

Cyrus will overthrow Babylon, making it possible for Judean exiles to return to the decimated city of Jerusalem. Isaiah 39 describes how Hezekiah, after recovering from a serious illness, receives envoys from the king of Babylon. Hezekiah not only welcomes the Babylonian envoys, but he seizes the opportunity to impress them by showing off all his wealth; everything is shown to them. Apart from possibly wishing to impress his foreign visitors regarding his own status as a great king, Hezekiah may have hoped to forge a political and military alliance with the Babylonians against the powerful Assyrians. However, Hezekiah's actions anger God. Hezekiah should have known better than to look to Babylon, the archetypal godless city, for support. The book of Isaiah itself contains a telling denouncement of Babylon in chapters 13–14. Consequently, God sends Isaiah to Hezekiah with a message: Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the LORD. And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. (Isa. 39:5–7) Isaiah's prediction anticipates the overthrow of the Davidic dynasty by the Babylonians. This will take place in 586 BC, about a hundred years after the death of Hezekiah. Isaiah 39 provides an interesting bridge between chapters 1–39 and 40–66. Whereas chapters 1–39 focus principally on eighth-century Jerusalem and the shortcomings of the Davidic monarch, chapters 40–48 center on the Babylonian exile that follows the destruction of Jerusalem and the demise of the Davidic government in 586 BC. In chapters 48–66, Isaiah looks beyond the initial restoration of Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile, predicting the divine creation of an eschatological new Jerusalem. Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 108 hl-color:: yellow

- Isaiah 25–27 gives a particular vision of this renewal, where death will no longer be operative (Is 25), peace will be the banner of the city (Is 26) and God's vineyard of delight will produce fruit over the face of the world (Is 27). Further, nations will come and worship at the renewed sanctuary in Zion (Is 27:13; cf. Is 2:2–3). Key to Isaiah 25–26 is the vision of the judged yet restored "mountain of God" and "city"—Zion and Jerusalem.⁹ Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 101 hl-color:: yellow
- Chapters 13–23 consist mainly of oracles against the nations, but even here occasional glimpses of hope are given, reflecting God's ongoing commitment to Jerusalem. Isaiah 14:32 affirms, "The LORD has founded Zion, / and in her the afflicted of his people find refuge." Similarly, Isaiah 18:7 records: "At that time tribute will be brought to the LORD of hosts / from a people tall and smooth, / from a people feared near and far, / a nation mighty and conquering, / whose land the rivers divide, / to Mount Zion, the place of the name of the LORD of hosts." A

further statement of God's commitment to Zion comes in Isaiah 24:23: "Then the moon will be confounded/ and the sun ashamed, / for the LORD of hosts reigns / on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, / and his glory will be before his elders." To these, Isaiah 28:16–17 adds the expectation of God's building up Zion through a future "cornerstone," a metaphor for a promised king. God's protection of Zion in the face of foreign foes is mentioned in Isaiah 29:5–8, and the restoration of exiles to Zion is graphically described with vivid images of new life in Isaiah 35:1–10. With "everlasting joy" "the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing" (Isa. 35:10). The positive picture of God restoring exiles to Zion in Isaiah 35 is immediately followed by two episodes that focus on the divine rescue of King Hezekiah, first from the Assyrians (chaps. 36–37) and then from illness (chap. 38). God's deliverance of the king and Jerusalem from the Assyrians takes on added significance in the light of how the Assyrians decimated the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC.⁶ These expressions of hope scattered throughout the book of Isaiah are exceptionally important. The book of Isaiah radiates a confidence that, in spite of the abject failure of eighth-century Jerusalem to be the city of God, the Lord will accomplish his plan to construct a temple-city on a holy mountain. Yet the expectation of forthcoming divine punishment remains a real threat if the people continue to desecrate God's dwelling place through idolatry and injustice. Unfortunately, Isaiah's predictions of chastisement become a reality in the sixth century BC. Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 99 hl-color:: yellow

