

A Study of the Prophets

A. What is a prophet?

- a. **Proclaimer.** Exodus 7:1-2; Numbers 12:6; 1 Samuel 3:19-4:1; 2 Kings 21:10; Jeremiah 26:2; Ezekiel 38:17.
- b. **Teacher.** Scripture reveals that during the time of Samuel there was a type of “school” for prophets led by Samuel. 1 Samuel 19:20; 1 Kings 20:35-36.
- c. **Recorder.** 1 Chronicles 29:29; 2 Chronicles 9:29; Jeremiah 36:1-2, 4; Luke 16:29-31.
- d. **Predictor.** Deuteronomy 18:22; Isaiah 41:22-23; Jeremiah 28:8-9; Romans 1:1-3.

B. Isaiah, the man and the times.

- a. His name means “salvation is of the Lord.” He was married and his wife was a prophetess (8:3). Two sons: Shear-jashub (7:3 – “a remnant will return”); Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (8:3 – “the enemy is hasting to the booty and swift to the prey”).
- b. Time – The days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (1:1). 739-683 BC.
- c. Israel was full of idolatry. At the death of Solomon (931 BC) Jeroboam rebelled against Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, and set up a golden calf in Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12). For 200 years Israel had been following this system.
- d. Purpose – “He was sent to challenge the sinners and encourage the faithful.” He was to remind the people that they should trust in God and not Syria, or other military alliances. He also addresses the future kingdom of God and the coming Messiah.
- e. He often refers to God as the “Lord of hosts” (62 times) and the Holy One of Israel (25 times).

C. What to Look For When Studying the Prophets.

- a. The current condition of the people as the prophet was speaking. The prophet’s message was always relevant to his hearers.
- b. How God dealt with His own people and with the heathen nations. We learn in great detail that God is in control of the world.
- c. The coming of Christ. All prophets had a message of warning and doom, but they also include a message of future hope in God’s anointed.
- d. The kingdom of God (church). The kingdoms of Israel and Judah fell because of their sinfulness, but God would establish a kingdom that would stand forever.

D. A simple outline of Isaiah:

- a. 1-12 - Prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
- b. 13-23 - Prophecies concerning the surrounding nations.
- c. 24-27 - Pronouncements of judgment and reward.
- d. 28-35 - Warnings against alliances.
- e. 36-39 - An account concerning Hezekiah, Sennacherib, and Babylon.
- f. 40-66 - Prophecies of comfort and salvation.

Isaiah 1-6 – The Condition of God’s People and Isaiah’s Commission

A. **1:1** - Uzziah (790-739 BC) 2 Kings 15:1; Jotham (750-734 BC) 2 Kings 15:32-38; Ahaz (741-726 BC) 2 Kings 16; Hezekiah (726-697 BC) 2 Kings 18-20.

- a. Assyria is the world power at this time. There were four Assyrian kings during Isaiah’s time. Tiglath-Pileser (2 Kings 15:17-20, 29); Shalmaneser; Sargon; Sennacherib (Isaiah 37:36-38).
- b. A study of 2 Kings 15-20 will show the state of Israel during this time.

B. 1:2-15, 21-23 – Israel Has Forgotten God.

- a. Notice the description:
 - i. Rebellious (v. 2).
 - ii. Ignorant (v. 3).
 - iii. Sinful, weighed down with iniquity, corrupt, forsakers, provokers, turned backward (v. 4).
 - iv. Sick (v. 5).
 - v. Full of sores (v. 6).
- b. Verses 7-9 shows their current condition as a result of their sin. God viewed them as He did Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 9)!
- c. Verses 10-15 reveals that God would not accept their worship because of their sinful condition.
- d. God’s people had become “harlots” (v. 21). Hosea 9:1. They were spiritual fornicators, prostitutes.

C. 1:16-20 – God’s Desire for His People.

- a. No matter how far they had departed from Him, God still desired their salvation.
- b. Verses 16-17 illustrate the meaning of repentance.
- c. God’s promises are conditional (vs. 19-20).

D. 1:24-31 – God Will Purge the Sin from His People.

- a. 1:24 - “LORD” is the Biblical, proper name for God (Exodus 6:2-3). “Hosts” was a military term referring to servants or service. God also refers to His own people as adversaries and enemies in this verse.

- b. God's will is that His people be just and righteous (v. 27). The ultimate fulfillment of this is seen in the church today.
- c. Those who chose to follow idols (v. 29) would be destroyed.

E. 2:1-4 – The Peaceful Church Age.

- a. "Latter days" is a reference to the Christian dispensation. Acts 2:16-17. "Mountain" is symbolic of a government (Daniel 2:35). It will be a place where people of all nations and tongues are welcomed.
- b. "Zion...Jerusalem" is the same place. This was fulfilled in Acts 2 when the church was established in Jerusalem.
- c. Verse 4 has often been abused by Premillennialists, but this is a reference to the nature of the new Kingdom of God, the church.

F. 2:5-22 – Israel's Condition and Her Response When God Comes in Judgment.

- a. "Filled with eastern ways" – they started living like the idol worshipers around them. "Soothsayers" – fortune telling, divining, magic.
- b. 2:7 – the accumulation of wealth had caused them to forget about their dependence upon God.

G. 2:12 – "The day of the Lord."

- a. Sometimes this phrase refers to the second coming of Christ (2 Peter 3:10) and sometimes, as it does here, it refers to a time of judgment upon a nation.
- b. Everything and everyone that exalts itself against God will be brought low in judgment.
- c. In view of the impending judgment, Israel is encouraged to turn away from men and turn to God (v. 22).

A. 3:1-7 – Punishment is Coming!

- a. When God judges a nation no man or group of men can withstand. God is again referred to as "the Lord of Hosts." In the siege of a city, all outside resources are eliminated by the enemy and eventually they fall.
- b. Verse 5 shows a reversal of roles in society. Inexperienced leaders cause much damage to societies.
- c. God's own people will be in a frantic search for anyone to lead them out of the distress.

B. 3:8-12 – Israel Will Be Punished Because of Her Own Sin.

- a. Their tongue and their doings are against the Lord (v. 8). God sees what man does, and what He sees provokes Him to action.
- b. God will reward those who do what is right (v. 10).
- c. The principle that runs throughout the Bible is that we reap what we sow.
- d. Obadiah 15; Galatians 6:7-8.

C. 3:13-15 – God Will Hold National Leaders to Account.

- a. The elders and princes were to be doing the exact opposite of what they are charged here.

- b. Verse 15 is a rhetorical question. Did you think you would be able to get away with what you have been doing?

D. 3:16-4:1 – The Women of Israel Will Be Judged.

- a. This sounds like our society today. Women dress and act for the purpose of getting someone's attention. *Wanton* in verse 16 means seductive.
- b. God expects certain things from His women (1 Peter 3; Titus 2).
- c. Isaiah mentions 21 items of "finery." God has always condemned the vanity and external show that clothing cannot hide. Their conduct and character cannot be hidden by the jewels and make-up.
- d. 3:24-25 show what will be, as opposed to what they were used to.
- e. 4:1 – the men of Judah will have been so beaten in war and captivity that women would ask to share husbands.

E. 4:2-6 – There is Hope for Future Israel.

- a. "In that day" is a reference to the time of Christ and the church. The *Branch* is a reference to Christ who would shoot up out of Judah.
- b. Jeremiah 23:5; Zechariah 6:12-13. The *Branch* would be "beautiful and glorious." The women of Judah may have been outwardly beautiful, but God looks at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).
- c. The judgment of God on His people had two purposes: (1) destroy the wicked and (2) cleanse the faithful.
- d. Notice the presupposition of God's people being called "holy" (v. 3). Isaiah states that everyone will be holy and that shows that God expects much from His people.
- e. The cloud and fire remind us of God's presence with Israel as they left Egypt.
- f. Verse 6 is a beautiful description of the Lord's church! "God has provided a shield of protection, a place where each of His children may be near Him."

F. 5:1-7 – A Song of a Vineyard.

- a. Verses 1-2 reveal God's treatment of His people and what they gave Him in return.
- b. He then addresses the inhabitants of Judah (v. 3). The same type of effort that was used in preparing the vineyard will be used in destroying it because of sin.
- c. Verse 7 reveals the meaning of the song.

G. 5:8-10 – Judgment upon land owners. Leviticus 26:14-16.

H. 5:11-17, 22-23 – Judgment upon pleasure seekers. Drinking had become a way of life. Notice verse 13. The captivity is so certain that Isaiah speaks as if it had already happened.

