



Isaiah, Pt. 1

Corrupt Zion to Renewed Zion

Session 23

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Briefly explain the theme of Isaiah in 1-2 sentences.
- Explain the significance of the multinational remnant and its connection to the Abrahamic Covenant.
- Describe the role of the Servant and his connection to the Davidic Covenant.
- Define how Isaiah envisioned the new creation.

INTRODUCTION

When we turn to the book of Isaiah, we turn to a book with huge canonical significance. Not only is it the gateway to the Latter Prophets, influencing the other prophetic writings, he's also the most quoted prophet in the NT. Isaiah greatly expands major theological themes like God's uniqueness and sovereignty, the global rule of the Davidic Son, the fate of the world after God's eschatological judgment, and the nature of the new creation. The significance of this book cannot be overstated.

Outline

- Part 1: The Sin and Judgment of Judah
 - 1-6: The nation's present sin and future hope. Isaiah's call.
 - 7-12: The "Book of Immanuel." Trust in Yahweh, not Assyria.
 - 13-23: God's judgment against Israel and foreign nations.
 - 24-27: Apocalyptic triumph of Yahweh over evil.
 - 28-35: Warnings of judgment and declarations of God's glorious power.
 - 37-39: Hezekiah's deliverance from Assyria.
- Part 2: God's Servant
 - 40-48: Comfort for God's people because of God's uniqueness and steadfast love.
 - 49-54: God's Servant provides atonement.
- Part 3: Eschatological Judgment and Salvation
 - 55-56: God's compassion on Israel and the nations.

- 57-59: Call to put away false religion and practice true righteousness.
- 60-66: Final future deliverance of God's people and new creation.

THE SETTING

Although Isaiah prophesied before and during the fall of Israel to Assyria, he is a southern prophet (1:1). Isaiah was called by God to prophesy “in the year that King Uzziah died” (6:1, circa 742 BC). At this point, the northern kingdom of Israel has walked in generational unfaithfulness for centuries, and due to King Hoshea's withholding of tribute from Assyria, King Shalmaneser V of Assyria has destroyed Samaria (Israel's capital), desolated the northern kingdom, and exiled the northern 10 tribes into foreign lands (2 Kgs. 17:1-6). **How are we to understand the Assyrian exile theologically?**

JUDAH'S INDICTMENT & ISAIAH'S CALLING (1-6)

Judah may have survived the Assyrian invasion, but not because she was innocent. Chapter 1 opens with an indictment of her sins. Like Israel, Judah has also walked in covenant unfaithfulness. If the people do not repent, the Day of the Lord would come (2:6-22). After presenting this crisis, Isaiah recounts his prophetic calling. The reason his calling comes after the indictment is because the prophetic calling is always a response to the nation's sin. **What's so important about Isaiah's call in chapter 6?**

(1)

(2)

(3)

THE BOOK OF IMMANUEL (7-12)

THE CHILD IMMANUEL

Chapters 7-12 comprise what some scholars call the “Book of Immanuel” due to its large amount of Messianic material concerning the coming Davidic king. **What's the main theme?**

In the face of a conspiracy between Syria and northern Israel against Judah, Isaiah encourages King Ahaz to ask God, instead of Assyria, for help. God even invites Ahaz to ask for a sign that He is with them (7:10-16).

THE SIGN OF IMMANUEL IN 7:14

God tells Ahaz to have faith in the face of Syria and Israel's alliance against Judah. The "sign" promised is that a virgin/young woman shall conceive and bear a son whose name is Immanuel. Before jumping to Jesus, take a closer look at the text. Before the child grows up and matures (before he "knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good"), both Syria and the northern kingdom of Israel would be destroyed and depopulated by Assyria (vv.17-20).

The name "Immanuel" doesn't necessitate divinity of the child; many people were named after the titles or attributes of God (ex: Joshua = *Yeshua*, or "Yahweh is salvation"). Immanuel was to be a sign that Ahaz would survive foreign invasion because God was with him.