- On ch 35-- Remarkably, this description goes far beyond anything normally associated with exiles returning to their native land. The blind will see, the deaf will hear, and the mute tongue will shout for joy. And they will experience "everlasting joy." This is hardly to be treated as merely exaggerated language. More likely, Isaiah describes here the real experience of those who will enter the eschatological new Jerusalem. Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 116 hl-color:: yellow
- Isa. 36:1–56:8 (Yahweh's Royal Servant)
 - Note to self: the servant is Israel- although in 49 it seems there is one designated to be the servant because Israel failed to be God's servant and by 54 he makes "the many" servants.
 - Chapters 13–23 consist mainly of oracles against the nations, but even here occasional glimpses of hope are given, reflecting God's ongoing commitment to Jerusalem. Isaiah 14:32 affirms, "The LORD has founded Zion, / and in her the afflicted of his people find refuge." Similarly, Isaiah 18:7 records: "At that time tribute will be brought to the LORD of hosts / from a people tall and smooth, / from a people feared near and far, / a nation mighty and conquering, / whose land the rivers divide, / to Mount Zion, the place of the name of the LORD of hosts." A

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- s we have already observed, Genesis 11:1–9 describes how Babel/Babylon was founded as the antithesis to the city of God. With the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem in 586 BC, all that God had patiently done to establish his temple-city was reduced to ashes and rubble. Babylon appeared victorious. Yet this was not the end of the story, for Isaiah speaks words of comfort, promising restoration and the creation of a radically different Jerusalem. Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 97 hl-color:: yellow
- Moreover, this surprising outcome seems to set in reverse God's plan to inhabit the earth. Not surprisingly, therefore, the idea of Jerusalem falling to the Babylonians presented a major theological dilemma for the people of Jerusalem and Judah. Nations being hostile toward Jerusalem, the holy mountain of God, was accepted as an inevitable consequence of humanity's opposition to the rule of God on earth, but the people of Jerusalem believed that God's presence and that of the Davidic kings ensured the city's invincibility. God's enemies would be overthrown and his rule extended throughout the earth Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 97 hl-color:: yellow
- Later, within his fifth major section of judgment and blessing (Isa. 36:1–56:8), Isaiah refers to an individual whom the Lord calls "my servant" and who functions

in much the same way as the coming Davidic king. God's Spirit is "upon him," and he will "bring forth justice to the nations" (42:1; cf. 49:1, 6; 52:15). He will not be a typical potentate of the period, violently conquering and oppressing the surrounding nations, but will be humble, gentle, and patient:¹³ He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law. (42:2–4; cf. 49:4; 52:14; 53:2–3, 7–9) God prefaces his commission to his servant (42:6–9) with a reference back to the creation of heaven, earth, and especially human beings: Thus says God, the L, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it. (42:5) The Lord then tells his servant that he will be "a covenant for the people, / a light for the nations" (42:6), a poetic way of saying that the servant will mediate between God and his people Israel and will also reveal God's benevolent instruction to all the peoples of the earth.¹⁴ He will "open the eyes that are blind" and "bring out the prisoners from the dungeon" (42:7). Isaiah makes clear a few paragraphs later that blindness and imprisonment are metaphorical ways of describing Israel's lack of knowledge and sinfulness (42:19, 22).¹⁵ Here, however, Isaiah describes both Israel and the nations as blind and imprisoned. Everyone, whether Israelite or not, needs the gracious rescue God's servant will provide. In another description of the servant a few chapters later (49:1–7), Isaiah makes a mysterious correlation between the servant and Israel. Here the servant plays the same role as the servant of 42:1–7.¹⁶ He calls the coastlands and the peoples from afar to pay careful attention to him (49:1; cf. 42:1). He performs his mission with humility and without any obvious success from the perspective of the surrounding society (49:4; cf. 42:2–3). He calls Israel back to the Lord and follows that call with an extension of the light of the Lord to the nations (49:5–7; cf. 42:6). Yet in the middle of all this (49:3), the Lord says to the servant, You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified. (49:3) At first it might seem that the mystery is easily solved: the servant is Israel! But how can Israel call Israel back to the Lord?¹⁷ Clearly, the servant is an individual, like the great Davidic king of Isaiah 11, who calls both Israel and the nations into the light of God's revelation and eventual salvation (49:6) but who also completes the vocation that God had given to Israel when he constituted it as a nation. In the face of Israel's failure to be the means by which God will fulfill his promise to bless the nations through Abraham (Gen. 12:3), the servant will fulfill that promise. He will be the conduit of God's blessing, through Abraham, to all the nations of the earth. He will be "Israel" in this sense. Later still in this section, Isaiah becomes even more specific about how the servant will accomplish this.