I. 5:18-19 – Judah had become a slave of sin. Romans 6:12-14.

J. 5:20 – their value system had been turned upside down.

K. 5:21 – they had all forsaken the true source of wisdom.

L. 5:24-30 – because of all this, God is coming in judgment.

- a. He had several “woes” and now he has some “therefores.”
- b. The reason for the coming judgment – verse 24b.
- c. God would lift up a *banner*. A flag or cloth symbol that would be used to gather armies or nations.

A. 6:1-5 – A Vision of God’s Holiness.

- a. King Uzziah died in approximately 740 BC. Read of him in 2 Kings 15:1-7 and 2 Chronicles 26. A good king for Judah, but because he entered the temple to offer incense he was struck with leprosy and died in isolation.
- b. Seraph is a Hebrew word that means, “to burn or consume.” Hebrews 1:7.
- c. Holy used three times is a sign of God’s complete sacredness. Isaiah sees God as separate (holy) and above His creation.
- d. Isaiah responds in great humility (v. 5) when he is brought face to face with the absolute holiness of God.

B. 6:6-13 – Isaiah’s Commission.

- a. Homer Hailey wrote, “Sin and the guilt of sin must be removed, blotted out, if one is to be an acceptable servant of the Lord; and since all sin is ultimately against God, only God can forgive it.”
- b. *Iniquity* carries with it the idea of twisted or perverted, but it also includes guilt. *Purge* means covered or written over.
- c. Isaiah is now ready and willing to go and preach to the people of his day. The result of his preaching will be the exact opposite of what it should have been.
- d. Jesus quotes this passage in reference to speaking in parables (Matt. 13:13-15).
- e. Isaiah asks a natural question, “How long should I keep doing this?”
- f. Zechariah 7:8-12.
- g. Verse 13 points out that some would be faithful to God. This “holy seed” would be the source of the Messiah in the future.

Isaiah 7 – A Sign for King Ahaz

A. 7:1-2 – Syria and Israel Attack Jerusalem.

- a. We have jumped ahead by several years into the work of Isaiah. Ahaz is the grand-son of Uzziah and he was a bad king (2 Kg. 16:1-4). Probably around 735 BC.
- b. Judah is in the process of being punished because of her sin. Syria and Israel are the two nations that come against them.

B. 7:3-25 – Isaiah and Shear-Jashub Meet With Ahaz.

- a. Ahaz is instructed not to worry because within 65 years the nation of Ephraim would be destroyed. All Ahaz needed to do was place his faith in God. If he did not, his kingdom would not be established.
- b. The Lord instructs Ahaz to ask for a sign and he refuses! The extent of the odder is unlimited. He did not want a sign because he did not believe.
- c. Ahaz was in the process of looking to Tiglath-Pileser for a treaty, something which God did not want Israel's leaders to do.
- d. Since his lack of faith resulted in a refusal to seek a sign from God, Ahaz and the house of David would be given a sign in the future.
 - i. The virgin (v. 14). There are two words in the Hebrew that identify a virgin. *Almah* (here; Gen. 24:43) and *bethulah* (Gen. 24:16). The first word requires a clarification, whereas *bethulah* does not. The virgin birth of Christ is an integral part of the Christian system (Matt. 1:23).
 - ii. Immanuel. Literally, "God with us." Matthew 1:22-23. Isaiah is not speaking of some child contemporary with Ahaz. This is a promise connected to the house of David (2 Sam. 7:12-13).
 - iii. However, Isaiah does reveal some contemporary events that Ahaz would see (v. 17). Because of Judah's sin, her enemies will come upon her like insects.
- e. "Hired razor" (v. 20). Ahaz used the treasures out of God's temple to pay Assyria to protect him from Israel and Syria. In turn, Assyria would also attack Ahaz with the same money he used for protection!
- f. The people and the land would be completely devastated. 2 Chronicles 28:16-22.

Isaiah 8 – Assyria is Coming!

A. 8:1-4 – Isaiah's Son is used as a sign against the People.

B. 8:5-10 – The people had refused God long enough.

- a. *Shiloah* was a small pool/stream near the temple that flowed south in Jerusalem. This is where Isaiah met with Ahaz (7:3) to instruct him to trust in God. Instead, he turned to others for assistance.
- b. Now the river of God's wrath is going to drown him and the people! They could make all the plans they wanted, but God's punishment would not be stopped (v. 10).

C. 8:11-22 – Isaiah is encouraged to trust in God.

- a. If Isaiah opposed Judah's treaty with Assyria he would be viewed as a traitor.
- b. He is instructed to put his trust in the Lord (v. 13).
- c. In making a modern application of this passage one commentator wrote, "Throughout the history of the church, those who have sought to call the church back to her God-given mission and away from her man-made "programs" have been treated as troublemakers."
- d. Nahum 1:7. Verses 16-18 contain a statement made by Isaiah.
- e. When people turn away from God they are turning away from the light (v. 21-22).

Isaiah 9 – Promise and Warning

A. 9:1-7 – Light will come to God's people.

- a. Chapter 8 ended with words of warning and doom, but 9 starts with hope through the coming Messiah.
- b. We know this is a reference to Christ because of Matthew 4:12-17.
- c. At that time they were oppressed because of Assyria (2 Kings 15:29).
- d. Two reasons are listed for their future rejoicing:
 - i. Assyria's yoke would be broken (v. 4).
 - ii. The new kingdom would not be a kingdom of physical war (v. 5).
- e. The reason for this change is because a "child" is going to be born (v. 6-7).
 - i. A son – of God and David (Romans 1:3-4).
 - ii. Government on his shoulders – Christ's authority (Ephesians 1:20-23).
 - iii. Wonderful – a masculine noun meaning wonder, miracle, marvel.
 - iv. Counselor – an adviser.
 - v. Mighty God – strong mighty one. Term often denoting God in the OT.
 - vi. Everlasting Father – eternal Father. Divine nature of Christ.
 - vii. Prince of Peace – chief of tranquility.
- f. The throne of David is mentioned throughout Scripture (2 Samuel 7:12-13; Luke 1:31-33).

B. 9:8-10:4 – Ephraim and Samaria will be punished because of their sins.

- a. Time and time again God has warned His people, but they refuse to listen (v. 13).

- b. There are four sections of prophecy and each ends with the same statement.
 - i. 9:8-12. Israel will be devoured.
 - ii. 9:13-17. Leaders are the source of the problem.
 - iii. 9:18-21. Wickedness had spread like a wildfire.
 - iv. 10:1-4. There is no hope apart from God.

C. 10:5-19 – God will use Assyria to punish the sin of His people and then He will punish Assyria for her arrogance against Him.

- a. Though they did not realize it at the time, Assyria was God’s weapon (rod) to punish Israel’s sin. Assyria just assumed it was her own purpose and power that was accomplishing all this.
 - i. The cities mentioned in verses 8-9 had been conquered by Assyria in the past.
 - ii. “Oriental monarchs looked upon their victories or defeats as expressions of the strength or weakness of the nation’s gods.”
 - iii. In defeating Israel they would assume that the God of Israel was weak.
- b. Verse 15 shows that Assyria would be God’s tool for the purpose of punishing sin.

D. 10:20-23 – A remnant will return.

- a. This prophecy would be fulfilled in two ways:
 - i. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah record the return of God’s people from captivity.
 - ii. Verse 22 is quoted in Romans 9:27-28 in reference to the spiritual remnant who believe in Christ.
- b. Verses 24-34 contain a promise to God’s people that He would remove the burden of Assyria from His people.

Isaiah 11-12 – The Offspring of Jesse

A. 11:1-5 – The Character of the Branch.

- a. Chapters 9-10 have discussed the fact that both Israel and Assyria will be destroyed because of their sin.
- b. Chapters 11-12 are messages of hope for God’s faithful.
- c. A “rod” is a small shoot that would come out of the “stem” or stump of the family of Jesse. The house of David (Israel) is going to be consumed and so it is referred to in this manner. At this point in time, the line of David appeared to be dead, but there was hope for the future through the Messiah (2 Sam. 7:12-13).
- d. “Spirit of the Lord” is a reference to the baptism of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ (Matt. 3:13-17).

- e. Verses 3-5 speak of the nature of His life.
 - i. His judgment is based upon knowledge of the hearts of men, not their outward appearance.
 - ii. The rod of His mouth and the breath of His lips refer to His teaching. John saw the same thing (Rev. 1:16; 2:16).
 - iii. He would be righteous (conform to God's will) and faithful (stable, never wavers).

B. 11:6-10 – The Character of His Followers.

- a. Homer Hailey wrote, "This description of peace and harmony drawn from the animal kingdom can no more be taken literally than can the description of a sword proceeding out of the mouth of Jesus. The prophet is not looking to a time when the animals of the natural world will be living without enmity, but he is describing the peace of those in Jehovah's holy mountain, the kingdom of God, who have undergone a spiritual and moral transformation."
- b. Verse 9 reveals that the prophet is speaking of the kingdom/church when he speaks of "My holy mountain" and the inhabitants being "full of the knowledge of the Lord" (Isa. 2:2-4).
- c. Verse 10 also clears this up by referring to the Gentiles seeking after the Lord. Paul uses this verse in Romans 15:12 while encouraging Jewish Christians to get along with their Gentile brothers.

