**Book of Isaiah**

“Isaiah” means “the salvation of Jehovah,” and the word salvation is repeated many times in the book. Isaiah apparently was from a leading family, since he had access to several of the Jewish kings. He was married (8:3) and the father of at least two sons (7:3 and 8:1–3). He began his ministry near the end of the reign of King Uzziah, or about 758 B.C. He preached until the turn of the century, and tradition tells us he was “sawn asunder” by wicked King Manasseh (Heb. 11:37).

**Christ in Isaiah**

Isaiah gives a rich prophetic picture of Jesus Christ. We see His birth (7:14 with Matt. 1:23; also Isa. 9:6); the ministry of John the Baptist (40:3–6 with Matt. 3:1ff); Christ anointed by the Spirit (61:1–2 with Luke 4:17–19); Christ the Servant (42:1–4 with Matt. 12:17–21); Israel’s rejection of Christ (6:9–11 with John 12:38, Matt. 13:10–15, and parallel references in the Gospels; also Acts 28:26–27 and Rom. 11:8); the Stone of Stumbling (8:14 and 28:16 with Rom. 9:32–33 and 10:11, 1 Peter 2:6); Christ’s ministry to the Gentiles (49:6 with Luke 2:32, Acts 13:47; see also 9:1–2 with Matt. 4:15–16); Christ’s suffering and death (52:13–53:12); His resurrection (55:3 with Acts 13:34; 45:23 with Phil. 2:10–11 and Rom. 14:11); and the Coming King (9:6–7, 11:1, 32:1–2; 59:20–21 with Rom. 11:26–27; 63:2–3 with Rev. 19:13–15).

**The Lord’s indictment of the nation (chaps. 1–5)**

1. Isaiah’s prophecies focus on Judah and Jerusalem. His book is called a vision, which suggests that the prophet “saw” (2:1) mentally and spiritually as well as heard what God communicated to him.
2. These verses are in the form of a covenant lawsuit against Judah. The Lord, through His messenger Isaiah, indicted His covenant nation for her breach of the Mosaic Covenant, and offered His complete forgiveness to those who would repent but judgment to those who continued to rebel.
3. Isaiah, speaking for the Lord, invoked the heavens and the earth to hear the following accusation against the people. Calling on the heavens and the earth was a way of informing the nation that all creation would agree with what God was about to say.
4. 1:16–20 God then invited the sinful people to come to their senses (Isa. 1:18) and admit they had been wrong in their attitudes and practices. The invitation “Come now, let us reason together” was more than a call for negotiations between the people and God. The people were to be convinced by their argumentation with God that He was right and they were wrong about their condition. If they acknowledged the depth of their sins - that their iniquities were like blood-colored stains on their souls (scarlet, a red dye made from a worm, and crimson, red-colored cloth) - then God in His grace would cleanse them, making them spiritually white like snow or wool. Acknowledgment of sin was to precede God’s cleansing. And the same is true today.
5. 2:1–2. The message recorded in these verses is what Isaiah … saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem (cf. 1:1). The prophets in Israel had, at one time, been called “seers” because of their divinely given power to “see” or foretell what would happen (1 Sam. 9:9). Here Isaiah was foretelling the future of Jerusalem and Judah.
6. 2:6–9 God had abandoned His people not because He no longer loved them but because they had become like the pagans around them.
7. 2:19–22 Then the prophet called on Judah to stop trusting in man. Man is merely like a vapor. His breath can be snuffed out quickly. In view of God’s coming judgment, Judah should begin to turn to Him in the present. God’s glory should cause them to live righteous, holy lives and thus escape His severe judgment.
8. 3:8–9. The reason such destruction would come on Judah (v. 1) is that everything the nation said and did was against her covenant God. The people defied God and were open about their sin much like the people of Sodom. Therefore the coming disaster was brought on by themselves.
9. 3:13–15. Isaiah pictured the Lord seated in a courtroom ready to judge the people and especially the leaders. Two charges were leveled against the leaders. The first is that they had ruined God’s vineyard (v. 14), that is, God’s people. Like husbandmen caring for a vineyard, the leaders were to care for the people. The second charge is that they had taken advantage of the poor.
10. 4:2. In spite of the coming severe judgment, divine blessing would eventually come.
11. 5:1–2. In his song Isaiah pictured his loved One (God) planting a vineyard on a fertile hillside, removing the stones and planting only the best vines. He built a watchtower, a stone structure from which to guard the vineyard. And He made a winepress in anticipation of producing good wine. However, only bad grapes grew on His vines.
12. Though 5:8–30 are not a part of the song in verses 1–7, they fit into Isaiah’s train of thought nicely because their six indictments (“woes”) are against the “bad fruit” the nation had been producing.

