



The Bible Challenge

A daily guide to reading the Bible in a year

Isaiah

Chapters 13-37

Intro: The Prophet of the King

Isaiah the Prophet served as a prophet during the reigns of four kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. His main service was to THE king, The LORD God of Hosts. The Prophet's role is to serve the Lord of Hosts by challenging/ inspiring/ judging the kings of the House of Judah.

The purpose of the book centers around the vision of God for Judah and Israel and the world. The ideal is that the reign of God on Earth would begin with Israel and draw

the nations of the world into the Kingdom's blessing. The ultimate vision and earthly reality are two different things. Isaiah holds out the hope of the ideal of Kingdom expansion under the reign of the God of Hosts, while sternly pronouncing judgment on the present sinful state of affairs.

Kings of Judah	Years of Reign
Uzziah	767-740 b.c.
Jotham	750-735
Ahaz	735-715
Hezekiah	715-686

Structure of Isaiah ³⁵	1-66
The Book of the King	1-37
The Book of the Servant	38-55
The Book of the Anointed Conqueror	56-66

The dramatic announcement of the Book of Isaiah is that The LORD God of Hosts will bear his arm as a paradoxical suffering servant and an anointed conqueror. The general literary shape of the book of Isaiah bears this out.

³⁵ Isaiah literary outlines are taken from J Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and a Commentary* (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 1993)



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The Book of the King (1-37)

The unifying theme of the first 37 chapters of Isaiah is "the King". Overall the Lord God of Hosts is King (6:1,5). The reign of God is primary; he will establish his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. The present concern is the earthly king reigning over Judah (7:1-2); he has chosen to establish the kingdoms of this world over the kingdom of God. Isaiah holds out hope of a messianic future king who is yet to come (9:6-7); he will establish the reign of God.

The Book of the King³⁶	Isaiah 1-37
Preface: Judah Diagnosis and Prognosis	1:1-5:30
The Triumph of Grace	6:1-12:6
The Universal Kingdom	13:1-27:13
The Lord of History	28:1-35:10
The Rock of History	36:1-37:38

The flow of this section of the book is to lead the reader toward an inevitable conclusion--there is no security in any other than the LORD. Nations rise and fall under the sovereign providence and power of the Lord. He is the Rock of History.

The Universal Kingdom (13-27)

In chapters 1-12, Isaiah's focus has been on setting the stage for the major themes which he will develop in full. The key concept which he has emphasized is that the LORD has preserved a righteous remnant who can look ahead to divine deliverance and restoration through a messianic King. This will have implications for all people and nations of the world.

In this section, the Prophet turns his attention toward the nations of the world and holds out a vision of universal judgment and universal restoration for those who seek refuge in the Lord.

³⁶ Ibid.



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 The literary structure of chapters 13-27 is made up of ten clearly defined prophetic oracles (13-23) and then an expanded section on final judgment/restoration (24-27). There are five primary themes which will repeat through each series and finding their ultimate hope and fulfillment in the 3rd Series.

Theme	The Light of Human Glory Falls: Series 1 (13-20)	Night Falls: Darkness, Chaos, Curse Judgment: Series 2 (21-23)	The Dawn of the Day of the Lord: Series 3 (24-27)
Downfall of Idolatry and the City of Man	Babylon (13:1-14:27)	The Wilderness of the Sea: Babylon (21:1-10)	City of Emptiness (24:1-20)
Hope in Zion's King	Philistia (14:28-32)	Silence: Dumah (21:11-12)	Zion's King (24:21-23)
Nations in Need are Gathered	Moab's Need and Pride (15:1-16:14)	Evening: Arabia's Need No refuge in (21:13-17)	The Great Banquet (25:1-12)
Strong Cities and The Rock	Damascus/ Ephraim (17:1-18:7)	The Valley of Vision: Jerusalem (22:1-25)	The City of God (26:1-20)
International Restoration: A Global Harvest	Egypt (19:1-20:6)	Tyre (23:1-18)	The Final Gathering (27:1-13)

The world is organized with Israel/ people of God at the center, geographically and redemptive-historically. As Isaiah develops, the five themes there is a near term vision of the fall of man's day of glory (series 1) to a more distant vision on the horizon of darkness and chaos (series 2) to a coming far off day of Divine light (series 3).