C. 11:11-16 – The Blessings for the Remnant.

- a. The phrase "in that day" is used twice in this chapter and it refers back to when a Branch would shoot out of the stump of Jesse.
- b. Verse 11 refers to the "second time" that God would gather His people together. They were gathered together after captivity (Ezra, Nehemiah) and they would be gathered together in the church/kingdom in the future.
 - i. This is a spiritual recovery Paul refers to in Romans 9-11.
 - ii. A banner (v. 12) would be a rallying point for an army. There would be a place where God's people could rally together sometime in the future- the church.
 - iii. Verse 14 mentions the Philistines, Ammonites, Edomites, and Moabites. The church is a gathering place for all nations and tongues.

D. 12:1-6 – A Song of Praise.

- a. Isaiah again uses "in that day," twice.
- b. God was revealed earlier as the enemy and destroyer of His people. Now He is revealed as the source of their salvation.
- c. Instead of Assyria, in that day, God would be their source of protection and deliverance.
- d. "Yah" or "Jehovah" is a reference to the revealed, personal name of God (Ex. 6:2-3).

- e. “Water from the wells of salvation” is a reference to the water of life (Jn. 4:10-14).
- f. Verses 4-6 show the grateful attitude that the redeemed will have in the church (1 Thes. 5:18). As Christians we must be doing what verse 4 commands.
- g. Song is an expression of joy and thanksgiving in Scripture.

Isaiah 13-14 - A Proclamation Against Babylon

The Babylonian Empire ruled from 606-536 BC and was followed by the Medo-Persian Empire from 536-331 BC.

A. 13:1-5 – The Announcement.

- a. The sanctified and mighty ones (v. 3) are later revealed as the Medes (v. 17).
- b. God uses Babylon to punish His people and then uses the Medes to punish the arrogance of the Babylonians. The prophets teach that the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men (Dan. 4:25).
- c. Notice, the Lord gathers the army (v. 4) and the Lord uses His weapon (v. 5).

B. 13:6-16 – The Day of the Lord is Coming.

- a. This phrase is used several times in Scripture. Sometimes it refers to national judgments, such as this. Other times it refers to the final day of judgment (2 Pet. 3:10).
- b. Verses 6-8 reveal that even the mightiest nation in the world cannot stand against the God of heaven!
- c. Verses 9-10 show that this will be a time of severe punishment. Just like Babylon, the Medes will be cruel and fierce. Verse 10 is familiar language to Bible students. It is used in reference to events that effect the world (Isa. 24:21-23; Eze. 32:7; Joel 2:31; Matt. 24:29). Verse 13 also speaks of this event.
- d. Verses 11-16 speak of the reasons and results of the coming punishment.
 - i. Reasons: its evil, iniquity, arrogance (v. 11).
 - ii. Results: the men will be killed (v. 12), none will be spared (v. 15), and the women and children will not be spared (v. 16).

C. 13:17-22 – Babylon Will be Completely Devastated.

- a. The Medo-Persian Empire came into power in about 550 BC. Money will not stop them from defeating Babylon.
- b. Verse 18 shows the ruthless nature of the warfare.
- c. In the future, instead of being inhabited by humans it would become a dwelling place for wild animals.

D. 14:1-2 – God Would Have Mercy on Israel.

- a. This is a prophecy of the return of Israel to Jerusalem under the reign of Cyrus. 2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4.
- b. Esther 8:17 reveals that many “people of the land” converted to Judaism during this time.
- c. Jeremiah 25:8-14.

E. 14:3-11 – A Proverb Against Babylon.

- a. The arrogance of Babylon had led her to believe that no one could defeat her.
- b. There will be rejoicing and relief in every part of the created world over the fall of this evil empire (v. 7-8).
- c. Verses 9-11 state that even those in the grave will see the fall of this people. Babylon should not be surprised to find other wicked nations in that place (Ps. 9:17).

F. 14:12-23 – The Mighty Nation Has Fallen!

- a. “*Lucifer*” is a reference to Babylon, not Satan (13:1; 14:4). Some try to connect this with Luke 10:18 and say that it refers to Satan’s being cast out of heaven. This does not fit the context. *Lucifer* is from a word that means, “to shine.”
- b. The nation had tried to exalt itself above God, but it will be brought low (v. 15).
- c. Daniel 4:22-25. This is part of Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.
- d. Verses 16-21 show the response of surrounding nations to the fall of Babylon. When they are defeated by the Medes it would be realized that they are no different than any other nation.
- e. Is this kind of thing still possible today? Does God still rule in the kingdoms of men?
- f. Verses 22-23 reveal that God is the responsible party in this destruction.
- g. Homer Hailey wrote, “When a nation reaches the point of such corruption and wickedness that it is unfit to continue, God brings it to an end.”

G. 14:24-27 – The Surety of the Destruction.

- a. Isaiah 10 speaks of the destruction of Assyria and 13-14 speak of Babylon. History tells us that the Assyrian Empire existed from approximately 1350-608 BC. The Babylonian Empire existed from about 721-536 BC. Isaiah begins his work in approximately 750 BC and speaks of the destruction of both.

- b. The purposes of God cannot be overthrown by even the strongest nation (v. 26-27).

H. 14:28-32 – Philistia Will Be Broken.

- a. The Philistines were a constant trouble to Israel. Judges 3 and 13-14 reveal that they troubled Israel during the days of the Judges. David finally subdued them (1 Chr. 20:4-8), but they rose up again (2 Chr. 21:16-17).
- b. Ahaz died somewhere between 725-715 BC.
- c. Zephaniah 2:4-7 also speaks of the destruction of Gaza.
- d. One proof that God was in control would be the fact that Zion (Israel) would have refuge in these times.

Isaiah 15-16 – A Proclamation Against Moab

Moab was the son of Lot's oldest daughter and Ammon was the son of his youngest daughter (Genesis 19:30-37). Jeremiah 48, Ezekiel 25:8-11, Amos 2:1-3, Zephaniah 2:8-11 contain prophecies against Moab. From these passages we learn that Moab was an enemy of God's people.

A. 15:1-4 – Mourning Over the Destruction of Moab.

- a. The destruction is going to be sudden and quick. Baldness and cut off beards were signs of mourning.
- b. Sackcloth was a coarse garment that would be worn against the skin to show sorrow (Genesis 37:34; 2 Samuel 3:31; 1 Kings 20:31; Esther 4:3; Jonah 3:6-8).

B. 15:5-16:5 – Isaiah's Response to the Message.

- a. This shows the heart of the prophet. Moab was an enemy of Israel, but he is saddened by the events that will take place. The people will be removed like a bird flushed out of its nest (16:2).
- b. It seems as if Moab is told in 16:1 to turn to God's people for help/protection. This is perhaps the connection with verses 3-5.
- c. It seems that Isaiah is pointing Moab to the future hope of God's people through the tabernacle of David (v. 5). This is obviously a reference to the kingdom of God established through Christ. It is the God of Judah who is just and righteous (v. 5).

- d. Amos 9:11-12 refers to the tabernacle of David. A remnant of the Ammonites and the Gentiles would benefit from this kingdom. Acts 15:12-18 refers to this prophecy in reference to the Gentiles being a part of the church.

C. 16:6-12 – Moab’s Arrogance.

- a. Jeremiah 48:29, 42. Instead of turning to God and His people for help they turn away in pride.
- b. Verses 1-5 reveal that hope was available, but when they turned away from the only possible hope their destruction was sealed (6-12).
- c. Verse 12 points out something that still happens today. When things get really bad, it is time to pray.

D. 16:13-14 – Their Fate Is Sealed.

- a. Jeremiah 48:45-47 reveals that there was a remnant of Moab left, but they became “like Sodom” (Zephaniah 2:9).

Isaiah 17 – A Proclamation Against Damascus

Damascus is the oldest, continuously inhabited city in the world. It was in existence during the lifetime of Abraham (Genesis 14:15; 15:2). Damascus is going to be judged and Ephraim is also mentioned in this chapter (Isaiah 17:3). These two formed an alliance in an effort to defeat Jerusalem (2 Kings 16:1-6) and so they would be condemned together.