Isaiah has already led his readers to expect that the servant will not triumph in the same way as other kings of the period, with violence followed by proud assertions of power. He will not “cry aloud or lift up his voice” (Isa. 42:2). Even if his enemies had the vulnerability of a bruised reed or a faintly burning wick, he will neither break nor quench them (42:2–3). The servant will not put his confidence in his own labor or his strength but in the Lord whose commitment to justice he will trust (49:4).¹⁸ In 52:13–53:12, Isaiah fills out this picture of the servant’s humility. In a way reminiscent of the great Davidic king in 11:1–2, the servant will be wise (52:13) and will spring like a young plant from dry ground (53:2), but like the servant in Isaiah 42 and 49, he will be so humble that it will be as if his appearance were marred and painful to see (52:14; 53:2–3). People will despise him, failing to recognize who he is (53:3) to the extent that, although he is innocent of any injustice, they will execute him as a criminal (53:7–9). From this very miscarriage of justice, however, will come a transformation of Israel’s relationship with God. The Lord’s servant will experience the punishment Israel deserved, and this substitutionary punishment will bring them peace (53:5). The death of the righteous servant will make “many to be accounted righteous” (53:11). When the injustice and oppression of Israel reaches its lowest point, God will use that low point to begin the restoration of his people to a relationship with himself. There are indications in this passage, moreover, that the forgiveness God offers to his people through the substitutionary death of his innocent servant will extend to the nations. In 52:15, Isaiah says that the servant “shall . . . sprinkle many nations,” using a term that appears in Leviticus 16:14 to refer to the high priest sprinkling sacrificial blood on the altar to make atonement for his sin. The sprinkling in Isaiah 52:15, therefore, is probably a reference to the atoning death of the servant that Isaiah describes later in the passage (53:4–12).¹⁹ If this is right, it is likely that Isaiah meant to include the “many nations” he mentions in 52:15 among the “many” for whom the servant’s substitutionary death atones (53:12). Isaiah fills out this theme at the end of this section of the book as he describes a future pilgrimage of foreigners to God’s “holy mountain” (56:1–7), where his temple will become “a house of prayer for all peoples” and where the nations will worship God together with Israel (56:7–8).

- The servant’s role as an atoning sacrifice is highly significant in the light of the corruption of Jerusalem and the requirement to be holy in order to ascend the mountain of God. The future servant king will suffer and die for the benefit of others. This function takes on even greater significance when it is linked to a future Davidic monarchy. Unlike the immoral Davidic kings of the eighth century, who exploit the poor and needy, the servant king will lay down his life to atone for the sins of others.¹⁷ The servant king’s self-sacrifice is even more striking because he is designated righteous by God (Isa. 53:11; cf. v. 9). The actions of