*"How you are fallen from heaven,
 O Day Star, son of Dawn!
 How you are cut down to the ground,
 you who laid the nations low!
¹³You said in your heart,
 'I will ascend to heaven;
 above the stars of God
 I will set my throne on high;
 I will sit on the mount of assembly
 in the far reaches of the north. (Isa.14:12-13)*



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*In that day this song will
be sung in the land of
Judah:*

*"We have a strong city;
he sets up salvation
as walls and
bulwarks.*

*² Open the gates,
that the righteous
nation that keeps faith
may enter in.*

*³ You keep him in perfect
peace*

*whose mind is stayed
on you,
because he trusts in
you.*

*⁴ Trust in the LORD
forever,
for the LORD GOD is
an everlasting rock.*

-Isaiah 26:1-4

The nations mentioned all surround Israel to the North, South, East and West--near and far, small and mighty. They arrogantly place their hope in the Glory of man which is destined for destruction (Babylon and Assyria, 13:1-14:27; 21:1-10; 24:1-20). The nations may rejoice at the temporary fall of the Davidide King (Philistia, 14:28-32). But when the darkness comes they will cry out for news of the day (Dumah-Edom 21:10-11). That Day comes with the glory of Zion's King, YHWH (25:1-12) .

Israel (Ephraim) has placed its faith in an unholy alliance with Damascus (17:1-18:7) Yet, Isaiah's is a vision of a destroyed and then exalted Jerusalem/Mt. Zion which lies at the center of God's sovereign plan of redemption. destroyed because of self reliance (22;1-25). Restored because the LORD GOD is an everlasting Rock whose Word is to be trusted forever (26:1-4).

In Mt. Zion's King (YHWH/Messiah) the nations will find their salvation and renewal. Evil will be ultimately defeated (27:1)

*In that day the LORD with his hard and great
and strong sword will punish Leviathan the
fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent,
and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.*

--Isa. 27:1

Isaiah predicts that the Lord will gather Egypt to the South and Assyria to the North into a unified Kingdom with Israel at the Center (19:24-25; 23:18; 27:12-13). That which was formerly unholy will be called Holiness unto the Lord (23:18)!

The Lord and Rock of History (28-37)

The three series of chapters 13-27 conclude with a vision of ultimate hope. Now in Chapters 28-37, Isaiah again returns to focus on the historic realities of the present day.

His purpose is to show that the unrealized promises and plans prophesied in 13-27 are certain and true. To Isaiah's hearers, the prophecies may have sounded incredible and unlikely.



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Isaiah will now ground his prophetic word in two crisis of history. God's sovereign word would be fulfilled before their very eyes.

The Lord of History **Chapters 28-37)**
The Rock of History

The Assyrian Power	Crisis	28-29
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Egyptian Alliance	False Hope in Man	30-32
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The Judgment of the Lord	Divine Hope in the Word of Prophecy	33-35
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YHWH as the Rock of Salvation	History Proves the Word	36-37
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The Prophet Isaiah demonstrates that the Assyrian Crisis is a an occasion to trust in the Rock--YHWH and in the surety of his prophetic word. Jerusalem's temptation was to look to human power (Egypt). Yet the Lord was laying a cornerstone in Jerusalem (28:16).

The word of Judgment that Isaiah prophesies comes to pass. The proof is in the Historical narrative of chapters 36-37.

The message of this section is clear: trust in the Lord and in the word of the Lord given through the Prophets. The people of God will need this assurance as they face even greater crisis in the future with the Babylonian Crisis.