A. 17:1-3 – Damascus and Ephraim (Israel) will be Judged.

B. 17:4-11 – Israel is Going to Suffer.

- a. Assyria took Syria in 732 BC and Israel in 722 BC. “Jacob” is a reference to Israel. Isaiah 7:1-8 speaks of the coming destruction of both nations.
- b. When God comes in judgment there will not be much left of these two (v. 5-6).
- c. During this time of suffering, instead of turning to idols, the people would look to the only true God (v. 7-8). Punishment caused Israel to realize that the idols could not deliver them.
- d. Verse 10 reveals the cause of the coming judgment: the people had forgotten God. This was a continuous problem with the Israelites (Judges 2:7-12).
- e. Verse 11 confirms the Biblical teaching of “you reap what you sow” (Galatians 6:7-8).

C. 17:12-14 – A Lesson Learned.

- a. Assyria is the rushing waters. They are coming, but they should have learned from what was happening to Syria and Israel.
- b. 2 Kings 19:32-37.

Isaiah 18-20 – Proclamations Against Ethiopia and Egypt

A. 18:1-3 – The World is Invited to Watch What Will Happen.

- a. It appears as if Ethiopia was putting forth an effort to build an alliance with Assyria who was the dominant world power at this time.
- b. All nations need to understand that God is in control.

B. 18:4-6 – God’s Dealings with the Assyrians.

- a. In the right time God will strike down the Assyrian Empire.
- b. God has always operated on His own time-table, not man’s.
- c. Genesis 21:1-2; Galatians 4:4.

C. 18:7 – Ethiopia will Submit to the Lord.

- a. The Assyria army was destroyed as it came up against Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:35-37).
- b. Homer Hailey wrote, “Jehovah’s destruction of the wicked and His gracious goodness to His won will so impress those from the farthest reaches that they will bring their gifts to His throne.”
- c. Exodus 6:28-7:5.

D. 19:1-4 – Egypt’s Idols are Helpless Against the Lord.

- a. These verses also seem to indicate that there was internal trouble within Egypt that helped lead to its downfall.
- b. Historically it is known that Egypt was subjected to the Assyrians (663 BC) and by the Persians some time later.

E. 19:5-10 – Natural Disasters Will Occur.

- a. The “sea” is a reference to the Nile which was the source of life to Egypt.
- b. It would not literally “dry up,” but when the Empire is attacked its glory would be brought down.
- c. The economy would be strangled as a result of these events (v. 10).

F. 19:11-17 – Egypt Followed Foolish Counselors.

- a. Historically, Egypt is known for its wisdom in different areas (Acts 7:22). However, at the time of Isaiah’s writing, they had become irrational.
- b. The problem with this country was that they followed human wisdom. This is the problem with all societies in the world.
- c. Proverbs 11:14; 12:5; Ecclesiastes 10:16-19.

G. 19:18-25 – Promises to Egypt, Assyria, and Israel.

- a. All three nations would eventually understand that God is ultimately in control of this world.
- b. An “altar” signifies a place of worship. Isaiah seems to be discussing the possibility of a covenant between God and Egypt.

- c. In the gospel age these former enemies will become allies. All are one in Christ and there is no political domination in the kingdom of God (John 18:36).

H. 20:1-6 – Egypt and Ethiopia Punished by Assyria.

- a. The date of this event was approximately 715 BC. Sargon came to the throne in Assyria in 722 and ruled to 705. This is the only time Sargon is mentioned in Scripture.
- b. God uses the prophet as an object lesson against Egypt and Ethiopia.
- c. They had turned to Assyria for an alliance and were disappointed.
- d. God should be the source of national strength.
- e. Psalm 33:10-12.

Isaiah 21- Proclamations Against Babylon, Edom, and Arabia

A. 21:1-10 – Babylon will fall.

- a. Around 722 BC Babylon declared independence from Assyria. Merodach-baladan was their king at this time. Nebuchadnezzar was the last “powerful” king of Babylon, but Babylon was still a city when Peter wrote (1 Peter 5:13).
- b. The fall of Babylon (21:10) was not an immediate, overnight fall. It was a gradual decline over many years. This is typically the manner in which nations fall.

B. 21:11-12 – Edom will fall.

C. 21:13-17 – Arabia will fall.

D. It is important to notice in this chapter:

- a. Isaiah declared what he heard from God (21:10) and the Lord God of Israel has spoken it (21:17).
- b. Again, one of the main lessons throughout all the prophets is that God is ultimately in control of the world.

Isaiah 22- Proclamations Against Jerusalem and Shebna

A. 22:1-14 – Jerusalem refused to repent.

- a. “Valley of vision” indicates that within the walls of Jerusalem there were prophets speaking God’s word.
- b. Verse 4 shows the attitude of Isaiah during their time of distress and suffering.
- c. Verses 5-11 speak of the coming destruction and the attempts the citizens would make in securing their city.

- d. Verse 11 speaks of a pool that would be made. This is probably a reference to Hezekiah's tunnel (2 Kings 20; 2 Chronicles 32).
- e. The problem was that they were not looking to God for their protection.
- f. Verses 12-13 show that instead of repenting of their sin, they dug in deeper! The conclusion is reached that there is no sacrifice left that can save them (v. 4).

B. 22:15-25 – A Prophecy Concerning Shebna.

- a. Shebna was the scribe under Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:37). The events of 2 Kings 18 are also recorded in Isaiah 36. At this time Judah was under threat from Assyrian king Sennacherib.
- b. It appears as if Shebna became full of pride and was more concerned about his burial place than being a “father” to God's people (v. 21). Eliakim would take his place. Eliakim was “over the household” (2 Kings 18:18).
- c. He would be given a position of authority (key of the house of David) and he would be a place of safety (peg) for God's people.
- d. There were righteous people who sought to do God's will even in the midst of national degeneration.

C. 23 – Tyre Will Fall.

- a. There are going to be economic and political ramifications to the fall of this city.
- b. Verse 9 shows that God is behind these events. Ezekiel 27-28 speaks of these events as well.

Isaiah 24 – All Are Accountable to God

Chapters 24-27 are a summary statement of what Isaiah has been saying in the previous chapters. All nations, Israel included, will be judged by God for their sins.

A. 24:1-13 – God's Judgment is Universal and Harsh.

- a. Verse 2 shows that all men of all rank are still accountable to God.
- b. Why are these great judgments coming upon all the nations of the earth? Verse 5 explains. Psalm 9:17; Proverbs 14:34.
- c. Wine, tambourine, harp, mirth, grapes – all these things were associated with celebrations and luxury. When God comes in judgment against a nation, all reasons for “partying” will be destroyed.

B. 24:14-23 – Rejoicing and Judgment.

- a. It seems as if verse 14 is connected with the end of verse 13. At harvest, there will always be some “left-overs” in the field. Those who are faithful to God and survive the coming judgment will have a reason to rejoice.

- b. The problem was that even though people would see the judgment of God there were some who would still refuse to repent (v. 16).
- c. The earth was so full of sin that it was out of balance (v. 19-20).
- d. Most commentators agree that verse 23 is looking forward to the days of God's kingdom on earth, the church.

Isaiah 25 – A Song of Isaiah

A. 25:1-5 – Isaiah Praises God.

- a. Notice, God's counsels of "old" are faithfulness and true. God has always been faithful to His word (2 Tim. 2:13).
- b. God was to the poor and needy what no one else was willing to be. James 1:27.

B. 25:6-8 – God Will Provide a Feast.

- a. Many believe this to be a reference to the church age. The mountain is a reference back to 24:23.
- b. Matthew 22:1-14 contains the parable of the wedding feast.
- c. Verse 7 shows that in the church is the place of light. Ephesians 4:18.
- d. 1 Corinthians 15:54-55. In Christ our victory over death is guaranteed.

C. 25:9-12 – God is the Source of Salvation.

- a. 46:13. Those who "wait" (*to look for, hope, expect*) on the Lord are glad and are able to rejoice.
- b. God's hand signifies that this "mountain" (the church) is a place of protection. Moab is frequently spoken of as a people of arrogance (Jeremiah 48:28-29).

Isaiah 26 – A Song of Praise from Judah

A. 26:1-6 – God is a Strong City.

- a. In contrast to the proud (25:10-12) the people of God find a place of safety and rest.
- b. Notice that God expects His people to be a "righteous nation which keeps the truth" (v. 2). As a result, they will be kept in "perfect peace" (v. 3). God is a place of protection for those who trust in Him (v. 4).

B. 26:7-11 – God Weighs the Path of Man.

- a. "Uprightness" (v. 7) literally means smooth or level. God has made the path that we are to walk level and able to be traveled (Proverbs 5:21).
- b. In verses 8-9 Isaiah speaks of a desire for God judgment. God's verdicts are always right. Unrighteousness filled Israel at the time of Isaiah's writing and so this is a message of hope to those people.

