

ISAIAH

12-WEEK STUDY GUIDE

Theological Focus

The book of Isaiah is filled with prophecies that address the spiritual and moral condition of the people of Judah, as well as the political and military challenges they faced.

In his writings, Isaiah calls for repentance and warns the people of the consequences of their disobedience to God's laws. He also speaks of a future restoration and salvation for the people of Israel, pointing to a Messiah and a renewed covenant with God.

Several theological foci addressed in the book are:

1. God hates pride and will destroy the proud.
2. What pleases God is for people to trust in him for the forgiveness of sins, for security from their enemies, for guidance in the future, and for eternal hope. (Chapter 1-39)
3. Glorify God who transforms the world. (Chapter 40-66)

Background

The authorship of the book of Isaiah is traditionally attributed to the prophet Isaiah himself. However, biblical scholars suggest that the book may have been written by multiple authors over a period of time, due to the differences in linguistic styles and historical context.

The book is commonly divided into two main sections:

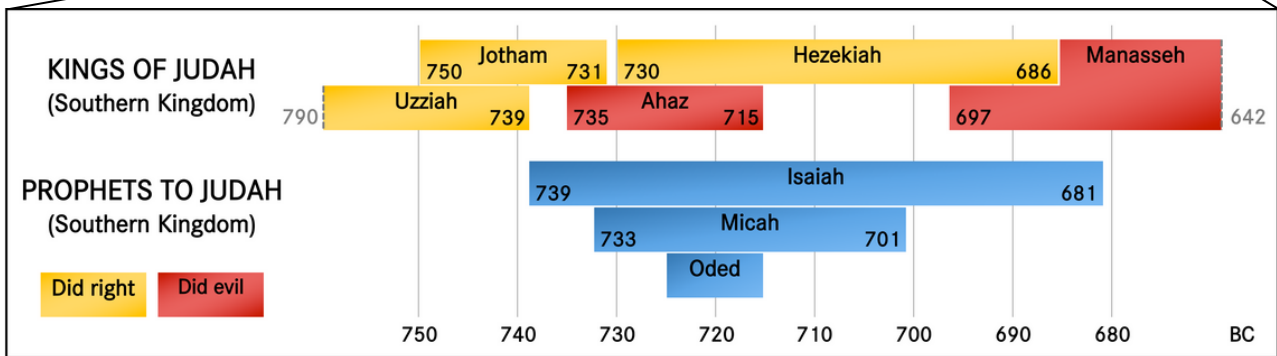
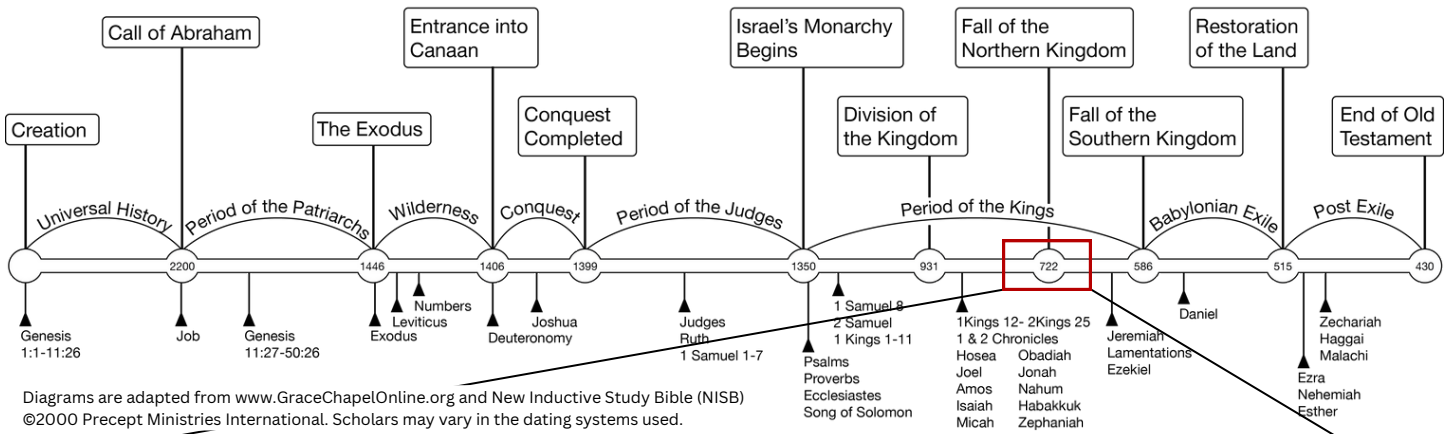
Ch. 1-39	[• Believed to be written by Isaiah himself]
		• Events and prophecies during Isaiah's lifetime	
Ch. 40-66	[• Authorship remains a subject of debate]
		• Prophecies that address a different historical context (exile and after)	