the servant are vital for the transformation of corrupt Jerusalem into a radically new city. This is underscored by the fact that the Servant Songs in chapters 49–53 are interspersed with passages that focus on the transformation of Zion. Is-
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- Further oracles come in Isaiah 28–39 linked to the reign of Hezekiah, Ahaz's successor. These also present a less than hopeful picture regarding the Davidic dynasty in the eighth century BC, for Hezekiah is warned against the danger of trusting in Egypt when threatened by the Assyrians. Jerusalem, however, is spared from destruction when God intervenes, an event that underlines God's special commitment to both Zion and the Davidic dynasty. The defeat of the Assyrians is merely a temporary reprieve, however, for Isaiah 39 contains a divine oracle that warns of a future deportation of the royal family to Babylonia. The contents of chapter 39 are noteworthy, because they create a remarkable bridge between the first part of Isaiah and chapters 40–48. Chapters 1–39 concentrate mainly on the eighth-century reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah, but chapters 40–48 look to the future, anticipating how in the late sixth century the Persian ruler Cyrus will overthrow Babylon, making it possible for Judean exiles to return to the decimated city of Jerusalem. Isaiah 39 describes how Hezekiah, after recovering from a serious illness, receives envoys from the king of Babylon. Hezekiah not only welcomes the Babylonian envoys, but he seizes the opportunity to impress them by showing off all his wealth; everything is shown to them. Apart from possibly wishing to impress his foreign visitors regarding his own status as a great king, Hezekiah may have hoped to forge a political and military alliance with the Babylonians against the powerful Assyrians. However, Hezekiah's actions anger God. Hezekiah should have known better than to look to Babylon, the archetypal godless city, for support. The book of Isaiah itself contains a telling denouncement of Babylon in chapters 13–14. Consequently, God sends Isaiah to Hezekiah with a message: Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the LORD. And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. (Isa. 39:5–7) Isaiah's prediction anticipates the overthrow of the Davidic dynasty by the Babylonians. This will take place in 586 BC, about a hundred years after the death of Hezekiah. Isaiah 39 provides an interesting bridge between chapters 1–39 and 40–66. Whereas chapters 1–39 focus principally on eighth-century Jerusalem and the shortcomings of the Davidic monarch, chapters 40–48 center on the Babylonian exile that follows the destruction of Jerusalem and the demise of the Davidic government in 586 BC. In chapters 48–66, Isaiah looks beyond the initial restoration of Jerusalem after the Babylonian

exile, predicting the divine creation of an eschatological new Jerusalem. Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 108 hl-color:: yellow

- In light of the failure of the Davidic monarchy to ensure justice in Jerusalem, it is noteworthy that in Isaiah 44:28–45:13 the Persian ruler Cyrus is designated the Lord's anointed.¹⁴ This Gentile king defeats the Babylonians and is responsible for initiating the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem (cf. 2 Chron. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–8). Given the Israelite belief that the Davidic king would be a source of blessing to the nations, it is ironic that God raises up a Gentile king to begin the process of restoring the temple in Jerusalem. But Cyrus's involvement in the rebuilding of the temple and city merely anticipates a much greater achievement accomplished by another "servant." Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 110 hl-color:: yellow
- Responding to the tragic picture of an immoral city, the prophet Isaiah predicts the future transformation of Jerusalem into a righteous city that will be the place of salvation for the nations. Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 100 hl-color:: yellow ((63d058a8-e3cd-4d74-b157-e985f157c984))
- In Isaiah, the role of Cyrus is paralleled by a nameless individual, referred to as the "servant." This person is distinguished from Cyrus, but both are chosen by the Lord (Isa. 42:1, 6; 45:4; 49:7), who takes each of them by the hand (Isa. 42:6; 45:1). Fittingly, what Cyrus does for Israel is mirrored by what the servant does for the nations. The identity of the unnamed servant in Isaiah 40–66 has prompted much discussion. He is mentioned specifically in Isaiah 42:1–9; 49:1–7; 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12, and probably also in 61:1–3, although in this latter passage the term servant is not used.¹⁵ The first four passages are commonly known as the "Servant Songs," but scholars differ somewhat when defining the actual boundaries of some of these songs. The identity of the servant is much debated, with some scholars suggesting that the designation refers to Israel as a nation and not an individual.¹⁶ On balance, it is much more likely that the servant of Isaiah 40–66 is to be equated with the promised king of Isaiah 1–39. The designation "servant" emphasizes that this individual is obedient and loyal to God Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 110 hl-color:: yellow
- Isa. 56:9–62:12 (The Servant and the New Covenant)
 - In Isaiah's sixth major cycle of judgment and blessing (Isa. 56:9–62:12), the Lord's patience with injustice in Israel has run out. Israel is observing its traditional religious rituals but failing to follow the Lord's instruction to give freedom to the oppressed, to provide for the poor, to rest on the Sabbath, or to render justice and speak truthfully in their courts (58:1–59:15a). As the Lord looks across this landscape, he can find "no justice" and "no one to intercede" (59:15b–16). So he takes action himself, putting on the armor of salvation, righteousness, vengeance, and zeal (59:17). He repays the wicked for their evil

deeds (59:18–19) and becomes a Redeemer to any who will turn from their transgression (59:20). At the end of this passage, the Lord makes a “covenant”—a solemn agreement—with his people. He will give to them an individual on whom his Spirit will rest, who will ensure that the Lord’s teaching continues forever (59:21). Earlier, Isaiah had referred to the servant who would complete Israel’s mission to establish “justice in the earth,” bring the law to the distant “coastlands,” and be “a light for the nations” (42:4, 6; 49:6) as someone on whom God’s Spirit would rest (42:1) and who would be “a covenant for/to the people” (42:6; 49:8). The individual addressed here in 59:21, then, is likely to be that same servant.²⁰

