

- Isaiah shows the depth of the Gospel, describing the vast gulf between God’s character and our own, explaining how this gulf can be reconciled: God himself will become a man and come to earth to show us the way. [Moore, pg. 13]

Chapter 1

- The first chapter serves as an introduction to the entire prophecy, giving examples of the types of messages God wanted Isaiah to deliver
- It begins with the “Great Arraignment” in which God indicts Israel for rebellion, making the case for the need for repentance.
- God invites Israel to repent, setting the tone for reconciliation
- “Come now, let us argue it out,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow.” (Isa 1:18)

Suggestions for Our Study

- Listening with fresh ears
- Approaching text prayerfully
- Meditating on the theme throughout the week
- Looking out through the characters’ eyes

~ * ~ * ~ * DISCUSSION QUESTIONS * ~ * ~ * ~

1. *What feelings did the first chapter of Isaiah bring up in you?*
2. *Can you hear God’s invitation to intimacy in these verses?*
3. *How might this first chapter be speaking to our world today?*

Welcome, Friends! to

“The Book of Isaiah”

A ten-week class exploring the Book of Isaiah and its relevance to our faith and practice today.



Michelangelo’s “Isaiah” from the Sistine Chapel, Vatican City

WEEK 1: Intro & Ch 1

Introducing the Book of Isaiah

- Isaiah is often called “The Messianic Prophet” because many of the prophecies he wrote about are seen as having been fulfilled in the life and mission of Jesus
- Jesus quotes more from Isaiah in his teachings than from any other book in the Old Testament (except for Psalms)
- Paul quoted Isaiah in his letters more than any other book in the Old Testament.
- The Isaiah scroll, the oldest surviving manuscript of Isaiah was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls and was dated to 150-100 BCE. It contains almost the whole book of Isaiah and is virtually identical with the modern Masoretic text.
- Isaiah 44:5 contains the first clear statement of monotheism: “I am the first and the last; besides me there is no god.” This model of monotheism became the defining characteristic of post-Exilic Judaism and the basis for Christianity and Islam.
- Isaiah was one of the most popular works among Jews in the Second Temple period (515 BCE – 70 CE)
- In Christian tradition, it is sometimes referred to as the “Fifth Gospel”

Who Was Isaiah?

- The name Isaiah means “The Lord is salvation”
- He is described as the son of Amoz, who is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. He is married and has two sons.
- Tradition says that Amoz was the son of Joash, the king of Judah (mentioned in 1 Kings 14:1). This would explain Isaiah’s close association with kings and priest and involvement in current affairs [Copeland, pg. 3]
- Is it thought that the vision of the throne scene from the year Uzziah died (Isa 6:1) was the beginning of Isaiah’s ministry (739 BCE).

- Isaiah was a prophet to Judah and Jerusalem, serving Kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah
- Jewish tradition says Isaiah prophesied for a period of 50 years (739-690 BCE).
- He was said to have been executed by King Manasseh by being sawn in two with a wooden saw (Heb 11:37).

How Is Isaiah Structured?

- Scholars believe that different sections of Isaiah were written at different times by different authors. Early in the 20th century, theologians thought Isaiah was divided into three “oracles”:
- In the 21st century, theologians have seen Isaiah as having two major parts.
 - Part I, Chapters 1-39) from the Assyrian Period, is considered the “Book of Judgment,” calling Jerusalem and foreign nations to account for their sinful ways
 - Part II (Chapters 40-66) from the Babylonian Period, comprise the “Book of Comfort,” showing God as reconciler and loving parent, encouraging the afflicted children to have faith and patience and look forward to salvation and future blessing.

Themes in Isaiah:

- Two main themes: “Trust in the Holy One of Israel” and “The Messiah to come and the glory of his age”
- Isaiah shows the depth of God’s character, showing “God’s supremacy, majesty, sovereignty, and stunning generosity.” [Moore, pg. 12]
- Isaiah speaks out about corrupt leaders
- Isaiah speaks for the disadvantaged
- Isaiah shows that righteousness arises from God’s holiness as opposed to Israel’s covenant