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Introduction to Isaiah

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Transcribed and edited by David Sielaff, September 2010

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So significant is the Book of Isaiah to the people of God throughout history that it can be compared in influence with the Gospel of John in the New Testament. A copy of the Book of Isaiah discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls was the only biblical scroll complete in its entirety. Remarkably, the words of that manuscript which go back over 2200 years agree amazingly with the Hebrew text that the Jewish authorities have maintained over the centuries from which we get the translations today in the Bible.

This discovery of Isaiah among the Dead Sea Scrolls has given confidence to many people. Even secular scholars, who look upon the Bible as a book of man, have been given more confidence in the Holy Scriptures. The discovery of this Book of Isaiah links us with the Old Testament period. We can now have greater assurance that we have a Bible that is quite reliable indeed.

We know that this Book of Isaiah was held in high esteem by people in the Old Testament periods. In the New Testament many of the prophecies dealing with the precise work of Jesus Christ and His apostles are found in Isaiah. The prophecy about the virgin birth is found here. We also find prophecies about the crucifixion of Jesus, about His life here on earth, and how that He would live in humiliation and degradation in a society that did not approve of Him while He was here. All this is found in the Book of Isaiah.

Isaiah also has some of the most flamboyant prophecies. This is because blood, thunder, and fire are found in Isaiah more than any book in the Old Testament. The Book of Revelation quotes Isaiah extensively to show the divine judgments God will inflict upon both rebellious Israelites, and the rest of the human race.

This Book of Isaiah has a universality associated with it that is not found in any other book of the Old Testament. It agrees remarkably with concepts we find in the New Testament. Though it has a flamboyant prophetic theme in which judgment is meted out with a rod of iron, we also find it is one of the most tender of books when it comes to describing the mercies of God for mankind and His own people. We also see a

microcosm in the Book of Isaiah of the teachings of God from the beginning of Genesis through the Book of Revelation. It seems like you can find virtually every doctrine, even of those in the New Testament in a nascent form, within the Book of Isaiah.

You can find not only teachings and prophecies which are negative, but also many that are positive. In Isaiah we have God giving His understanding of how Israel in ancient times applied His law, how He found them deficient in many ways, and how He blinded their eyes to cause them in many cases to be that way. However, He has a plan that He is working out.

That plan is shown here in the Book of Isaiah which will demonstrate that God controls all of history. He has a plan, a divine scheme of things, to bring not only Israel but all mankind to redemption and salvation. In several places it reaches out and “grasps” the Gentiles in the fullest sense of the word, and brings them into the bosom of Abraham, into the bosom of God. The New Testament received much of its teachings, its philosophical and religious principles from Isaiah. In fact, the book of Isaiah in one way is a microcosm of the entirety of the scripture. Isaiah then is a book of books in the Bible.

Editor’s Note: Isaiah begins by directly referring to the covenant that Israel made with YHWH at Mt. Sinai. That covenant is the prelude for all the teachings and prophecies in Isaiah. God owns Israel, and He holds Israel responsible for violations of that covenant. By the time of Isaiah the punishment of the northern kingdom of Israel had already occurred. After repeated warnings by God through Isaiah and other prophets, the punishment of Judah will occur. God pronounces judgments against Israel. The Book of Isaiah warns about the punishments to come upon the kingdom of Judah and the aftermath, and the sequel which will bring glory to Israel, Judah, and the world. *DWS*

In between the judgments pronounced in the prophecies of Isaiah are some of the most surprising and wonderful prophecies of Israel’s eventual glorification that you can find anywhere in Holy Scripture. As I said, Isaiah is kind of a microcosm of the whole Bible, and the first chapter of Isaiah is a microcosm of the whole of Isaiah, a sort of table of contents.¹ Isaiah is third of “The Prophets” and it represents the first of what we call the “Major Prophets.” The two other Major Prophets are Jeremiah followed by Ezekiel. All are roughly the same length, with Isaiah a little longer than Jeremiah, and Jeremiah a little longer than Ezekiel.²

Isaiah’s Position in the Biblical Canon

Old Testament

1. The Law of Moses [the Torah]
2. The Prophets
(individual books listed)
 - (1) Joshua–Judges
 - (2) Kingdoms [1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings in one book]
 - (3) **ISAIAH** ←
 - (4) **JEREMIAH**
 - (5) **EZEKIEL**
 - (6) the Book of the Twelve [the Minor Prophets in one “book”].

