

First Impressions of the Prophet Isaiah and His Message

Setting:

- Ministry spanning 4 kings of Judah centered in/around Jerusalem (740-700 BC)
- Northern Kingdom of Israel invaded and defeated by Assyrian Empire
- Southern Kingdom of Judah in spiritual decline and threatened by Assyrian Empire

Personal Matters:

- Isaiah was married and had at least two sons with symbolic names (7:3, 8:2-3)
- Had personal access to the Kings of Judah as a counselor/advisor (7:3, 37:2, 38:1)
- Overwhelmed with his sin (6:5), trusted the LORD in time of trial (8:17), wept for enemies (15:5)

Intended Audiences:

- Isaiah's Israelite contemporaries in Jerusalem/Judah during Assyrian threat (chaps 1-39)
- Future generations of Israelites during and following Babylonian exile (chaps 40-66)
- Nations/peoples of the world in any age

Primary Themes:

- The uniqueness of the God of Israel as the One worthy of complete trust and obedience
- Promises of Judgment and Salvation for Judah and the Nations
- Servants of the LORD: Israel, The Suffering One, those who trust Him
- Future kingdom of peace and prosperity in restored Zion, the City of God

Basic Outline:

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| Feb 7 | 1. Contrasting oracles of present and future Judah/Jerusalem - Part 1 (1-5) |
| | 2. A vision of the LORD at Isaiah's commissioning (6) |
| | 3. The LORD's call to Judah to trust Him during the Assyrian threat (7-39) |
| Feb 14 | A. Oracles during the reign of King Ahaz concerning special children (7-12) |
| Feb 21 | B. Judgment oracles concerning the nations (13-24) |
| | C. Praises to the LORD re. Zion's future glory as the enduring City of God (25-27) |
| Feb 28 | D. Contrasting oracles of present and future Judah/Jerusalem - Part 2 (28-35) |
| | E. 'Trust' narratives re. the LORD's interactions with King Hezekiah (36-39) |
| Mar 7 | 4. Promises of comfort re. the LORD's salvation from Babylonian exile and sin (40-55) |
| Mar 14 | 5. The LORD's servants, Zion and all mankind at the closing of the age (56-66) |

Summary remarks of one Isaiah commentator:

"The overall impact which the book of Isaiah leaves on the heart is that if man is to receive and experience salvation at all, it will have to be given to him by the Creator and Lord of the universe through grace. The way of man is ingratitude, lack of trust, self-centeredness. If he is not worshipping idols, he is oppressing the helpless; if he is not relying on military strength and foreign alliances, he is going through the external form of fasting ... in order to persuade God to remove His punishment. There is none holy but God, and when He reveals Himself to man, the only honest response is ... "Woe is me... for I am a man of unclean lips." He who through such a feeling seeks the Lord and calls upon Him alone can find mercy and pardon. Many choose the broad way of trusting in good works in order to gain the praises of men, but the few who travel the narrow way of trusting in God alone He molds into a faithful remnant in spite of their sinful humanness."

Willis, John T. 1980. *Isaiah*. (vol. 12 of Living Word Commentary on the OT, p. 9). Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press.