

Why is Isaiah Special? **(Survey of Isaiah) John Hepp, Jr.**

Introduction

1. Writing prophets must be understood in the context of the Lord God's kingdom on earth, over the nation of Israel. The Old Testament (OT) is the story of that kingdom. For a long time it was divided into two parts: Judah in the south and the ten tribes, called Israel, in the north. Finally the Lord began to dissolve that kingdom, beginning with the northern tribes. Before doing so, He raised up various prophets to explain what He was doing. He gave them messages to preach and to put in writing. Isaiah was in the first set of writing prophets. His group also included Amos, Micah, and Hosea.
2. The Book of Isaiah has helped countless people since it was written. Can you give examples of using Isaiah to help someone?

I. What is the importance of Isaiah in the Bible and Bible History?

- A. Its position and size
At the head of the written books of the OT prophets, Isaiah is also the most complete. Of books by the first set of writing prophets, it has the fullest account.
- B. Its message about the Lord God, Israel, and the kingdom
Isaiah gives the most aspects of the Lord's message to and about Israel when He began to dissolve His OT kingdom over them. Two aspects of His message through them:
 1. Announce the Lord's judgment and tell why.
 2. Describe the future restoration of the kingdom. (Isaiah has the fullest treatment in the OT.)
- C. Its use in the NT
Because of its fullness and certain features, Isaiah is the prophetic book most-quoted in the NT.

II. What are the structure and general contents of this book?

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| PART I JUDGMENT (chs. 1-39) <ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Introduction (chs. 1-6)B. Book of Immanuel (chs. 7-12)C. Nations (chs. 13-27)D. Book of Woes (chs. 28-35)E. Historical Interlude (chs. 36-39) | PART II COMFORT (chs. 40-66) <ol style="list-style-type: none">A. The Restoration (chs. 40-48)B. The Restorer (chs. 49-57)C. The Restored (chs. 58-66) |
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III. What are some of the special features that make Isaiah a blessing?

- A. It pictures the Lord God (His character and actions).
- 1:2-4 The Lord speaks; His relation to Israel as Father & Holy One.
 - 2:12 (13:6, 9) The coming Day of the Lord, in which He will be exalted.
 - ch. 6 The Lord on His throne (where “burning ones” serve/worship) gives Isaiah a somber commission.
 - 40:1-11 The Lord returns to Jerusalem, revealing His glory, as Ruler and Shepherd.
 - 40:12-26 (66:1-2) The Creator (measures waters in His palm), far above the nations (that are like a drop), idols, and rulers.
 - 40:18-20; 44:10, 12-22 Contrast the Lord to worthless idols.
 - 45:22-23 Salvation is in Him only.
 - 55:8-11 The Lord’s powerful, effective word. (A startling example of this is the destruction of the Assyrian army, 37:36. Another is raising up the Emperor Cyrus to bring the remnant of Israel back, 41:2; 44:28—45:4.)
 - 63:1-6 The Lord taking vengeance on the enemies of His people.
- B. It often describes the future kingdom of God.
(These give the proper background for NT references to the kingdom. Jesus’ miracles show that He can bring this kind of kingdom.)
- 2:1-4 Jerusalem the capital, all nations in subjection, peace and righteousness.
 - 11:6-10 Animals coexist in peace; no dangers.
 - 12:1 The redeemed will give thanks for salvation.
 - 19:23-25 The Lord adopts other nations along with Israel.
 - 24:19-23 After worldwide judgment, “many days” of the Millennium, followed by final judgment.
 - 25:6-9 The Lord’s banquet and victory over death.
 - 32:15-18 (59:21) The Holy Spirit poured out.
 - ch. 35 (55:12-13) The desert blossoms; blind see; deaf hear. The ransomed return to Zion with singing, on the “Highway of Holiness.”
 - ch. 60 (background for Revelation 21-22) Jerusalem is glorified; the Lord its light (no night), kings bringing their wealth, no more violence.
- C. It presents Messiah the King.
- 4:2 The beautiful and glorious Branch of the Lord (which Targums identify as Messiah.)
 - 9:6-7 (55:3-5) The Ruler’s names and unending rule from David’s throne.
 - 11:1-5 (32:1; 61:1) The Ruler anointed (*Mashiach*=Greek *Cristos*=English *Christ*) with the seven-fold Spirit, rules in righteousness and firmness.
 - 42:1-6 (49:1-7; 50:4-9) The Lord’s Servant, true Israel, establishes justice.

- 52:13—53:12 The Lord’s Servant highly exalted after He suffers to bear the sins of many.
- D. It appeals for repentance.
59:1-2 (cf. 55:6-7)
- E. It provides comfort.
40:1, 27, 31 The command to comfort; those who wait on the Lord renew their strength.
41:10 Don’t fear because the Lord is with you and upholds you.
43:1-2 The Lord’s actions for Israel: created, formed, called (as Shepherd), will accompany in trials.
- F. It exalts the Lord’s grace and forgiveness.
43:21-25 He will forgive His people Jacob—and cause them to praise Him—in spite of their rebellion.
63:7-10, 15; 64:1 This begins the remnant’s prayer, which continues through ch. 64 and is answered in ch. 65.
- G. It reveals Israel’s future (sometimes called “Zion,” the name of its capital) (This is the emphasis of chs. 40-66, “The Rhapsody of Zion Redeemed,” a spiritual drama with various speakers. An alternate title might be “The Failure and Success of the Lord’s Servant.”)
11:11-16 Israel unified and exalted over the nations.
65:17-19 Zion the crown jewel in the new heavens and earth (2 Peter 3:13, “according to his promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth”).