- This positive picture of a new Jerusalem is developed further in Isaiah 62:1–5. The corruption and immorality of Jerusalem’s past is irreversibly replaced by a righteousness that shines forth. No longer abandoned by God, Jerusalem will become a precious jewel in the Lord’s hand, a witness to the nations that this is indeed the city of God. In describing the transformation of Jerusalem, the book of Isaiah introduces the idea that this new Jerusalem is not a city created through a slow process of evolution. On the contrary, Isaiah emphasizes that this ideal city owes its very existence to the creative activity of God. Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 102 hl-color:: yellow
- Isa. 65:1–66:24 (New Heavens and New Earth)
 - **Isaiah concludes his book with a seventh series** of contrasts between the eventual destruction that will come to those who have rejected God and the blessing that will come to God’s faithful servants (Isa. 65:1–66:24). After God’s merciful delay, judgment will eventually come (65:1–7). The faithful remnant within God’s people will experience much hardship as this judgment takes place (65:8–12).²¹ Finally, however, God will separate his faithful servants from the faithless (65:13–16), and God’s servants will inhabit a new creation: For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I created Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. (65:17–18) The threefold use of the verb “create” here, especially with “heavens” and “earth” as its object, recalls Genesis 1:1. It is a verb that Isaiah has used frequently to describe God’s creation of various features of the natural world (e.g., Isa. 4:5; 40:26, 28; 42:5; 45:7).²² This new creation will contain no weeping or distress (65:19). Life will last an unnaturally long time (65:20). People will build, plant, reap, and bear children in peace (65:21–23). Just as in 11:6–9, peace will reign in the animal world, and the serpent, whose insidious cleverness helped destroy the peace of the garden of Eden, will stay in the dust where it belongs (65:25; cf. Gen. 3:14). This will be a period, moreover, when “all nations and tongues” gather to see God’s glory (Isa. 66:18) and when the survivors of

God's judgment on Israel travel to the far corners of the world to announce God's fame. As a result, people from "all the nations" will join faithful Israel as full members of God's people and as worshipers of the Lord (66:18–23). Isaiah's Vision of the World's Restoration Isaiah, then, envisions the pathway by which God will fulfill his promise to bless all the nations of the earth through Abraham. God will do this despite Israel's failure to rise above the level of the rest of fallen humanity in its trusting obedience to God. Israel, and all the disobedient peoples of the earth, will pass through a time of judgment for the violence, injustice, oppression, and idolatry that characterize their societies, but then God will bring to Israel a great servant-king from the line of David. God's Spirit will be on this royal servant, and he will be the mediator of a covenant between God, Israel, and the nations of the earth. He will be wise, just, and compassionate. His servanthood will extend to the point that, although totally innocent of wrongdoing himself, he will die for the sins of both Israel and the nations. He will embody Israel's vocation (cf. Ex. 19:5–6), bringing the light of God's teaching to the nations and calling all, whether within Israel or the nations, to turn from their transgression. Eventually, under his reign, God will restore all creation to the security, peace, and abundance of the garden in Eden, and God himself will be present there with his human creation.