3. The Writings or Royal Section

New Testament

4. The Gospels with Acts
5. The General Epistles
6. The Epistles of Paul
7. The Book of Revelation

¹ By the way I love tables of contents. One of the first things I look at when I examine a book would be the table of contents. The next thing would be the index. I want to find out the subjects covered in that book. I never start at the first chapter of a book and read all the way through. I go to the title first, then the table of contents and then the index. *ELM*

² The Jews of later times wanted to position the Book of Isaiah into a lessor place simply because Isaiah is very different in its internal arrangement and design than other books of the Bible. This irritated many rabbis of the Talmudic period, which is from the 3rd to the 5th centuries AD. Others thought to move Isaiah because Israel is left hanging, so to speak, though they recognized how wonderful everything was in the interior. Yet at the end Israel is left in judgment. They suggested that Isaiah be put at the end of the Major Prophets, but this was never done. *ELM*

The word “Major” does not mean major as far as rank is concerned, it simply means longer than the others. When Ezra in the 5th century BC put together the Old Testament that we have today, he put Isaiah at the beginning of the Major Prophets, followed by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the 12 Minor Prophets (which were all reckoned to be on one scroll as one book). To this day the Jews have kept that arrangement. Put all the prophetic books together in the Hebrew canon you get six in number. Isaiah is in the middle of the prophetic books, but it is the first of the Major Prophets, a position of significance.³ These books of the Major Prophets are also arranged chronologically:

- **Isaiah** was composed in the middle of the 8th century BC.
- **Jeremiah** was written at the beginning of the 7th century BC.
- **Ezekiel** followed Jeremiah by a year or so.

The Gentile power that afflicted Israel at the time of Isaiah was Assyria. The Gentile power that afflicted Israel, mainly the Jews, in the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, was Babylon. Isaiah and Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah had to deal with Assyria as a Gentile power. But other prophecies in the Book of Isaiah have to do with another future power that arose on the heels of the Assyrian Empire — Babylon.

When you view the prophecies of Isaiah in two major sections, you find that it says the whole of the Babylonian system would continue to exist in its prophetic outreach until the end of the age, until the second advent of Christ. The book of Daniel said the same thing. The book of Revelation also says that Babylon will continue until the second advent of Christ. Babylon as a prophetic world power was first introduced in the Book of Isaiah.

The Book of Isaiah shows that the destiny of Israel is glorious, more than the other prophets put together, but with a different emphasis. He shows Israel first appearing holy and righteous on the outside. They look good with their teachings, with their religious beliefs, rituals, sabbaths, holy days, their ways of life. But within they are actually corrupt and extremely evil. When Isaiah ends his discourse 66 chapters later, Israel is in judgment by God for its sins. Most interesting. The beginning is in debauchery and the ending is in judgment, but between are some of the most glorious teachings of Scripture that you will ever find.

Isaiah has a special reason for writing that way. Isaiah (along with Jeremiah) shows that the human heart is extremely wicked, both Israelite and Gentile. Isaiah is also the number one prophet teaching about the Messiah, clear teachings that Israel as a nation would reject. That is the main reason why Israel is singled out as looking good on the surface, very religious, but in the heart still needing redemption.

However, they will be redeemed. In Romans 11:26 the apostle Paul expressly stated that **“all Israel shall be saved.”** We know that to be the fact. But they will go through various stages in order to arrive at that standard of salvation which all of us need.

Important Factors in Isaiah

Several factors about this major prophecy are most important. The Book of Isaiah is in 66 chapters, but that numbering is not inspired. Understand that. But it is rather remarkable how they agree in arrangement with the 66 books of our Old and New Testaments today.

The chapters of Isaiah were arranged that way by Robert Stephanus in the 13th century AD. He did this because he saw that there are two major sections to the Book of Isaiah. The chapters are fairly evenly spaced, but they are not accurately sectioned as far as the subject matter is concerned. They need adjustment in a few places.

³ See Dr. Martin’s book [Restoring the Original Bible](#) (Portland, OR: ASK Publications, 1994), pp. 19 and following, and his Supplemental Article: [“The Geographical Design of the Holy Scriptures”](#) and [“Diagram: the Symmetry of the Bible.”](#) DWS

The prophecy about the Messiah who was to come is found in two chapters whereas it ought to be only in one. It is in the conclusion of chapter 52 and then all through chapter 53. So we can see by analyzing these chapters here they were selected by man. The words that make up Isaiah are inspired but the divisions of the book into chapters are not.⁴

Scholars have long understood that there are two major sections to Isaiah. The first 39 chapters represent what they call First Isaiah. First Isaiah has themes to it which are principally prophetic, blood and thunder themes about God's divine judgment upon Israel and Judah, His own people. There are also judgments about Assyria, the major Gentile power at that time. There are also prophecies concerning Egypt, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Elam, and other nations in existence in those days. These prophetic sections are all in the first 39 chapters.

Second Isaiah begins in chapter 40 and goes through chapter 66. The chapters of this second section are 27 in number. People have noticed very definitely, and there is no doubt, the main reason they were put into 66 books is the fact that starting in chapter 40 the Book of Isaiah has a distinct New Testament theme down to the end of chapter 66. Indeed, look at chapter 40 carefully as it starts out:

“Comfort you, comfort you my people says your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem, cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished [fulfilled, completed], that her iniquity is pardoned: For she [Jerusalem] has received [punishments] of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.”

• *Isaiah 40:1–2*

These first two verses are an introduction that speaks of warfare around Judah and Jerusalem coming to an end. Jesus prophesied the same thing when His kingdom would come here on this earth. Jesus as the Prince of Peace will bring warfare to an end. He will come in war at the beginning of His second advent, but he will put down all rebellion and evil authority, and establish peace here on this earth.⁵

This section (chapters 40–66) is even written in a different style. Some scholars believe that the man who wrote the first 39 chapters cannot be the same man who wrote the last 27. He is the same man certainly, but he had a different thinking cap on when he wrote the second section. It is remarkably different from the first. It is as if he is writing in one style at the beginning, one of blood and thunder, whereas in the next section the blood and thunder is much tempered, with more universality coming into view. It is more peaceful in nature. There is a working out of all the problems of the world. Indeed, the final 66th chapter ends with the whole world, and even the whole universe, being reconciled to God.