Some biographical information about Isaiah: 🧑 **Wife:** an unnamed prophetess (Isa. 8:3)

🧑 **Sons:** Shear-Jashub (Isa. 7:3) and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (Isa. 8:3)

Isaiah was known primarily by what he said, not what he did. However, there was one major act recorded in Isa. 20 when he went naked for three years to warn Judah not to put their trust in Egypt and Cush. In his writings, Isaiah is critical of Judah's foreign policy to trust in Egypt, Babylon, and other nations, as well as Judah's lack of commitment to trust God.

OLD TESTAMENT TIMELINE



Historical and Religious Background of Isaiah 1-39

I. The time of Uzziah and Jotham (ch. 2-5)

- Isaiah chapters 2-5 address the latter part of Uzziah's reign when he had attained considerable prosperity and military strength (cf 2 Chr. 26:6-16) – likely in 750-740BC.
- At this point, Assyria was quite weak and divided, which allowed Uzziah to consolidate control over the Philistines, Meunites, Arabs, and Ammonites.
- Uzziah achieved significant success at the beginning of his reign because he listened to the prophet Zechariah who instructed him in the ways of God.
- However, Uzziah did not destroy the high places of worship. Most significantly, he went into the temple to burn incense to God, and God struck him with leprosy (cf 2 Chr. 26:16-20).
- At this time, Jotham, his son, was co-regent because Uzziah was secluded because of his leprosy.

II. The time of Ahaz (ch 7-23)

- The political and military situations of the region got dramatically more difficult when the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser came to power (745-727 BC).
- The vassal King of Damascus (Rezin) and Israel (Pekah, Northern Kingdom) tried to get Judah (Ahaz, Southern Kingdom) to join their coalition against Assyria, which then prompted them to attack Judah. As a result, Judah came into an alliance with Assyria and eventually became an Assyrian vassal state.
- During this time, the kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria (721 BC), and many Israelites migrated to Judah.
- Notably, Ahaz was not a good king. He introduced pagan worship in the temple of Jerusalem.

III. The time of Hezekiah

- Hezekiah primarily squared off against Sennacherib. He made extensive preparations in Jerusalem to withstand Assyrian attack. Ultimately, this was the period when Assyria declined, and Sennacherib was killed by his sons.
- Hezekiah is ultimately pictured as a great reformer, a man of faith who encouraged his armies to trust in God for deliverance. However, he was not perfect as he was still looking to foreign alliances for help. During his reign, he made an alliance with Egypt and was condemned by Isaiah.
- Hezekiah demonstrated faithfulness through the following actions: he repaired the temple, consecrated the priests, renewed the covenant with God, and restored worship in the first year of his reign (715BC).

Key Verses

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”

Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 40:31

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 53:5

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Isaiah 55:8-9

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 65:17-19

“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.”

Messianic Theme

The book of Isaiah contains a prominent messianic theme, which refers to the anticipation and prophecy of a future anointed figure, known as the Messiah, who would bring salvation, justice, and restoration to God's people.

In this book, the Messiah was uniquely portrayed as a “Suffering Servant”, characterized by the “Servant Songs” found in Ch. 42, 49, 50, and 52-53. These writings describe a servant who would suffer on behalf of others, bear their sins, and bring forth redemption and healing.

This book also prophecies about Jesus’ birth (Isa. 7:14) and emphasizes the Messiah’s role in restoring and redeeming God’s people. It speaks of the Messiah gathering the scattered Israelites, bringing comfort to the afflicted, and transforming the desolate places into the new heavens and the new earth.