- When the prophetic testimony on Zion is taken together, Zion becomes a witness to God's universal dominion in creation (see Is 60). As a theological symbol, Zion presses the future hope well beyond any former localization in the prophets' presentation of history. Zion, then, absorbs the grandeur of Israel's Sinai theophany into a new vision of God's universal reign in creation (Levenson). Although the Zion tradition may link back to creation theology, in the prophets the vision of "restored Zion" is a picture of creation redivivus. . . . In this way, for the prophets Zion becomes a rich theological symbol that depicts the reign of God over his creation in time and eternity. Zion becomes a symbol of new creation and redeemed humanity that lives before God without sin, death or pain because God rules in its midst (cf. Is 2:2–4; 65; Mic 4:14). Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 149 hl-color:: yellow
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- Where “Zion” imagery is retained in expressions of hope for the future (in the post-exilic literature), it is rarely (if ever) in the form of a simple return to the status quo ante. The shared prophetic vision of a restored Israel is of an entity that is qualitatively different; in the terms of the New Covenant, this is based in turn on an act of God that is qualitatively different. It is not easy to turn such prophecies into a vision for the historical city of Jerusalem. This is the more true of that literature in which hopes for Jerusalem introduce an eschatological element, removing it from the ordinary historical plane. Jerusalem becomes, in the prophetic vision, a symbol of God’s final work of salvation for all the nations, who unite in their knowledge and worship of him. In all this Jerusalem—the historical city—recedes into the background.¹⁹ The prophetic expectations linked to the new Jerusalem are not simply focused on the nation of Israel. For the prophets, future Jerusalem takes on a more universal dimension, involving the nations of the earth. Capturing something of this, Thomas writes: Zion as a symbol intertwines the destiny of Israel with the nations. As those who have been judged and remain, the nations and Israel will find refuge in Zion under the protection of God, the instruction of God, and his appointed king (Mic 4:1–2; Zeph 3:9; Zech 2:10–11; 8:1–23). After purification of sin, Israel and the nations are incorporated i Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 150 hl-color:: yellow
- The formation of a resplendent city of God on a re-created earth was central to their eschatological hope. Moreover, the citizens of this eschatological city would include the righteous who had already died, for they would joyfully be resurrected to experience life in all its fullness. Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 123 hl-color:: yellow
- Recalling the Genesis 1 portrayal of creation, the Lord speaks here of creating “new heavens and a new earth” (v. 17). Remarkably, this announcement is followed almost immediately by a parallel statement that God will “create Jerusalem” (v. 18). In both instances, God uses the same Hebrew verb—*bara’*, “to create”—implying that Jerusalem is to be equated with the new heavens and a new earth. This resonates with the larger biblical picture, for God’s purpose in creating the earth is to dwell in a temple-city that will fill the whole world. To underline the radical transformation that will accompany God’s creation of the cosmic new Jerusalem, the oracle goes on to speak of how human life will be changed (Isa. 65:19–24). And after emphasizing how the city’s human inhabitants will enjoy peace and security, God describes how this transformation will impact the animals living on his holy mountain: “The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; / the lion shall eat straw like the ox, / and dust shall be the serpent’s

food. / They shall not hurt or destroy / in all my holy mountain,' / says the LORD" (Isa. 65:25).¹⁰ Looking to the future transformation of Jerusalem, Isaiah brings together in close association the concepts of holy mountain, Jerusalem, and new heavens and a new earth (cf. Isa. 66:18–23). We continue to see the significance of the city as the climax to God's awe-inspiring rejuvenation of the earth, the place where he and people will dwell together in harmony. Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 103 hl-color:: yellow

- Everything points toward the restoration of the comprehensive harmony that existed in the garden of Eden prior to Adam and Eve's rebellion against God. But Eden will no longer be simply a garden; it will become a majestic, cosmopolitan city Is-type:: annotation hl-page:: 104 hl-color:: yellow
- **King of Babylon****Suffering Servant**Smites (*nakah*), 14:6Is smitten (*nakah*), 53:4-5, 10Slays and oppresses (*nagash*), 14:2, 4, 10Is oppressed (*nagash*), 53:7-8Shakes earth and boasts, 14:13-14, 16Is humble and quiet, 53:7Wicked, pompous, feared, 14:5, 11, 16Righteous, despised, 53:2-3Exalts himself and fallsHumbles himself and is exaltedDies and ends, 14:18-20Dies, but prolongs days, 53:10-11Seed cut off, 14:20-22Cut off, but sees seed, 53:8-10Buried in tomb, 14:18-20Given a tomb, 53:9Kings see and are startled, 14:9-11Kings see and are startled, 52:14-15King's arise to welcome to Sheol, 14:9-20Kings arise and bow down, 49:6