**Isaiah Sees the Lord Isaiah 6:1–4**

King Uzziah has died and the throne of Judah is empty. Like all men of faith, Isaiah turned to God for his help and comfort, and in that hour of seeming defeat, he experienced a great spiritual blessing. He saw that the throne of heaven was still occupied by Jehovah God! Note the three-fold vision God gave to Isaiah.

1. **The Upward Look—He Saw the Lord (6:1–4)** For fifty-two years, Uzziah had led Judah in a program of peace and prosperity. It was an era of expansion and achievement. It was unfortunate that the king had rebelled against the Word of God and died a leper (2 Kings 15:1–7; 2 Chron. 26). Isaiah realized that though the nation had prospered materially, it was in terrible condition spiritually. God lifted Isaiah’s eyes from himself and his people to the throne of heaven. John 12:38–41 informs us that Isaiah saw Jesus Christ in His glory. He was on the throne of heaven being praised by the seraphim. His royal robe filled the heavenly temple,  “Lord of hosts” is Isaiah’s favorite name for God; he uses it at least sixty-five times. The prophet also calls God “the Holy One of Israel” at least thirty times.
2. **The Inward Look—He Saw Himself (6:5–7)** A true vision of God and His holiness always makes us realize our own sinfulness and failure. When believers have a true experience with the Lord, it does not make them proud; rather, it humbles and breaks them. When Isaiah confessed his sins, he mentioned especially his unclean lips. Of course, unclean lips are the products of an unclean heart. The prophet knew that he could not faithfully serve the Lord unless he was prepared and cleansed.
3. **The Outward Look—He Saw the Need (6:8–13)** Now God can call Isaiah and use him to preach His Word. The call is an evidence of God’s grace. He is willing to use human beings to accomplish His will on earth. Verses 9–10 are quoted six times in the NT: Matt. 13:13–15, Mark 4:12, Luke 8:10, John 12:40, Acts 28:25–28, Rom. 11:8; making a total of seven references in all. Is God saying that He deliberately blinds people and condemns them? What He is saying is that the Word of God has this hardening and blinding effect on sinners who will not listen and yield. The sun that melts the ice also hardens the clay. The Word of God either breaks or hardens - it is the person's choice.

**Isaiah 7–12**

There are important principles to keep in mind as you study OT prophecy: the prophets saw Christ’s coming in humiliation and in glory, but did not see the period of time between these events. We shall see these principles in the chapters before us now.

1. **Judah Will Be Delivered from Her Enemies (7:1–16)** Assyria was growing stronger and threatening the other nations, so Israel and Syria joined forces to protect themselves. They wanted Judah to line up with them, but she would not. God sent Isaiah and his son Shear-jashub to meet King Ahaz while the ruler was inspecting the Jerusalem water supply. Isaiah gave the king a message of hope. Ahaz acted very pious by refusing to receive a sign from God. So, the Lord turned from Ahaz and gave a sign to the entire house of David (v. 13). This sign was fulfilled ultimately in the birth of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:23). He was born of the Virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:31–35). His name was “Immanuel,” which means “God is with us” (see 8:8 and 10). Jesus Christ is God come in human flesh, yet without sin (John 1:14).
2. **Israel Will Be Defeated by Assyria (7:17–10:34)** From 7:17 on, Isaiah is talking to apostate Israel and Pekah, her king. He warns the Northern Kingdom that Assyria will come upon them and completely ruin them, leaving the land in poverty and ruin instead of fullness of blessing. It was at this point that the “sign child” was born (8:1–4), and named Maher-shalal-hash-baz—“speed to the spoil, haste to the prey.” His name emphasized the coming ruin of Samaria and Syria (8:4). In 9:1–7 Isaiah gives a second prediction of the coming Messiah; see Matt. 4:13–16. The areas mentioned in 9:1 suffered the most when Assyria swept over Israel, but they would be the ones to see the light of Messiah. In 9:8–10:34, Isaiah continues to warn Israel of her impending doom. He also warns Assyria not to become proud of her victories, for she is but a tool in the hands of God. Her day of defeat will come too.
3. **Israel and Judah Will Unite in the Kingdom (11–12)** Note 11:12—the divided nations will one day unite and return to their land in peace. In 11:1–3 we have a picture of Jesus Christ, “the Branch.” In 6:13 we saw the nation “chopped down” as a tree, with the stump remaining; now we see Christ coming from the stump to save the people. Jesus Christ is the legal descendant of David; He is “rooted” in Judah as a Jew Himself. He is called “the Branch of the Lord” in 4:2, “a righteous Branch” in Jer. 23:5; “my servant the Branch” in Zech. 3:8; and “the man whose name is the Branch” in Zech. 6:12.