Continuing with chapter 40, go to verse 3. Who is this prophet that linked the Old Testament and the New? He was John the Baptist.⁶

“The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, prepare you the way of YHWH, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

• *Isaiah 40:3*

Those were the very acts and ministry that John the Baptist performed. Here at the beginning of this section of second Isaiah, which represents what we might call in type, in symbol, in allegorical form, an introduction that links the Old Testament to the New Testament. These remarkable two sections are very diverse from one another. Yet the same man, Isaiah, certainly wrote them. What inspired Robert Stephanus (and others agreed) to make the chapters that way? It was that Isaiah is separated into these two major divisions.

⁴ Follow along the outline of Isaiah at the end of this article. DWS

⁵ In addition, these verses state that God's "warfare" or punishment of Israel has ended (when this passage is fulfilled), and that God will rescue and care for Israel in the future. DWS

⁶ Isaiah 40:3 is quoted at the beginning of the New Testament, and at the beginning of a particular *person*, who introduced the New Testament to the Jewish world. John the Baptist was the last prophet of the Old Testament and the first prophet of the New Testament. ELM

The Name “Isaiah”

The name Isaiah is a variant of Joshua. It actually means that YH, which is God, YHWH (Jehovah as some people say), “YH is Savior,” or that salvation comes from YH, God the Father who is YHWH. Joshua followed in the footsteps of Moses. Joshua carried the Law out by crossing over the River Jordan into the promised land. Here in the promised land the first of the Major Prophets had the name, a variant of Joshua. They are not the same name, but the meaning is virtually the same, just slight nuances differ.

Joshua’s name is the same as our Lord’s name was, Jesus or *Yehhowshua*’ in the New Testament. *Yehhowshua*’ *Christos*, Christ Jesus. He followed Moses who gave the Law, and Jesus fulfilled the Law and gave grace and the Gospel. Here is Isaiah with virtually the same name as Joshua, taking over a prophetic theme to give to the people of Israel.

The name Isaiah is also very close to the name Hosea, the first of the 12 Minor Prophets, which means “salvation.” The only thing left out of the name is the Yeh (or YH). What we have is a linkage to show the carrying on of certain themes. In one way of looking at it, Joshua carried on with Moses’ work. Then we find Isaiah is carrying on, in a prophetic sense, the work of David and Solomon. Then the Book of Hosea commences, as the first of the Minor Prophets.⁷ Such things link these scriptures.

Isaiah prophesied for about a 60-year period, but it is not possible to be precise on that. He commenced his prophecies in the upper middle part of the 8th century BC in the time of King Ahaz. Isaiah went through a very traumatic period of time in the history of Israel. The Assyrians were growing in power to the north. Isaiah lived to see three different invasions by the Assyrians. One invasion was major, in which the Assyrians took most all of ancient Israel out of their lands to Assyria leaving only Judah in the south with the two tribes associated with Jerusalem and King Hezekiah. The prophet who inspired King Hezekiah, who gave him the teachings he needed at the time, was Isaiah.

Isaiah and Micah, Moses, and Others

Another prophet parallel to Isaiah in time, almost a twin in one way, was the prophet Micah. Some prophecies that both of them gave were exactly word for word. They lived at the same time. They gave their teachings to Israel and to Judah at the same time. In many cases they performed the same actions.

Both prophets gave their prophetic judgments in groups of five. Moses did the same in Leviticus chapter 26 when he explained that if the Israelites would obey God they would get blessings, blessings and more blessings. If they would not obey God there would be a 5-fold destruction, getting more intense each time if they would not repent. Isaiah adopted the same theme. Amos adopted the same theme. The Book of Psalms is separated into 5 books, that correspond in subject as well as structure to the 5 books of the Law of Moses. You find a 5-fold structure in the Megillot, the 5 books from the Song of Songs through to Esther. If we include the Book of Acts as being one of the gospels (which we should), there are five of them also. The prophets loved the number 5 and often used such patterns.⁸

All of these things are important to realize as a general introduction when you begin to study the intricacies of the prophecies of Isaiah. When we go into the details bear in mind some of these principles that Isaiah adopted go all the way back to Moses in some cases.

Themes of Prophecy

In this introduction to Isaiah we need to realize there were specific themes that he used that other

⁷ Hosea lived a little earlier than Isaiah. DWS

⁸ For the Book of Psalms, see Dr. Martin’s Appendix 1: “[Preliminary Suggestions for the Structure of the Psalms](#)” from his book *Restoring the Original Bible*. For the 5-fold structure of the Megillot see Dr. Martin’s presentation “[The Megillot in Prophecy](#).” For the Song of Solomon, see Dr. Martin’s presentation “[The Significance of the Song of Solomon](#)” which shows the 5 divisions of the dramatic structure of the Song.

prophets used also, themes they learned over 500 years by reading the Scriptures themselves. The prophets are giving information to Israel to tell what God wanted them to do and not to do, and what would be the outcome if they did the things that God stated or what would happen if they did not do them. These themes in Isaiah are scattered in various places.

