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Saint Mark's Church
Servants Meeting

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

The book of Isaiah is the longest of the prophetic books and counted one of the five big books of prophecies in the Old Testament (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentation, Ezekiel and Daniel). It resembles the Bible in miniature format. Just as the Bible has 66 books, so Isaiah has 66 chapters. Just as the Bible has an Old Testament of 39 books (in Hebrews OT) and a New Testament of 27, Isaiah breaks down into two sections, the first being 39 chapters long and the other being 27 chapters. Where the Old Testament speaks to the foundation of the coming of Christ, Isaiah 1-39 speaks of the need of mankind for salvation. The second part of Isaiah resembles the New Testament in that this section through prophecy reveals God's provision of the offering of Salvation through the Messiah and the Messianic Kingdom. So, the book of Isaiah is about Messiah and foreshadows both His first and second Advents.

THE WRITER

1. Background

- ❖ Isaiah means in Hebrew, 'salvation of God' or 'God is salvation'
- ❖ He is identified as Isaiah son of Amoz (1:1). He came from royal family. Tradition states that Isaiah was a cousin of King Uzziah or a nephew of King Amaziah.
- ❖ He was married to a prophetess (8:3), having at least two children: Shear-jashub, [in Heb. means, "*a remnant will return*" (7:3)], and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, [in Heb. means "*hurry spoil, the prey hastes*".](8:1).]
- ❖ He was giving advice to the kings on foreign affairs and was their counsellor (7:3,4; 8:2 30:1-7; 36:1-38:8, 21; 2 Kings 18:3-20:19).
- ❖ Tradition mentioned that king Manasseh had put Isaiah to death by sawing him in half inside of a hollow log. That someone died this way is found in Heb 11:37.

2. His Ministry

- ❖ He was a prophet to Judea (the Southern kingdom) ,before the captivity.
- ❖ The prophets actual period of ministry covers about 60 years, ranging from around 740 B.C. to 680 B.C

- ❖ Isaiah may have been active in king Uzziah's court prior to the king's dismissal because of his leprosy. Uzziah's death comes in 740 B.C (2 Ch. 26). Isaiah's ministry would extend through the reigns of Jotham (740-731 BC), Ahaz (731-715 BC), and Hezekiah (715-686 BC). It is probable that the prophet was active into the reign of Manasseh (686-642 BC).
- ❖ Isaiah's message is that the Israelites and the surrounding nations have sinned. Judgement must come, for God cannot allow such blatant sin to go unpunished forever. But also he declares the message of hope. Messiah is coming as a Saviour to carry the cross and to wear a crown.

3. The historical background

- ❖ His ministry commences around the time the Northern kingdom is carried into captivity (722 BC). About 140 years remain before the Southern kingdom went into captivity (586 BC).
- ❖ King Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria had conquered all of northern Syria by 740 B.C.
- ❖ Assyria (Shalmaneser or his successor Sargon II) moved against Israel and after a three-year siege, took the capital of Samaria (722 BC) and carried the people into captivity.
- ❖ Assyria expanded unto the northern boundary of Judah.
- ❖ The city-states of Palestine and Syria along with Egypt rebelled against Assyria and were put down in 720 B.C.
- ❖ Judah (under Hezekiah) joined an uprising along with Egypt, Edom, and Moab against Assyria (713-711 BC)
- ❖ Sargon II (of Assyria) took Ashdod and Gath leaving Judah vulnerable
- ❖ Sargon died in 705 leading to revolt by many including Judah under Hezekiah along with Babylon (2 Kings 18:7; Isa. 39:1-4)
- ❖ Sennacherib (of Assyria) retaliated in 701 defeating Sidon, receiving tribute from Ashdod, Ammon, Moab, and Edom, subjugating Ashkelon and Ekron, and surrounding Hezekiah, forcing him to pay tribute to Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13-16)
- ❖ King Sennacherib tried again to destroy Jerusalem but the Lord defended the city for His Holy name (Isa. 37)
- ❖ Sennacherib's death (Isa. 37:38) occurs about 681 B.C.
- ❖ The Southern Kingdom went astray from the covenant with God (1:3-9; 38:6-10), imitates the other nations in worshipping idols and committing all their sins and misbehaviour
- ❖ Isaiah lived through the reigns of four known Assyrian kings:
 1. Shalmaneser V (782-772 BC)
 2. Sargon II (722-744 BC)

3. Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 BC)
4. Sargon II (721-705 BC)
5. Sennacherib (704-681 BC)

Contemporary Prophets in the Northern Kingdom

- ❖ Amos (765 – 753 BC)
- ❖ Hosea (755-710 BC)

THE BOOK

- ❖ Isaiah is clearly the most Christological book of the Old Testament. It can be counted as the fifth gospel, because of the incredible clear and detailed messianic prophecies
- ❖ The book is written in poems except ch.36-39. The Holy Spirit used all the writer artistic talents and imagination (Isaiah considered as Shakespeare of the prophets) to present to us one of the greatest books in holy bible.
- ❖ The book contains sixty-six chapters, a form that had already appeared in the beginning of the second century BC. The book of Ecclesiastics refers to Isaiah (Eccl. 48:17-25) as a single work. The Dead Sea Scrolls as well as the NT regard the entire sixty-six chapters as a single book
- ❖ The great critical debate of the liberal schoolers attacks the authorship and date of Isaiah. These scholars suggested two or even three authors. This attack is based primarily upon:
 - The lack of faith in miracles. In the case of Isaiah, these miracles are the prophecies of the future, particularly the naming of Cyrus as the leader who will send the Jewish remnant home from the Babylonian exile (44:28; 45:1-4). This prophecy comes some 150 years before the event, well before the birth of Cyrus
 - Radical differences in language, style, and theology between the two sections; 1-39 and 40-66. Actually the similarities between the two sections are greater than the differences. These include similarities in thoughts, images, rhetorical ornaments, characteristic expressions, and local colouring. The differences are mainly because of the different subject matter, condemnation versus consolation. In the first part the author emphasise on the Messiah as King, and in the second part Messiah as suffering Servant.
- ❖ The fathers of the church suggest that the prophecies in the book of Isaiah are recorded according to the time of inspiration to the prophet although some of the recent scholars reject this