C. 26:12-15 – God versus other Masters.**D. 26:16-19 – God’s People have cried out to Him.**

- a. The faithful, instead of trusting in other nations, turned their prayers to God.
- b. This passage lets us know that God would restore His people. They were to be punished for their unfaithfulness, but there was coming a day of deliverance and hope.
- c. The resurrection of verse 19 could be a reference to one of two things:
 - i. The physical return of Israel to their land after captivity.
 - ii. A spiritual resurrection of God’s people after the punishment for their sins.

E. 26:20-27:1 – God’s Faithful have a place of Safety during the Judgment.**Isaiah 27 – A Promise of Return from Assyria**

“In that day” (v. 2) is a reference to the judgment that would take place while God’s people are protected. *Leviathan* (Job 3:8; 41:1; Psalm 74:14; 104:26) is a reference to the heathen nations that God would judge. We learn from this chapter that God wants to bless His people; He wants what is best for us. Verses 7-9 teach us that the captivity would result in good for God’s people (Psalm 119:67, 71; Hebrews 12:7-11). The problem with God’s people at that time was that they were without understanding (v. 10-12). They never seemed to understand that God requires righteousness and justice from His people. Verses 12-13 set the context for this return. It is not some event yet in the future.

Isaiah 28 – Judgment and Hope for God’s People

A. 28:1-8 – Judgment on Ephraim.

- a. Amos also deals with these people (6:1-7). They apparently lived a lifestyle of pleasure and entertainment.
- b. One thing included with the downfall is the mention of drinking (v. 3, 7-8).
- c. Leviticus 10:8-11.
- d. Verses 5-6 point out that there is hope for the “remnant.”

B. 28:9-15 – The People Began Trusting in Lies.

- a. Their greatest problem was that they lost an interest in God’s word. God had been revealing His will “here a little and there a little” and it became tiresome to them.
- b. Remember what God told Isaiah in the beginning of his work (6:9-10).
- c. Verses 14-15 show that the prophets and priests had deceived themselves into believing that they would not suffer when the nation fell.
- d. It is possible to believe a lie (Genesis 37:31-35; Jeremiah 28:1-3).

C. 28:16-22 – The Precious Cornerstone.

- a. To the people of Isaiah’s day God was the Rock in whom they should have trusted.
- b. In the NT this passage is applied to Christ (1 Peter 2:6-8). There was hope in the midst of judgment.
- c. The measuring line and plummet were architectural instruments that kept a building square. The leaders of God’s people in Isaiah’s day were crooked, but in Christ we can find justice.

- d. When the judgment of God comes His people will find that the “bed is too short and the cover is too narrow.” Their efforts of self-preservation are going to be futile.

D. 28:23-29 – A Farming Parable.

- a. Isaiah uses an illustration from farming to teach a spiritual lesson.
- b. When the ground is prepared the seed is sown, but not all seeds are planted in the same way. They would scatter some while others were planted in rows.
- c. In the same way, God would not always deal with His people with punishment and captivity.

Isaiah 29 – Jerusalem Will Be Punished

A. 29:1-8 – The Certainty of Punishment.

- a. “Ariel” is a reference to Jerusalem and means either “lion of God” or “hearth of God.” It was the stronghold and place of sacrifice for God’s people.
- b. It appears as if the Jews were in a state of denial. They were continually feasting while the prophets were saying that destruction was coming.
- c. Verse 6 shows the source of the coming destruction.

B. 29:9-16 – Their Eyes Were Closed.

- a. Homer Hailey wrote, “The Jews of Isaiah’s prophecy had given themselves up to a drunken spiritual stupor; therefore, God sent them a spirit of deep sleep.”
- b. Their condition was the same as the Gentiles (Romans 1:18-32).
- c. Verses 11-12 show that the fault is their own. It seems that they always had an excuse.
- d. Jesus quotes verses 13-14 in Matthew 13:13-15.

C. 29:17-24 – There is Hope for Israel.

- a. Israel’s spiritual condition could be turned around, but they were going to have to suffer the consequences of their sins first (Psalm 119:67).
- b. Instead of being deaf and blind, they would see and hear.
- c. The gathering of the children (v. 23) is a reference to the church age of the Jews and Gentiles being brought together in one body (Ephesians 2:14-18).

Isaiah 30 – Israel Rebuked for Seeking Help from Egypt

A. 30:1-17 – An Alliance with Egypt Will Fail.

- a. Our “counsels” and “plans” must be directed by the word of God (Proverbs 3:5-6; James 4:13-17).
- b. 2 Chronicles 7:12-15.
- c. God even gives this attempted alliance a name in verse 7 meaning, “Rahab sits idle.” In other words, they are going to be no help to Judah. Rahab means, “to be bold or proud.”
- d. Verses 9 and 15 shows the attitude of God’s own people!
- e. They did not want to listen to the prophets messages of warning. By turning away from the warnings they were also turning away from the source of hope.
- f. Matthew 23:37.

B. 30:18-26 – God Would Be Gracious.

- a. Notice, God is a God of “justice” or “judgment” meaning that He will always do what is right based on His ordinances.
- b. Verse 21 shows that God will not leave His people in the dark. This is not a “small, still voice” that will come to us and tell us what to do. God’s word directs us through teaching (John 6:44-45).
- c. Verses 23-26 paint a picture of peace and prosperity. In judgment they would suffer, but God would redeem His people from captivity.
- d. Jeremiah 18:7-10.

C. 30:27-33 – Assyria Will Be Judged.

Isaiah 31 – Don't Trust In Egypt

A. 31:1-3 – Don't Trust In Numbers.

- a. A commentator wrote this on 31, "In the face of the Assyrian threat, Judah had turned to Egypt, rather than Jehovah, for help. It is their lack of faith in God that Isaiah deals with in this chapter, rebuking them because "they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the Lord." The prophet warns them that relying on the chariots of Egypt is vain for only God is able to deliver them."
- b. Through time God's people should have learned that strength in numbers is not what will deliver God's people from trouble (Judges 6-8).
- c. By their actions they were saying that Egypt was equal to or greater than God in strength (v. 3). Notice, the helper (Egypt) and the helped (Judah) will fall.

B. 31:4-9 – If You Repent, God Will Deliver You.

- a. Essentially, God is stating that nothing will cause Him to give up His people. It is through these people that the Messiah would eventually come.
- b. It is pointed out that the punishment coming from Assyria will cause the Israelites to give up their idols. They would ultimately realize that the Lord is God.
- c. 2 Chronicles 24:17-19.

Isaiah 32 – Promise and Warning

A. 32:1-8 – A Righteous Reign.

- a. At the time it was written, Hezekiah was king and he was a good king (2 Kings 18:3-6).
- b. Jeremiah also spoke of one who would come and “execute judgment and righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:5). This prophecy was made after Hezekiah was dead.
- c. This passage then is obviously a reference to Jesus and His reign. Jesus is on His throne now (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 10:12).
- d. Many believe that the “princes” (v. 2) are a reference to the apostles. Others believe that it is a reference to all Christians. Either way, the kingdom of Christ (the church) is a place of righteousness and justice.
- e. Verses 3-8 seem to teach that the way things were when Isaiah was writing will be turned around in the days of the church. God’s people will be able to distinguish between the righteous and the wicked.

B. 32:9-15 – The Conditions During Isaiah’s Time.

- a. The problem is identified as complacency or self-satisfaction (v. 9-11). Isaiah also addressed the women in chapter 3.
- b. This condition was going to be upon God’s people “until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high” (v. 15). This is probably a reference to the days of Christ (Luke 4:16-21) and the church (Acts 2:1-4).

C. 32:16-20 – The Result of the Spirit Being Poured Out.

- a. Notice the results: justice, righteousness, peace, quietness, assurance.
- b. Verse 17 states that these things would last forever. I believe this shows that the subject is God’s spiritual kingdom in the future.
- c. The church is a kingdom that will last forever (Daniel 2:44-45).
- d. Verse 18 does not describe the inhabitants of literal Jerusalem, but the inhabitants of the kingdom/church (Isaiah 11).

Isaiah 33 – God Is Our Salvation

A. 33:1-6 – Assyria Will Be Destroyed.

- a. 2 Kings 18-19 record the events of Hezekiah trying to make peace with Assyria and seeking an alliance with Egypt.
- b. Isaiah prays for God’s grace in the time of trouble. The prophet realizes that the safety or destruction of Jerusalem is in God’s hand, not Egypt’s. the night before the attack 185,000 Assyrians were wiped out by God (2 Kings 19:35-37).
- c. We need to remember that the righteous are always rewarded for “waiting” on the Lord.

B. 33:7-16 – The Lord Will Act.

- a. The “valiant” and “ambassadors” probably refer to those whom Hezekiah sent with money to try to pacify Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13-25).
- b. Verses 7-9 seem to address Hezekiah, while verses 10-13 address Assyria. Verses 14-16 show that God will deliver the righteous.