We also find these same themes in the Minor Prophets. Sometimes we see these themes in the New Testament. This helps reinforce from the overall viewpoint of the Scriptures that there is a central symmetry and harmony to all of the Old and the New Testament. It represents a divine plan that God established from the very beginning, and throughout the various ages (eons) in which he gave information to His people. He would raise up prophets at various intervals to reveal parts of His plan to mankind. The New Testament comes along and puts it all together for us. When the revelation of the Mystery was given that the apostle Paul (with others) finally received after 63 AD, all of the prophecies in a marvelous fashion come together in a way that we can all comprehend. We should be thankful for that.

The Times of Isaiah and Micah

Isaiah lived in the middle of the 8th century BC at the time of the Assyrians. Micah was one of the prophets close to him. Recall that some of the themes they developed were exact, as if they had talked to one another, and no doubt they did on several occasions. Isaiah 2:1 says, **“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.”** Notice the prophecy in verse 2:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of YHWH’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, ‘Come you, and let us go up to the mountain of YHWH, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of YHWH from Jerusalem.’”

• ***Isaiah 2:2–3***

That is a prophecy of the future from Isaiah’s time and from his point of view. The Temple that was in existence, known as the House of YHWH or the House of the Lord in Isaiah’s day,⁹ was not on the highest of the mountains in the Jerusalem area. You know what the highest of the mountains there happens to be? This is a prophecy for the future when [perhaps] the Mount of Olives will actually be the top of the mountains in the Jerusalem area where a new Temple will be built.¹⁰

Isaiah was not the only one that expressed such thoughts. Go to Micah chapter 4 and read a message that resonates with almost the same words:

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of YHWH shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say,

⁹ See my article [“A Name for the Temple of God”](#) that presents another name by which the Jerusalem Temple was called “The House of the Name.” That “name” was YHWH, the personal name of God (Exodus 3:15, Concordant Version):

“And Elohim said further to Moses: Thus shall you say to the sons of Israel, YHWH, the Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac and the Elohim of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name for the eon, and this the remembrance of Me for generation after generation.”

See also Exodus 6:3 and 15:3. They were not to take the name of YHWH in vain (Exodus 20:7, for one of several examples). During the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Israel was forbidden by God to use the name YHWH when speaking aloud except in special circumstances. Hence, the Temple was called “the House of the Name.” See Dr. Martin’s articles: [“What Is the Proper Name for the Father of Jesus?”](#) and [“The Divine Names and the New Testament.”](#) DWS

¹⁰ Dr. Martin intended to review the material about the next Temple in light of the research from his book *The Temples that Jerusalem Forgot*. However, he did not complete his review before his death. This research still needs to be done. DWS

'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of YHWH, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of YHWH from Jerusalem.'"

• *Micah 4:1–2*

Go to Isaiah chapter 20. Isaiah did something which is rather interesting for us today. I do not recommend that you do so, but he had the power and authority to do it. To emphasize his prophecies Isaiah for three years walked naked and barefoot:

"And YHWH said, 'Like as my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.'"

• *Isaiah 20:3–4*

Note the context. We find that Isaiah — not for every moment of the three years, but in order to show his prophetic teaching — actually went naked. Does it say in the midst of the whole populace? No, it does not say that at all, but when the Egyptians were taken captive in this fashion as prophesied, it was open and public. God sometimes uses various means for his prophets to get their messages across. Isaiah went naked when necessary for a 3-year period.

Isaiah was a very sophisticated individual, a counselor to King Hezekiah, to King Ahaz and later to King Manasseh¹¹ and others. He was one of the literary giants of the Old Testament. He was inspired of Almighty God in every way, so we cannot criticize this action of his. Micah did the same thing:

"Behold I [Micah is speaking] will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls."

• *Micah 1:8*

Micah carries on with the prophecy and repeats what Isaiah said before. The two prophets worked hand in glove with one another. You do not find Isaiah mentioned in Micah's prophecy, nor do you find Micah mentioned in Isaiah, but they lived at the same time, and together they make a double emphasis.¹²

Fivefold Punishment Theme

I said earlier that they used the theme of the five divisions of punishment. We certainly find that here in the Book of Isaiah. Look at the punishments God promises to put upon Israel as part of their covenant with YHWH. If they do wrong there is a five-fold worsening intensity of punishment until utter ruin results. The five-fold intensified prophetic theme in the Law of Moses is first given in Leviticus 26:14. If Israel would not harken unto the commands of God: **"I will chasten you seven times more."** In Leviticus 26:19 He promises still more intense punishments if they would not obey and perform properly.