1. Prophecies in the days of Uzziah Isaiah 1-5
2. Prophecies in the days of Jotham Isaiah 6
3. Prophecies in the days of Ahaz Isaiah 7-14
4. Prophecies in the days of Hezekia Isaiah 15-66

❖ Some terms are repeated many times in this book as:

1. “The Holy one of Israel” (repeated about 29 times and only 6 times in the OT) and pointed to the Messiah the creator and Saviour of Israel through His sacrifice on the cross.
2. “The servant of the Lord” (repeated about 20 times between ch.40-50) , sometimes means the first Adam who was destroyed by sin and other times means the second Adam “Jesus Christ” who saved the first Adam. There are four poems spoken by the servant of the Lord: 42:1-4; 42:5-7; 49:1-6; and 50:4-9, and two poems that speak about the servant: 50:10-11; and 52:13-53:12.

❖ The establishment of the church of Alexandria was prophesied in Ch.19:1 ,18-22

❖ Chapter 14 which prophesied about the destruction of the king of Babylon may be an indication to the fall of Satan before the creation of the human being.

❖ “The gospel according to Isaiah”, has three major sections:

- The Holy Disciplinarian (The prophecies of condemnation) Ch. 1-35
- The Holy gives victory (Historical parenthesis) Ch. 36-39
- The Holy comforts with Salvation (Prophecies of comfort) Ch. 40-66

Part 1: The Holy Disciplinarian (The prophecies of condemnation)

(Ch. 1-35)

1. Prophecies against Judah - Chapters 1 - 12

a. The judgement of Judah	1
b. The day of the Lord	2-4
c. The parable of the vineyard	5
d. The call of Isaiah	6
e. The destruction of Israel by Assyria	7:1-10:4
1. Sign of Immanuel	7
2. Sign of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz	8
3. Prophecy of Messiah birth	9:1-7
4. Judgement of Ephraim	9:8-10:4
f. The destruction of Assyria by God	10:5-12
1. destruction of Assyria	10:5- 19
2. Remnant of Israel	10:20-34
3. Restoration of Messiah’s Kingdom	11
4. Thanksgiving of the Redeemed	12

2. The prophecies against other nations - Chapters 13-23

a. Prophecies against Babylon	13-14:23
b. Prophecies against Assyria	14:24-27
c. Prophecies against Philistia	14:28-32
d. Prophecies against Moab	15-16
e. Prophecies against Damascus and Samaria	17
f. Prophecies against Ethiopia	18
f. Prophecies against Egypt	19-20
g. Prophecies against Babylon	21:1-10
h. Prophecies against Duma (Adom)	21:11,12
i. Prophecies against Arabia	21:13-17
k. Prophecies against Jerusalem	22
l. Prophecies against Tyre	23

3. The prophecies of the day of Lord - Chapters 24-27

a. Judgement and tribulation	24
b. Triumph of the kingdom	25-27
1. Israel's praise for the kingdom	25
2. The praise of the resurrection	26
3. Israel blossoms in the kingdom	27

4. The prophecies of judgement and blessing – Chapters 28-35

a. Woe to Ephraim	28
b. Woe to Ariel (Jerusalem)	29
c. Woe to Egyptian alliance	30-31
d. Behold the coming King	32
f. Woe to the spoiler of Jerusalem (Assyria)	33
g. Woe to the nations	34
h. Behold the coming Kingdom	35

PART 2: The Holy gives victory (Historical parenthesis)

(Ch. 36-39)

1. Hezekiah's salvation from Assyria – Chapters 36-37

a. Assyria challenges God	36
b. God destroys Assyria	37
1. Hezekiah's salvation from sickness	38
2. Hezekiah's sin	39

PART 3: The Holy comforts with Salvation

(Prophesies of comfort) Ch. 40-66

1. The prophecies of Israel's deliverance 40-48

a. Comfort because of Israel's deliverance	40:1-11
b. Comfort because of God's character	40:12-31
c. Comfort because of God's greatness	41
d. Comfort because of God's Servant (the Messiah)	42
e. Comfort because of Israel restoration	43-44
f. Comfort because of use of Cyrus	45
g. Comfort because of Babylon's destruction	46-47
h. Comfort because of fleeing from Babylon	48

2. The prophesy of Israel's Deliverer 49-57

a. The Messiah's mission	49
b. The Messiah's obedience	50
c. The Messiah's encouragement to Israel	51-52
d. The Messiah's attainment	53
e. The Messiah's promise of Israel's restoration	54
f. The Messiah's invitation to the whole world	55-56:8
g. The Messiah's rebuke of the wicked	56:9-57:21

3. The prophecies of Israel's glorious future 58-66

a. Blessings of the true fasting	58
b. Sins of Israel that veiled Salvation	59
c. The glorious city	60
d. Advents of the Messiah	61
e. Future of Jerusalem	62
f. Messiah trodden the winepress	63:1-6
g. Prayers of the remnant	63:7-64:12
h. The Lord's answer to the remnant	65:1-16
i. Glorious new Jerusalem	65:17- 66:24

Prophets , Kings of Judea and Kings of Assyria In the time of Isaiah