C. 33:17-24 – God is the King of Israel.

- a. “Your eyes” is a reference to the righteous of verses 15-16. I believe this is again a reference to the Messianic age.
- b. Verses 20-21 make it clear that Isaiah is writing about the kingdom/church.
- c. What God was for the remnant of Isaiah’s day, Christ is for us today (v. 22).
- d. Verses 23-24 give a picture of trouble. There was trouble for the Jerusalem of Isaiah’s day (23), but the prophet looks to a time when sins will be forgiven (24).

Isaiah 34 – God’s Anger Against the Nations

A. 34:1-15 – The Results of the Punishment.

- a. Notice in verse 1, “the nations, the earth, the world.” All men of all races and religions are accountable to the God of heaven.
- b. Verse 2 is recorded in the past tense. Homer Hailey wrote, “Whatever the great God of heaven determines is so certain to be accomplished that He may speak of it as already done.”
- c. Isaiah uses hyperbole in verses 3-4 to describe the destruction that is coming to all the ungodly nations.
- d. Deuteronomy 32:41-42 is a commentary on verses 5-7.

B. 34:16-17 – The Certainty of the Judgment.

Isaiah 35 – The Highway of Holiness

A. 35:1-4 – God Will Bring Salvation.

- a. The reference to the wilderness and wasteland is a reference to the current spiritual condition of God’s people. When they returned from captivity the desert between Israel and Babylon was still a desert.
- b. Verses 3-4 are quoted in Hebrews 12:12-13. The context of Hebrews 12 is dealing with the “chastening of the Lord.”

B. 35:5-10 – The Highway of Holiness.

- a. The words of verses 5-6 are referred to by Jesus in Matthew 11:4-6. Jesus performed these types of miracles to cure physical ailments in people. In the immediate context of Isaiah's day there would be a spiritual renewal after the captivity.
- b. Jesus is the water of life (v. 7). John 4:13-14.
- c. This highway is restricted to certain people (v. 8-10). We must understand the spiritual application. This is not a literal road somewhere in the literal desert.

Isaiah 36-39 – Sennacherib Comes Up Against Jerusalem

The parallel account of these events is found in 2 Kings 18-20 and 2 Chronicles 32.

A. 36:1-10 – Sennacherib Sends Messengers to Hezekiah.

- a. Hezekiah reigned from 715 B.C. to 685 B.C. He was a reformer for Judah.
- b. The messengers tell Hezekiah that trusting either in God or Egypt would just be to their own hurt.
- c. Verse 7 shows that Assyria has a clear misunderstanding of the God of heaven. The altars that Hezekiah had been removing were the altars of idol gods.
- d. 2 Kings 18:4-8.
- e. Verse 8 is a mocking taunt of God's people.
- f. Verse 10 is interesting. It is very doubtful that God spoke to Sennacherib about what to do. However, Isaiah himself said that Assyria would be God's instrument of judgment (10:5-6).

B. 36:11-22 – Rabshakeh Speaks to the People.

- a. In an effort to "protect" the people Hezekiah's servants ask Rabshakeh to speak in Aramaic so their own people would not be disheartened. He speaks directly to the people in Hebrew in an effort to intimidate them.
- b. He proclaims that if they will submit to Sennacherib that they would prosper (v. 16).
- c. He then attempts to compare Jehovah to the gods of the people they have already defeated (v. 18-20).

Isaiah 37 – The Prophet Assures Deliverance

A. 37:1-7 – Sennacherib Will Fall.

- a. This is also recorded in 2 Kings 19 and these two chapters read the same.
- b. Verse 3 shows that Israel is in a place of great difficulty. Perhaps Hezekiah now realizes the sin of trusting in Egypt instead of God.
- c. What is the solution? Ask God's messenger to be praying for the nation.
- d. 2 Chronicles 7:14-15.

- e. Sennacherib will not last long enough to capture God's people. The rumor is probably what we read in verses 8-9.
- B. 37:8-20 – Sennacherib's Threat and Hezekiah's Prayer.**
- C. 37:21-35 – God's Response to the Events.**
- D. 37:36-38 – Assyria Defeated, Sennacherib Killed.**

Isaiah 38-39 – Hezekiah's Sickness, Recovery, and Pride

These events are also recorded in 2 Kings 20.

2 Chronicles 31:20-21 sum up Hezekiah's reign.

A. 38:1-8 – Hezekiah's Prayer and a Sign.

- a. From human stand-point his death was inevitable. It is thought by some that Hezekiah's response to the news from Isaiah was because at that time he did not have a son old enough to be a good king (2 Kings 21:2).
- b. God's promised deliverance would be a source of comfort. The promise to deliver Hezekiah is tied in with the promise God made to David (2 Kings 20:4-6).
- c. The "sign" is the turning back of the sundial by ten degrees. The healing of the "boil" was accomplished medicinally (2 Kings 20:7; Isa. 38:21).

B. 38:9-20 – Hezekiah's Psalm.

- a. He was 25 when he began reigning (2 Kings 18:1). He reigned for 29 years (2 Kings 18:2). These events then happened in the 14th year of his reign, so he was 39 years old. He was in the middle of his earthly life. Do you think he struggled with the thought of death that early in life?
- b. At this point in history not many details had been revealed about the "afterlife." The Christian has a much more clear understanding of life after death.

- c. On the subject of death Keith Mosher wrote, “One who has not sat where such suffering ones sit should refrain using trite expressions in order to comfort. Such sayings as, “I know what you are going through;” or “I’m sorry;” or “I understand.” Ministering to those who hurt requires listening, being there for the person, and avoiding comments on why such pain is occurring.”
 - d. Verses 19-20 show Hezekiah’s praise for his deliverance.
- C. 39:1-8 – King of Babylon Gives a Gift and Hezekiah Makes a Mistake.**
- a. Hezekiah became lifted up with pride (2 Chronicles 32:31).
 - b. It seems that he was trying to impress Babylon with his wealth (1 Timothy 6:10-17).
 - c. Isaiah singles out Hezekiah and his family for the captivity (v. 7).
 - d. The end result of these events is that Manasseh became king of Judah (2 Kings 21) and the nation of Judah became worse than Sodom (Ezekiel 16:46-47).

Isaiah 40 – Comfort for God’s People

The theme of the rest of the book now changes. Instead of the constant focus being on their sin and punishment, the rest of the book looks to the hope that is in the future for God’s people.

A. 40:1-11 – God’s Comfort.

- a. The voice that is heard is calling for repentance. This passage is also used in reference to the work of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-3). The “valleys” and “mountains” refer to men’s hearts.
- b. Immediately, Isaiah would be looking to the time when the “remnant” would be returned from captivity under the reign of Cyrus. Prophetically, we are reading about the work that would be done in preparing men for the coming of Christ (Malachi 4:5-6).
- c. Verse 8 contains a promise that Israel needed to hear- God will always keep His word.
- d. God is going to perform the work of restoration (v. 10-12). 2 Chronicles 36:22-23.

B. 40:12-31 – The Greatness of God.

- a. Verses 12-14 discuss the mind of God. God did not need the advice of men or angels in His work (Proverbs 3:19).

- b. Verses 15-17 show God's superiority over man's power. These thoughts would be comforting to His suffering people.
- c. Verses 18-20 reveal God's superiority over idols. Man is not even capable of creating the gold, silver, or trees from which he carves his images. Can God be likened to something that man makes?
- d. Verses 21-24 show God's superiority over national leaders (princes). Notice, 700 years before Christ was born Isaiah declared that the earth was round! These verses are magnifying the greatness of God.
- e. Verses 25-31 teach Israel that they cannot hide from God. He cannot be compared to anything or anyone. We are offered these same comforting thoughts today (Ephesians 1:18-21).

Isaiah 41 – God Will Be With His People

- A. It seems that in this chapter Isaiah is looking to the deliverance of Israel by the hand of the Persians under Cyrus.
- B. Verses 8-13 contain many promises:
 - a. I will strengthen you.
 - b. I will help you.
 - c. I will uphold you.
 - d. Enemies will be defeated (v. 12).
- C. Worm (v. 14) indicates the low condition from which they would be delivered.
- D. God mentions water, rivers, pools and trees (v. 17-20). These are physical items used to teach a spiritual lesson. God is preparing them for the coming captivity and the years that would follow and His message is "I will be with you." To try to interpret these verses as literal events misses the point.
- E. Verses 21-29 are a challenge to idols. If they are truly "gods" then telling what will happen in the future is no problem. They should be able to declare their purposes.
- F. These "gods" are truly nothing (v. 24).
- G. One is coming from the east (v. 2) and now one is raised from the north. This would be a reference to the Median Empire. Cyrus was from East of Babylon and he conquered the Medes who were to the North and unified the kingdoms.