It goes on in verse 21 that if they did not come around at that time and repent then 7 more plagues would come upon them. He gives the third one starting in verse 22. In verse 24 it says 7 times more. Then the fourth one, and then finally the fifth one is in verse 28 where it says,

¹¹ Manasseh is not mentioned in Isaiah, but he was the most evil of the kings of Judah. He reigned 55 years, an indication of God's mercy and forbearance toward Judah, which, of course, was misunderstood by the people of Judah that God did not care about Manasseh's and Judah's sins. Manasseh was bound and taken captive to Babylon (2 Chronicles 33:10–13) when he later repented of his sins against YHWH. **"Then Manasseh knew that YHWH he was God"** (2 Chronicles 33:13). DWS

¹² Note how many times we find in scripture that there are two individuals that work together such as Moses and Aaron. When you come to the New Testament John the Baptist and Jesus preached at the same time for a while. There are Barnabas and Paul, or you find Timothy and Paul, or Peter and John. You see people who are working together. This is what we find with Micah and Isaiah. ELM

“Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chasten you seven times for your sins. And you shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall you eat.”

• *Leviticus 26:28–29*

It is a horrible description we find of the fifth intensified punishment.

Isaiah will introduce the same kind of a theme. Without going into details of the prophecy, let me show you some of the literary methods by which the prophets taught and some of the social customs they used to accent their teachings, such as going barefoot or going naked.

In Isaiah 5:24 we find this five-fold prophetic teaching of intensity. The punishment starts out minor and becomes increasingly more intense. By the fifth punishment, all the prophecies in their full impact will be given. Talking here about Israel,

“Therefore as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of YHWH of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Therefore is the anger of YHWH kindled against his people, and he has stretched forth his hand against them, and has smitten them: and the hills did tremble [in earthquake], and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets [the first punishment]. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.”

• *Isaiah 5:24–25*

That statement, **“For all of this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still,”** is repeated four more times. The fifth will be the final repetition. It comes into a section of prophecy where the intensity begins and is given in Isaiah 9:6, right after the child was born, there is verse 8:

“YHWH sent a word into Jacob, and it has lighted upon Israel. And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria [the northern kingdom of Israel], that say in the pride and stoutness of heart, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedar.”¹³

• *Isaiah 9:8–10*

He goes on to say in effect, “I am coming against you.” God does this because of this attitude. At the end of verse 9:12, here is the phrase repetition **number two**: **“For all of this his anger is not turned away but his hand is stretched out still.”** They still refused to repent.

In the meantime God says He will take the leaders away from them, maybe they will repent. Then look at verse 9:17, which is **number three**: **“For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.”**

Next He explains how wickedness burns as a fire, and how He will cause people to be hungry, and He even says here that a man will be eating the flesh of his own children as it said in Leviticus 26:28–29. Israel has no excuse. But you know what it says in Isaiah 9:21? **“For all of this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.”** That is **number four**.

He goes on with a great woe starting in Isaiah chapter 10 that will come to those who make unrighteous decrees and go contrary to God’s Law. He will send the Assyrians to take them into captivity. He says in verse 4 right near the end. **“For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.”** There it is, **the fifth and last time**. Those prophecies are stretched out over 4 to 5 chapters. They increase in intensity all the way through.

¹³ **“Bricks are fallen down”** may refer to collapse from an earthquake in Palestine during this period, especially one in the reign of Uzziah of Judah between 790 and 740 BC (Amos 1:1 and Zechariah 14:5). The sycamores were cut down, but they are to be replaced by planting cedar trees — or so those of the northern kingdom assume. They did not account for God’s punishments for their sins. *DWS*

A Fivefold Theme in Amos

An earlier close contemporary of Isaiah who used many of these themes was the prophet Amos. In the fourth chapter of Amos, he gives 5 prophecies of intensified punishment using the same style that Isaiah used, which they both received from Moses.¹⁴ Here is what the prophecy says in Amos 4:6:

“I also [God says] have given you cleanness of teeth [meaning famine] in your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet you have not returned unto me,’ says YHWH.”

• *Amos 4:6*

That was time **number one**.

He goes on to say:

“... I have withheld the rain from you ... I caused it to rain upon one city, and another I did not ... So two cities wandered for water and all of that ... yet you have not returned unto me,’ says YHWH.”

• *Amos 4:7–8*

That was **number two**.

“I have smitten you with blasting and mildew ... the palmerworm devoured them ... yet you have not returned unto me,’ says YHWH.”

• *Amos 4:9*

That was **number three**.

“I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet you have not returned unto me,’ says YHWH.”

• *Amos 4:10*

That was the **fourth time**.

“I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning; yet you have not returned unto me,’ says YHWH.”

• *Amos 4:11*

That was **the fifth and last time** he says this.

He gave them 5 intensities of punishment like Isaiah does, like Moses did. In the Book of Psalms there are five divisions, as there are in the Book of Lamentations, and in other places in the Bible. Here is the conclusion to the fifth time:

“Therefore thus will I do unto you O Israel: and because I will do this unto you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel.”

• *Amos 4:12*

In other words, I am fed up with you. I cannot go on any longer. I have given you every excuse and tried and tried and tried to bring you around to your senses.

¹⁴ The major focus of Amos’ prophecies was on Israel and only on Judah in a minor way. Isaiah’s major focus was on Judah and on Israel only in a minor way. Almost all of Amos’ prophecy was directed against the northern kingdom of Israel (also called Samaria or Ephraim by its contemporaries). The judgments given in Amos chapter 4 were pronounced against the northern kingdom of Israel before those judgments occurred.