Chapter 8 then says that Isaiah's wife conceives and bears a son whose name "Maher-shalal-hash-baz" refers to the plundering of Syria (capital Damascus) and Israel (capital Samaria) by Assyria—exactly what God had promised, thus fulfilling the "Immanuel" name. Isaiah also states that he and his children are for "signs" and "wonders" in Israel (8:18). If we see nothing

else in this passage except Jesus, who would have been born over 700 years later, the prophecy has nothing to do with Ahaz's current situation at all. Isaiah 7 is a great example of *correspondence* and *escalation* in biblical patterns: the serpent's seed (Syria and Israel)

persecutes the woman's/chosen seed (Gen. 3) and God confounds the plans of the nations against His Anointed (Ps. 2). These patterns continue through the exile and post-exile period, then eventually escalate to their climax in Christ, who is quite literally "*God with us*,"

God's Anointed Son, and the great serpent-crushing seed of the woman.

UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN

Chapter 9 contains another promised son (9:1-7). This child doesn't seem to be the same son as that of ch. 7. He is clearly the promised Davidic heir who will bring peace and justice, whose kingdom will increase to no end, and who will seemingly never succumb to death. This is the "forever king" of the Davidic Covenant.

THE BRANCH

One more Messianic image in this section is that of the branch. **Why is branch imagery so important and what does it signify?**

THE EARTH, THE EARTH, THE EARTH IS ON FIRE

Chapters 13-23 prophesy judgment against all nations: Babylon (13:1-22), Assyria (14:24-27), Philistia (14:28-32), Moab (15:1-16:14), Damascus (capital of Syria, 17:1-14), Cush (18:1-7), Egypt (19:1-15), Egypt & Cush (20:1-6), Babylon (21:1-10), Dumah (21:11-12), Arabia (21:13-17), Jerusalem (22:1-25), Tyre & Sidon (23:1-18), and the whole earth (24:1-23). **If Isaiah is prophesying during Assyria's tenure as world superpower, why does he prophesy against Babylon?**

Isaiah 24-39 is largely a denouncement of Judah and Jerusalem's sins. They honor God with their lips and practice organized religion, but their hearts are far from Him (29:13-14), and therefore the holy city will be besieged and trampled upon by foreign armies, and God's people will be vomited out of the land. Punctuating this dark section of the book is chs. 24-27, which is an apocalyptic vision of cosmic judgment and salvation.

GOD'S GREAT REMNANT

This leads us to a major theme woven all throughout the book of Isaiah, which is that of the remnant. **What is a *remnant*, and how does this idea make its way into Isaiah's message?**

(See also 14:1; 16:4; 24:14-16; 25:6-9; 29:17-19; 42:10-12; 49:7, 23; 55:1-5; 56:1-8; 65:1-7; cf. Ps. 87:4, Jer. 4:1-2, Zeph. 3:9, Zech. 9:2-7)

ENEMY AT THE GATES

The end of the first half of Isaiah comes in chs. 36-39, which return to a narrative account of the Assyrian invasion of Judah. At this point, it's 701 BC; the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed 21 years ago, Hezekiah is king of Judah, and now Sennacherib king of Assyria is invading Judah for refusing to pay tribute (2 Kgs. 18:7) and for participating in an anti-Assyrian movement supported by Egypt. The question for the reader is, "Will Judah turn to the Lord for help, or will they rely on Egypt and suffer the same fate as Israel in the north?" Due to Hezekiah's repentance, disaster is averted and Assyria is defeated by an angel of the Lord (Isa. 37:36). Despite this dramatic act of faith, the story unfortunately does not end happily. Hezekiah shows all the treasures of the temple and palace to Babylonian envoys, and Isaiah prophesies that one day, the same Babylon would invade Jerusalem and carry off her riches and people into captivity. History goes on to tell how terrible kings in Judah led the nation down the path of exile, until Babylon invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the temple in 586 BC.

CONCLUSION

Consider these thoughts this week:

- How is thinking about a prophet as a *covenant enforcer* different from thinking about them simply as "mouthpieces of God"?
- What do we learn about God from His patience toward Israel and Judah and in His judgment of them?
- Why is the promised son of David so important to Israel's future?
- How is the multinational remnant significant to the Abrahamic Covenant?

HOMEWORK

- Read pp.272-286 in *Old Testament Theology* by Paul House
- Watch the Bible Project's video on [Isaiah 1-39](#)
- Read Isaiah 1-13, 24-27, 36-39

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