- H. The “good tidings” of verse 27 probably refers to Cyrus’ decree that the Jews could return home and rebuild the temple and city of Jerusalem. The idols were not capable of doing this (29).

Isaiah 42 – Promise and Punishment

- A. Verses 1-4 are words referring to Christ. Jesus was fully equipped by the Holy Spirit to complete His mission on earth (Matt. 3:16-17). Verse 2 describes this servant as humble. When Jesus came he did so in a “lowly” manner (Matt. 11:28-30). The “bruised reed” and the “smoking flax” symbolize Jesus’ manner among those who were suffering spiritually.
- B. Verses 5-9 are an address to the Servant. God would hold and keep Him. Verse 7 was fulfilled physically and spiritually by Christ. Verses 8-9 show that God and His plan are far greater than the idols of man.
- C. Verses 10-13 – A song of praise to God.
- D. Verses 14-20 – A promise of God’s help.
- E. Verses 21-25 – Israel’s constant disobedience.

Isaiah 43 – Israel’s Redeemer

- A. 43:1-7 – God’s continual love for His people.
- B. 43:8-13 – There is no other source of salvation for Israel.
- C. 43:14-21 – There are no obstacles when God decides to act. Specifically, the action in mind here would be a deliverance from Babylon.
- D. 43:22-28 – No honor given to God. They were given over to Babylon because of their sin and they were to be delivered because of God’s scheme of redemption. Verses 25-26 show that God is willing and able to forgive their sin if they would turn to Him.

Isaiah 44 – No Other God

- A. 44:1-5 – Blessings for Israel. Verses 3-5 point to a spiritual revival for God’s people and also looks forward to the Gentiles. God’s blessings are to be obtained in a certain place. This could be a reference to the revival after the captivity and also a look forward to the coming of the church (Acts 2:1-4; Acts 11:26).
- B. 44:6-20 – God versus the idols. These verses point out the silly nature of images that men worship.
- C. 44:21-28 – God will deliver His people. Cyrus is named specifically as being the source of deliverance for Israel (v. 28). Isaiah is writing in about 700 BC and Cyrus does not come to the Persian throne until 559 BC. 140 years prior to these events inspiration names who God will use to accomplish His purpose.

Isaiah 45 – The Call of Cyrus

- A. 45:1-13 – God will use Cyrus to deliver His remnant. The purpose is stated in verses 3-4. These things were not done because Cyrus was such a good person, but so that God could accomplish His purpose. How or why did Cyrus know to do these things? It is possible that Daniel spoke to him (Dan. 10:1-3).
- B. Verse 7 – Did God create evil? Same word is used in 31:2.
- C. Israel might ask, “Why are you doing all this to us?” Verses 9-13 contain the answer. Basically, they would be punished and Cyrus would be the source of deliverance.
- D. 45:14-25 – Every knee will bow to God. Verses 14-16 seem to refer to the impact that all these events would have on the Gentiles.
- E. God’s plans have not been a secret (v. 19). Verse 22 reiterates the fact that only God can save people from their troubles.
- F. Verse 25 cannot refer to just the events that happened after the return from captivity. There is a spiritual application (Gal. 6:16).

Isaiah 46 – Idols v. God

- A. 46:1-4 – The burden of idols. Bel was a chief Babylonian god. Nebo was the Babylonian god of learning. This chapter shows the ridiculous practice of bowing down to inanimate objects. The true God had carried Israel throughout her history as opposed to them carrying around their gods.
- B. 46:5-13 – God is the only source of deliverance from trouble. Verse 7 shows the silly practice of idol worship. The bird of prey from the East is a reference to Babylon and they are going to “execute” God’s will.

Isaiah 47 – Babylon Will Suffer

- A. One of the lessons continually repeated throughout Isaiah is that the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:17).
- B. God had a purpose for Israel that would be accomplished, but they failed to keep the covenant (Hebrews 8:7-8). Because of this they were punished by Assyria and Babylon.
- C. Two reasons given for Babylon’s punishment in verse 9:
 - a. Sorceries (witchcraft).
 - b. Enchantments (spell, charms).

D. There is going to be no source of delivery.

Isaiah 48 – Israel Refined.

- A. There is something in a name! Verses 1 & 9-11 teach this. They were stubborn people (v. 4).
- B. Verse 9 shows that God would not utterly destroy the Israelites. The reason is that the Messiah would come from that nation.
- C. Verses 14-15 refer to Cyrus who would do God's pleasure to Babylon.
- D. Verses 18-19 show us the heart of God.
- E. Verses 20-21 show that Israel would be delivered from captivity.

Isaiah 49 – Promises for Israel

- A. Verses 3-4 show that God had a purpose for Israel and they failed to fulfill it.
- B. Verses 8-13 were to be fulfilled spiritually.
- C. Verse 14 reveals Israel's attitude, "God left us." It is sad to see people who are blind to the truth! Verses 15-18 again show the love of God for His people.

Isaiah 50 – God's Servant

- A. God was not the source of their problems (v. 1-3).
- B. Isaiah was faithful in his work as a prophet (v. 4-9).
- C. Trust in God (v. 10-11).

Isaiah 51 – God Comforts His People

- A. Remember where you came from (v. 1-2). God wanted His people to have peace, but they refused (v. 5).
- B. There was a remnant who maintained their faithfulness to the law (v. 7-8).
- C. Fear God, not man (v. 12-16).
- D. God's fury will be removed from Israel and turned to Babylon (v. 17-23).

Isaiah 52 – Jerusalem Will Be Delivered

- A. 52:1-3 – This deliverance looks past the return from Babylon into the time of God's Servant. The new Holy City would have no unclean members. 2 Corinthians 6:17.
- B. 52:4-6 – Israel was invited to Egypt and there was no real reason for Assyria to attack them. God is going to judge all those who have oppressed His people.
- C. 52:7-12 – There is good news! Again, this section looks beyond the return from Babylon. Paul uses this passage in Romans 10:13-17 as he is talking about the spread of the gospel. God is going to respond to the cry of His people.
- D. 52:13-15 – God's Servant. These verses are really an introduction to 53. There is a build-up in verse 13: exalted, extolled, be very high. Some commentators have suggested that this is a prophetic look at the progression of Christ's work on earth. The climax of the work of Christ was the resurrection. Verse 14 points out that Christ suffered more than anyone has ever suffered.

Isaiah 53 – The Suffering Servant of God

- A. 53:1-3 – Jesus was despised and rejected. Jesus would not be followed because of his looks. Israel began choosing kings based on their appearance. 1 Samuel 9:1-2; 16:7. The drawing power of Jesus is the cross (John 12:32-33).

- B. 53:4-6 – Jesus took our burden of sin on Himself. Matthew 8:16-17 refers this to the miracles of Christ, but there is more involved. He is also the source of spiritual healing. Those who observed the life of Christ may have assumed that He was cursed by God. Verse 5 reveals the reason for all he went through.
- C. 53:7-9 – Silent as He suffered. Christ was totally submissive to the will of God. Matthew 27:11-14. Jesus was not treated justly (v. 8). Pilate stated three times that there was no fault found with Jesus (John 18:38; 19:4, 6).
- D. 53:10-12 – The Servant’s reward. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross satisfied the justice of God. Someone had to die for sin. John 1:29. “His seed” is a reference to those who obey the gospel. “Prolong His days” is a reference to the resurrection.

Isaiah 54 – Zion Will Be Great

- A. 54:1-8 – The new Zion will be much larger than the physical kingdom ever was. At Isaiah’s time the nation was a disaster because of sin and captivity. Paul quotes verse 1 in Galatians 4:21-31 in reference to the church. Verse 5 shows that all people of all nations are accountable to God. He is not just the God of the Jews. Verses 7-8 show that Israel’s trouble would be for her long-term benefit.
- B. 54:9-10 – Just as God promised Noah concerning a world-wide flood, so the nation of Israel would never be taken captive again. This is a reference to the spiritual kingdom of Israel (Galatians 6:16).
- C. 54:11-17 – No one will prosper against God’s people and purpose. Verse 13 was fulfilled in the days of Nehemiah 8:1-8. Ultimately it is fulfilled in the teaching of the gospel. God will protect His people (v. 16-17). This is a reference to the indestructibility of God’s kingdom (Hebrews 12:28).

Isaiah 55 – Mercy For All

- A. 55:1-7 – Salvation is available for all. This passage reveals the extent of God’s grace (Revelation 22:17) and the substantial nature of God’s grace (v. 2). What are the “sure mercies of David?” This looks to the establishment of David’s throne forever (2 Samuel 7:12-13). Acts 13:26-41 records Paul’s words to the Jews and quotes this passage. After David’s death the throne of his kingdom would be established forever. Verse 5 refers to the calling of the Gentiles. To be blessed by God there must be a complete change of heart and action (v. 6-7).
- B. 55:8-13 – God’s thoughts and plans are higher than man’s. Romans 11:33-34. God’s word is going to be accomplished/fulfilled. Verses 12-13 are spiritual in their fulfillment.