Isaiah gave his prophecies to Judah (and to the remnants of Israel) after the prophesied judgments pronounced in Amos were largely fulfilled, after Israel was devastated by Assyria. During the time Isaiah’s prophecies were given the Assyrian Empire was casting its gaze for conquest upon the kingdom of Judah. *DWS*

“For, Lo, he that forms the mountains, and created the wind, and declares unto man what is his thought, that makes the morning darkness and treads upon the high places of the earth [Who is He?], YHWH, the God of Hosts, is His name.”

• **Amos 4:13**

So, God says through Amos, prepare to meet God and His greatest wrath.

You see, the theme that Amos is presenting here is the same kind that Isaiah was giving, and that Micah was giving. They were all near contemporaries with each other in the 8th century BC.

Names in Isaiah

If you want to understand the Book of Isaiah in a detailed way, then pay attention to the names of places and names of individuals who will come in the future. He refers to himself and to his two children. This is a principle which you will find throughout the Book of Isaiah, though he does not get around to saying that until the 8th chapter. These prophecies have relevance back in the 8th century BC, but also in the period that we are coming to in the near future leading up to the second advent of Christ.

Look at Isaiah 8:13. It is in the midst of the prophecy dealing with Immanuel (and with the virgin who gives birth to this child), who grows up to become a warrior, who will come and put down rebellion on the earth before we can have universal peace. It is contained in a larger section of Isaiah chapter 7 through to chapter 12 inclusively. These six chapters are all about the rising up of the Messiah whose name is Jesus Christ when we come to the New Testament period.

In the midst of this prophecy about the Messiah, the one produced by the virgin, Isaiah gives us a principle. In the next three chapters this principle comes up repeatedly. Beginning in Isaiah 8:13 we read:

“Sanctify YHWH of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary ...”

• **Isaiah 8:13–14**

This means if you look upon Him as the One who is in authority, He will be a sanctuary to you. That is a wonderful promise that God has given to anyone who reads this, particularly those of the devastated House of Israel for whom it was designed.

Continuing on, note this: “[he shall be] **for a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel ...**” (Isaiah 8:14). That is Judah and those associated with Jerusalem, and Samaria (and Ephraim) in the north, the two houses of Israel which were in existence at this time. Here is what God has to say about them, His own people:

“... but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broke, and be snared, and be taken.”¹⁵

• **Isaiah 8:14–15**

In relation to Christianity, it is interesting that John the Baptist came out of the wilderness. Who did he go to? He went to the people of Jerusalem. Then Jesus came and He went to the people of Jerusalem. What happened to John the Baptist? He was killed and his head chopped off. What happened to Jesus? He was killed also. He was crucified. But then He was resurrected from the dead and began to teach, and the apostles began to preach.

So powerful was their preaching that half of the people of Jerusalem within 30 years believed basically that Jesus was the Messiah. Most people do not understand that fact. They also expected Him to come in that generation. When He did not appear in that generation they rejected Him. As Jesus said, chronology

¹⁵ Again note a 5-fold pattern of judgment upon **“many among them”**: (1) **“stumble,”** (2) **“fall,”** (3) **“broke,”** (4) **“snared,”** and (5) **“taken.”** DWS

was not to be understood by his own apostles (Acts 1:7) or by the people. Many of those people turned against Him. The very ones that accepted Him at first, later turned against Him. Both houses of Israel turned against Him. Even the apostle Paul said of Israel that the vast majority turned away from Him.

So right in the midst of this section about the Messiah coming from a virgin, God (through Isaiah) says to the houses of Israel. I will be, He says:

“... a stone of stumbling, ... a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, ... for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Any many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.”

• *Isaiah 8:14–16*

This King James translation correctly renders from the Hebrew exactly as you and I would say today: “among my disciples,”¹⁶ meaning the disciples of Christ, and that was looked upon by the New Testament people as referring to the apostles. The next verse:

“And I will wait upon YHWH, that hides His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.”

• *Isaiah 8:17*

“**I will look for**” the Lord Himself. If you will look for the Lord, He will sanctify you. Now verse 18:

“Behold, I and the children whom YHWH has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from YHWH of Hosts, which dwells in Mount Zion. And when they shall say unto you ...”

• *Isaiah 8:18–19*

It continues speaking in the 1st person, saying in effect: you point them to me, Isaiah and my two children.

One of Isaiah’s children was named Shearjashub (Isaiah 7:3). Shearjashub means “a remnant shall return.” Isaiah went into the prophetess who was his wife. In chapter 8, she bore him a 2nd child, the longest named child in the Bible, Mahershalhasbaz, which actually means “in making speed to the spoil, he hastens to the prey.” Isaiah’s name means “Yah is Savior,” meaning “God is Savior.” When Isaiah takes the names of his two sons and himself, he puts it in the context of understanding what the real truth will be at a time when Israel’s mind is blinded. This is in the section dealing with the Messiah who comes forth from a virgin. I will give more information in later analysis of chapters in Isaiah.