**Prophecies Against the Nations. 13-23**

This section of Isaiah’s prophecy concerns the message of God’s judgment against Israel’s neighbors. Not only will God judge His people for their sins, but He will also judge the pagan nations surrounding Israel. Nevertheless, the prophet Isaiah sees into the future to a time beyond that captivity when Babylon itself shall be taken captive.

Note: In chapter 14 where it says “How you are fallen from heaven, O shining star, son of the morning” is not speaking of the Devil as Lucifer. The KJV is the only translation that says Lucifer.  This chapter is speaking of the King of Babylon. The King and his kingdom Babylon would fall and did fall. Nothing is there today where Babylon was located.

**Punishment and kingdom blessing (chaps. 24–27)**

God’s judgment on the nations through the Assyrian invasions (chaps. 13–23) forms a backdrop for the Lord’s eventual judgment on the whole world (24:1, 4). Known as “Isaiah’s apocalypse,” chapters 24–27 describe the earth’s devastation and people’s intense suffering during the coming Tribulation and the blessings to follow in the millennial kingdom.

**The woes (chaps. 28–33)**

Isaiah continued his theme of judgment with a series of “woes” against various groups who were opposing his words. Here he was attacking primarily the rulers of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms for their failure to heed God’s Word and for looking to other means for protection. They were trusting in their wealth (chap. 28) and foreign alliances (chaps. 30–31). But neither of these, Isaiah said, could help them. Only the coming Deliverer could save them from the enemies around them (chaps. 32–33).

**Vengeance and blessing (chaps. 34–35)**

These two chapters form a fitting climax to the judgment and salvation which have been spoken repeatedly by Isaiah. Chapters 36–39 record the historical fulfillment of many of the prophecies in the first half of the book. Discussion of the judgment on Assyria (30:27–33; 31:8–9; 33:1, 18–19) naturally led to a discussion of God’s judgment on the whole world in the Tribulation.

**Sennacherib’s threatening of Jerusalem (36–37)**

The Assyrians were convinced that they were invincible and that the God of Israel was no different from any other gods they had overcome on their westward march. So in 36:1–37:4 Isaiah stressed the pride of the Assyrians, and that their arrogance would result in God’s judging them. In Isaiah’s brief word to the messengers from the LORD he first told them not to be afraid of the Assyrians. God had heard that they had blasphemed Him (v. 4). Then the prophet said that the Assyrian king would return home and would be killed there (the fulfillment of this is recorded in vv. 36–38).

**Judah’s Captivity in Babylon (CHAPS. 38–39)**

These chapters concern an interesting event in Hezekiah’s life. Though God miraculously healed the king, his pride led to national calamity. In chapters 36–37, Hezekiah was a man of faith, but here he was a man of pride. This account is also recorded in 2 Kings 20. When Isaiah heard of the foreigners’ visit, he asked Hezekiah … what they said and where they came from. The king answered the second question but not the first one. When the prophet learned that Hezekiah had shown him all his treasures, Isaiah gave him a two-part prophecy of judgment. First, the king’s wealth would be carried off to Babylon. That was an astounding statement at that time because the great threat then was Assyria, not Babylon. Second, some of the king’s descendants would be forced to serve in the royal court of Babylon.