Isaiah 56 – The Gentiles Are Included In God’s Plan

- A. 56:1-2 – Obedience = salvation. Acts 10:34-35.
- B. 56:3-8 – The inclusion of the Gentiles with the Jews. No one is excluded from the blessings of God! The Lord's invitation is open for all (Matthew 11:28-30).
- C. 56:9-12 – Israel's irresponsible leaders. Isaiah turns his attention from the future glory of God's people to the conditions of his day.

Isaiah 57 – Israel's Idolatry

- A. 57:1-2 - 56:9-12 was a rebuke to the leaders of Israel. 57 begins by stating that the righteous man will be better off dead when it comes time for Israel to be punished.
- B. 57:3-10 – Israel was guilty of spiritual adultery. Hosea 4:11-14.
- C. 57:11-13 – “Let your idols deliver you.” The righteousness of God's people (v. 12) was no righteousness at all (64:6).
- D. 57:14-21 – The love of God. The sin of idolatry was the stumbling-block of God's people at this time. We must never forget the transcendent nature of God (v. 15). Contrite = the brokenhearted. Humble = the one who bows before God. God would punish His people for their sin, but He would heal them when it was over.

Isaiah 58 – Isaiah Cries Out

- A. 58:1-2 – Israel had the problem of mere outward expression in their religion. Albert Barnes compares their outward religion to the many practices of denominations.
- B. 58:3-5 – They had abused the day of a fast and then they wonder why God has not seen their actions.
- C. 58:6-14 – If they would do things the way God intended them to be done they would be rewarded. Obedience to God always results in blessing.
- D. The Jews had abused the Sabbath for many years (Jeremiah 17:19-23).

Isaiah 59 – Sin Has Caused Separation

- A. 59:1-3 – The reason for their current condition was their own sin and they did not realize it. They just thought that God was unable to save them from their oppressors.
- B. 59:4-8 – The nation is covered up in sin. Part of this passage is quoted in Romans 3 as Paul was showing the Jews that they needed the gospel just as badly as the Gentiles.
- C. 59:9-15 – There was no justice or truth in the land. They were spiritually blind and could not find salvation. Verses 9-15 are a national confession of sin by Isaiah.
- D. 59:16-21 – God’s response to the condition of the people. The Lord saw that there was no one to stand up for what was right and so He would act in righteousness. Verse 18 shows that God’s judgment is always fair and just. Verses 20-21 show that there were some who would not turn away from God’s covenant.

Isaiah 60 – The Glory of God

- A. 60:1-3 – God’s light is coming. Israel had been in moral and spiritual darkness for many years, but the Messiah will bring in the light of truth (John 8:12).
- B. 60:4-14 – The Gentiles will see and come to the light. The Gentiles did assist in rebuilding the physical city of Jerusalem (v. 10-12) but these verses are dealing also with a spiritual application (Ephesians 3:6).
- C. 60:15-18 – Once forsaken, now redeemed. Verse 18 shows that this section should be applied spiritually.
- D. 60:19-22 – God is the source of Israel’s glory. This passage is similar to Revelation 21:23-26. The people of this new habitation will all be “righteous” (v. 21).

Isaiah 61 – God Comforts His People

- A. 61:1-7 – Good news is coming. Isaiah was a messenger of hope to the people of his day, but this passage is specifically applied to Christ (Luke 4:16-22). Isaiah was inspired by the Holy Spirit and Peter pointed out that God anointed Jesus with the Spirit (Acts 10:38). Gentiles are mentioned three times in the first seven verses as having a significant role in God’s new “city.” Verse 6 shows that the inhabitants would be called priests (1 Peter 2:9-10).
- B. 61:8-11 – An everlasting covenant would be established.

Isaiah 62 – The Holy People of God

- A. 62:1-5 – God’s people called by a new name. God’s ultimate goal for His people was their righteousness. This is accomplished in the church. The church and the body are the same (Eph. 1:22-23). Salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10) and Christ is the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23). Therefore, salvation is found in the church. The Gentiles “saw” God’s righteousness when they heard the gospel (Acts 10-11). The “new name” is a reference to the disciples being called Christians (Acts 11:26). These verses describe the relationship that exists between God and the Christian.
- B. 62:6-7 – God has used watchmen. The prophets were called watchmen (Eze. 3:17). This is a reference to all faithful proclaimers of God’s word in the church.
- C. 62:8-12 – Salvation is in God. Assyria and Babylon would soon destroy the city and the temple, but in the church there is no such threat. Verse 10 shows that God made adequate preparations for the establishment of the church. Verse 12 reveals that we are God’s special people (1 Pet. 2:9-10).

Isaiah 63 – God’s Vengeance and Mercy

- A. 63:1-6 – God will defeat His enemies. Edom here seems to represent all the enemies of God and His people. As a person might tread the juice out of grapes so God has tread on His enemies in the “winepress of His wrath” (Rev. 14:19-20).

- B. 63:7-14 – God’s constant love. Lovingkindnesses, great goodness, mercies, multitude of lovingkindnesses. Verse 9 shows that in the time of their difficulty God empathized with them (Jud. 10:16). Verse 10 and Deuteronomy 9:7 reveal that they constantly rebelled against God even in view of His goodness toward them. Verses 11-14 show what was on God’s mind as He saw them suffering for their sin.
- C. 63:15-64:12 – A prayer of Isaiah for the help of God. From the view point of Israel (v. 15) it seems that God has lost His zeal for His people. God had fathered (created) the nation of Israel by means of His covenant with Abraham. Isaiah is turning to God in prayer and recognizing for the entire nation that God is the only source of deliverance.
 - a. 64:1-5 – Please take action for your people! In all of human history no one has ever heard of a god doing the things that the God of Israel had done for His people.
 - b. 64:6-7 – The sad condition of the people. The entire nation was unclean and unfit to come before God (Hag. 2:12-14). God’s faithful few were concerned about the state of their entire nation in the eyes of God.
 - c. 64:8-12 – A pleas for mercy. Instead of father, Isaiah now uses the term potter in reference to God’s relationship with Israel. He had created them but they had turned form their purpose. Isaiah calls attention to the condition of the city of Jerusalem and asks if God would act.

Isaiah 65 – God was Right for Judging Israel

- A. 65:1-7 – The reason for their punishment is pointed out. Verse 1 opens the chapter with a promise made to the Gentiles (Rom. 10:20-11:3). Israel was making no effort to hide their sinful actions from God. Verse 4 shows that they were practicing things that were explicitly forbidden by the law of Moses.
- B. 65:8-16 – Not all of Israel would be destroyed. Verses 8-10 reveal that God would preserve the faithful. Sharon and Achor are used to present the spiritual condition of the remnant in the days of the Messiah. They would dwell in a place of safety and abundance (the church). Verses 11-16 show that the faithful will be blessed and the unfaithful will be punished.
- C. 65:17-25 – A new heavens and new earth. This language must be interpreted carefully with consideration to the context. It cannot refer to God’s dwelling place because He “inhabits eternity” (57:17). It cannot refer to the earth we live on as being reconditioned or refurbished. If so, the rest of the passage would also have to be interpreted literally. This passage is referring to the Christian system or the church age. Verse 25 shows that this passage is to be interpreted figuratively as depicting the peace and security that would come to God’s people in the church (Isa. 11:6-9).

Isaiah 66 – Judgment and Blessing

- A. 66:1-6 - God is greater than the idols. The worship of God is not a focus on the externals (v. 2). Just as the Jews tried to limit God to living in the temple so we can limit God to a church building. Their worship was rejected because they came to God in their own way (v. 3).
- B. 66:7-13 – Blessings in Zion. A “male child” is born and then immediately following that a “nation” is born (v. 7-8). There can be no doubt that this refers to the birth of Christ and establishment of the church. Verse 9 shows that God’s plan would not fail. Verses 12-13 show the comfort that will come in this new nation.
- C. 66:14-24 – The world’s response to God’s plan. The servants of God would rejoice, but the idolaters would be punished (v. 14-17). The “sign” of verse 19 refers to something that would cause people to see the glory of God. The cross was the drawing power of the gospel (John 12:32). But, the church displays the manifold wisdom of God. It could refer to either. The “holy mountain” is the church (Isa. 2:1-4). Not only would the Gentiles be welcomed into the new kingdom, but they would also be used as priests (1 Pet. 2:9-10). The church is a place of worship (v. 23).