Isaiah is saying here, as a principle, pay close attention to the meaning of my name which means “Yah is Savior,” to the name of my first child, and to the name of my second child. The children’s names keep coming back in a context that will help you understand what was really going on.

This is all a mere introduction to this beautiful and wonderful prophecy of Isaiah. It is significant because it introduces you to the universality of salvation which God will give, not only to Israel, but to the whole of the world. Isaiah is appealed to (from a prophetic point of view) in the New Testament more than any other prophet.

When you come to specific prophecies about being born of a virgin, about the history of what will happen to Jesus, about when He becomes the Christ, when He will come back and put down all rebellion, do you know where that information comes from? It is from chapters 7 to 12 of the Book of Isaiah. When you want to find out about the role of Jesus in getting rid of sin, what He would do while on earth, and how He would die an ignominious type of a death, but then He comes forth in a resurrection of the dead — you find all that here in the Book of Isaiah.

¹⁶ The Concordant Version translation gives additional perspective to Isaiah 8:16: **“Tie up the testimony, and seal the law among my learners.”** DWS

You will find in the last chapter of Isaiah how the whole world finally becomes one with God. The universality is all there. When you put together all the information about Isaiah, you will see that this Book of Isaiah is for us today. It is for us to understand the truth of God and the way that leads to salvation.

Ernest L. Martin, 1998

Edited by David Sielaff, September 2010

Skeletal Outline of the Book of Isaiah

Below is an outline of the Book of Isaiah. It is from Ingram Cobbin's *The Bible Remembrancer: Containing an Analysis of the Whole Bible* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1848). This public domain book was published without author attribution, but it is widely attributed to Rev. Ingram Cobbin. Besides outlines for every book of the Bible, it contains several interesting Bible lists and articles.

Any outline can be useful, but those that believe the Bible is inspired are particularly so. Such outlines fill in the details of the general skeletal outline of the Bible as shown in the insert (above) "Isaiah's Position in the Biblical Canon" shown on the second page of this article.

Mr. Cobbin gives a useful introduction to the book:

"Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of four of the Kings of Judah — Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The duration of his ministry is variously stated at from forty-eight to sixty-one years. Some critics have attempted to show that there were two Isaiahs, and that the later portion of the book is of a later date, and by a later Isaiah. Up to the present date these arguments are met with the verdict of *Not Proven*. And considerable caution should be exercised before accepting this, or any, new hypothesis. As is well known, many of the prophecies of Isaiah are emphatically Messianic — notably those in chapters 7, 9, 11, 28, 42, 49, 52, 53, 61, 63. Passages like these are explicable on no other theory than that of direct inspiration. Isaiah has been called, and with truth, 'the evangelical prophet.'"

• *Bible Remembrancer*, p. 62

Outline of Isaiah

<i>Time of Prophesying</i> Reign of Uzziah	Ch. 1	Judah's ingratitude and general depravity. Folly of mere outward forms. Call to repentance. Destruction of Transgressors.	Reign of Hezekiah	8	Roll to be inscribed, Ma-her-shalal-hash-baz. Child so named. The name so given a sign of the destruction of the two confederate kings of Israel and Syria.
	2	The gospel dispensation. "The idols He shall utterly abolish." <i>(The first four verses are almost identical with Micah 4:1-4.)</i>		9	Promises of the true light, and the Wonderful, Counselor, etc.
	3	Calamities approaching luxurious Jerusalem, especially her vain females.		10	Judgments on the impenitent. The "remnant." Deliverance from Assyria.
	4	Seven women — one man. The "escaped" of Israel.		11	The rod and branch out of Jesse. The restoration of Israel.
	5	God's vineyard. "Woes" upon the wicked.		12	A song of praise for deliverance.
Reign of Jotham	6	Isaiah's vision of God's glory.		13	Judgments against Babylon.
	7	Judah invaded by Syria and Israel. Deliverance promised to Ahaz. Prediction of the Birth of Immanuel.		14	Song of exaltation over fallen Babylon.
Reign of Ahaz				15	The burden [oracle, sentence] of Moab.
				16	Moab exhorted to submission.

God's Vineyard	17	The burden [oracle, sentence] of Damascus. Transition to Sennacherib's invasion and overthrow	Rabshakeh's message	36	Messiah's kingdom flourishing. Rabshakeh's haughty message to Hezekiah.	
	18	"Woe to the land shadowing with wings," or Egypt, whither the Jews turned for protection		37	Hezekiah sends for Isaiah. Hezekiah's prayer. Isaiah's prediction of Sennacherib's destruction.	
	19	The burden [oracle, sentence] of Egypt.		Hezekiah sick	38	Hezekiah sick. His life prolonged. His song of thanksgiving.
	20	Predictions against Egypt and Ethiopia.	39		Hezekiah shows his treasures to the Babylonian ambassadors. The Babylonian captivity foretold.	
	21	Predictions against Babylon, Edom, and Arabia.	40		Comfort for God's people. Prediction of the coming of John the Baptist. The majesty of God. The vanity of idols.	
	22	The burden [oracle, sentence] of the valley of vision — (Jerusalem so described, surrounded with hills.) Description of the confusion of Jerusalem on the approach of the Assyrians.	41		Israel encouraged to trust and confidence.	
	23	The burden [oracle, sentence] of Tyre. Her destruction by the Chaldeans.	42		Prediction respecting Messiah ["My Servant"].	
	24	Divine judgments on the land of Israel	43		Promises of salvation and of restoration of Israel.	
	25	Thanksgiving for deliverance; and prediction of gospel times.	44		Promises of the Spirit. Folly of Idolatry. Cyrus the deliverer.	
	26	Song on Judah's protector	Cyrus predicted		45	Predictions concerning Cyrus.
	27	Leviathan (Babylon, or the enemies of God's people), punished. Song of the protected vineyard. Israel to be restored.			46	Babylon's idols.
	28	Judgment and Mercy for Judah and Israel.			47	Prediction of Babylon's degradation and ruin.
	29	"Woe to Ariel!" [the altar of God, or Judah] announcing invasion (by Sennacherib).	Christ the light	48	Israel reprov'd for neglect of God's warnings.	
	30	The Jews' vain confidence in Egypt. Mercies for Judah and Jerusalem. Wrath upon Assyria.		49	Christ sent as "a light to lighten the Gentiles." God's love to His people.	
	31	Vain confidence in Egypt. Overthrow of Assyria.		50	The Jews accused of divorcing themselves from God.	
	32	Prophecy concerning Messiah's kingdom.		51	Consolations and promises for God's people	
	33	The spoiler [Sennacherib] threatened.		52	Zion called to arouse from her humiliation, and contemplate her deliverance. Transition to the person, life, and work of the Messiah.	
	34	God's people avenged.		Messiah's Sufferings	53	Rejection, sufferings, and death of Messiah ["My Servant"]
	35	The desert blossoming, or			54	Jew and Gentile brought under the

Messiah's Anointing		dominion of Christ. The "covenant" of God with Israel.			
	55	Universal Gospel invitations	62	The prophet's prayer for Zion. The duty of her watchmen.	
	56	Strangers and foreigners to be admitted to the privileges of restored Israel. The "blind watchmen."	63	The coming of the Divine Conqueror. Prayer for Divine restoration.	
	57	The removal of the righteous in mercy. Idolaters sternly reprov'd.	64	Prayer for a manifestation of God's power. Confession of sin and supplication for mercy.	
	58	Hypocrisy reprov'd. The fast that God chooses.	65	The Gentiles called. The iniquities of the Jews condemned. The saved remnant. God's "holy mountain."	
	59	Condemnation of iniquities. Promises of Messiah.	66	God's regard to the humble. Mere ceremonies vain. Israel and the Gentiles. The Lord's controversy with evil-doers. All nations shall be gathered in.	
	60	Prediction of the glory of restored Israel.			
	61	Messiah's anointing to His ministry. Israel's final glory.			

The entire Bible has a structure, as Dr. Martin has shown in his book *Restoring the Original Bible*.¹⁷ The chapter divisions within each book of the Bible are not divinely inspired, so feel free to disagree with any author who provides you with an outline. I have chosen Cobbin's outline because it does not try to determine what God's thoughts are, but it describes what the obvious topics are discussed in each chapter.

Many ASK readers are familiar with E.W. Bullinger's *Companion Bible*, which also has an excellent outline structure that differs from Cobbin's. A condensed version of [The Companion Bible online](#) contains Bullinger's basic outlines of all the books of the Bible. Another version of the same is the [Google Edition of The Companion Bible](#). Use whichever works best for you.

In the past I have written favorably on a useful and enjoyable book by David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi*.¹⁸ Dorsey's analysis sets forth the major divisions of Isaiah as follows (pages 217–235, particularly p. 234):

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- A Introductory messages of condemnation, pleading and future restoration (Isaiah chapters 1–12).
 - B Oracles against the nations: humiliation of the proud king of Babylon (Isaiah chapters 13–27)
 - C Collection of woe-messages: don't trust in earthly powers (Isaiah chapters 28–35).
 - D CENTER: collection of historical narratives (Isaiah chapters 36–39).
 - C' YHWH's supremacy over idols: don't trust in idols (Isaiah chapters 40–48).
 - B' Messages about the Suffering Servant and mother Israel's restoration (Isaiah chapters 49–54).
 - A' Final messages of condemnation, pleading and future restoration (Isaiah chapters 55–66).
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¹⁷ See Footnote #3 above.

¹⁸ Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999/2004. Unfortunately no equivalent comprehensive volume is yet available for the New Testament.

Every commentary, whether a commentary on the entire Bible, just the Old Testament, or a commentary specific to one book, will have its own outline of Isaiah (or any biblical book). Every outline will be different. Cobbin's, Bullinger's, and Dorsey's outlines all differ.

The basic structure of the entire Bible was established by the Old and New Testament editors and canonizers of the Word of God such as Moses, David, Hezekiah, Ezra, Christ, Paul, Peter, and John. That structure is set. However, there is no established biblical outline more detailed than that. Feel free to create your own outline of each biblical book, recognizing that some outline structure points are more obvious than others, which is the purpose of commentaries (Ecclesiastes 12:12).

David Sielaff, September 2010