

# Holy Trinity Bible Study - Isaiah Lesson #1

Primary Sources:

Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Barry G. Webb

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer

## An Introduction to Isaiah 1:1-2

<sup>1</sup>The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. <sup>2</sup>Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken: "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me."

Reading: The Message of Isaiah pages 19-40

### Questions to Consider

#### 1. Where does Uzziah fall in the Davidic line?

##### **House of David**

1. David (c. 1003–970 BCE) – made Jerusalem the capital of Israel.
2. Solomon (c. 970–930 BCE)
3. Rehoboam (c. 930–915 BCE)

##### **Kingdom of Judah**

4. Abijah (r. 915–912 BCE)
5. Asa (r. 912–870 BCE)
6. Jehoshaphat (r. 870–849 BCE)
7. Jehoram (r. 849–842 BCE)
8. Ahaziah (r. 842–840 BCE)
9. Athaliah (Queen) (r. 840–836 BCE)
10. Jehoash (r. 836–796 BCE)
11. Uzziah (r. 796–750 BCE)
  - i. He ascended the throne at the age of 16.
  - ii. Also known as Amaziah (his birth name) though it is possible Uzziah was coregent with his Father, Amaziah, until his Father's death in 767.
  - iii. Considered the most successful King after Solomon.
  - iv. He conquered the Philistines and the Arabians, fortified the country, reorganized and re-equipped the army.

- v. His success contributed to his failure as he became too proud and tried to usurp the power of the priesthood.
  - vi. Uzziah was struck with leprosy for disobeying God (2 Kings 15:5, 2 Chronicles 26:19-21).
12. Jotham (r. 750–735 BCE)
  13. Ahaz (r. 735–716 BCE)
  14. Hezekiah (r. 729/716 – 697/687 BCE)
  15. Manasseh (r. 697/687–643 BCE)

**2. What was the geo-political situation in the Middle East at the end of his reign?**

1. Israel occupied a strategic place astride the land routes linking Africa with Central Asia and the Far East. *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Page 19*
2. The once mighty Egypt, well past its prime and weakened by internal strife, was in no position to interfere. Assyria, which still had ambitions to do so, was too preoccupied for the time being with more pressing matters, including harassment along its northern border and uncertainty about the succession. *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Page 20*
3. Five years before Uzziah's death, in 745 BC, an ambitious and capable new ruler, Tiglath-Pileser III, had come to power in Assyria. He quickly took control of Babylon and secured his northern border by a decisive victory over Sardur II of Urartu. *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, page 20*

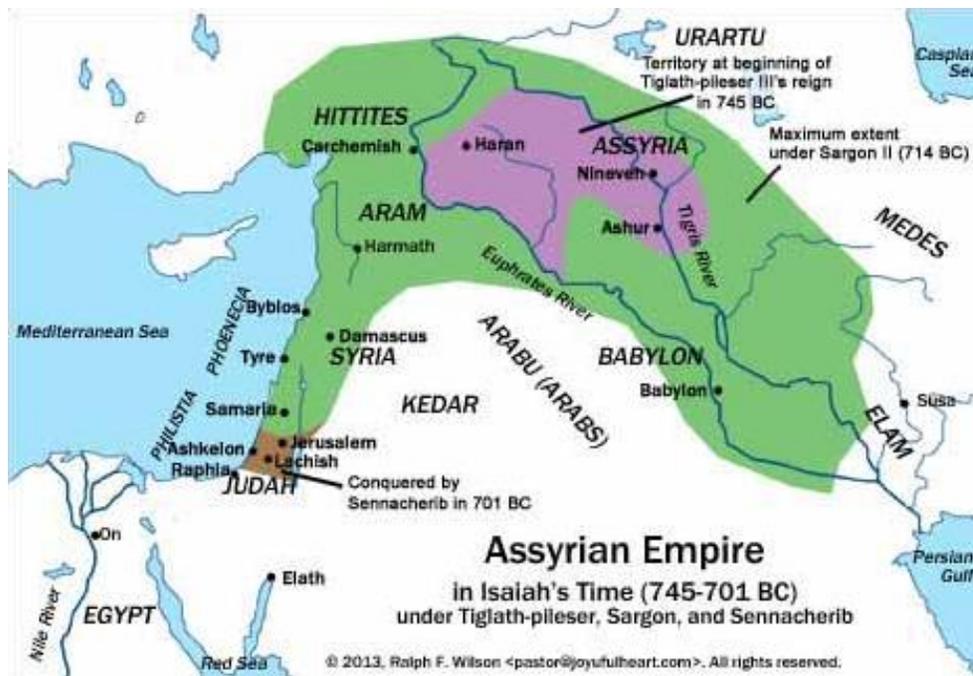
### 3. What is changing in Judah as his reign comes to an end?

In the year Uzziah died the international scene was full of threat. At home, too, things were far from well. The new-found wealth was not evenly distributed. It was concentrated in the hands of an economic elite who cared little for the have-nots beneath them. Deep fissures were opening up in Judean society as justice was bought and sold, or simply disregarded and replaced by violent exploitation and repression. Religious observance continued, but could no longer conceal the rot that had set in underneath.<sup>9</sup> The creed that the LORD was king had become hollow. *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, page 20*

In his book **The Prophets**, Abraham Heschel challenges this view. He says, the increasing prosperity of Judah “was not canalized for the exclusive benefit of the aristocracy and the wealthy merchants, as was apparently true of the Northern Kingdom in the eighth century ... in other words, there was no period in Judah during which was such concentration of wealth in the hands of individuals as to destroy the social order.” The people made good use of the opportunities for commercial and industrial expansion.

### 4. Who was Isaiah?

1. Isaiah the son of Amoz.



2. The –iah at the end of his name may have indicated he was of the royal lineage and may have been a cousin of Uzziah. It would help explain his ready access to the kings.
3. He was married with two sons but not much is known about his life.
4. He was called to prophetic ministry about the age of twenty.
5. The traditional view is that all 66 chapters of the book of Isaiah were written by one man, Isaiah, possibly in two periods between 740 BCE and c. 686 BCE, separated by approximately 15 years, and includes dramatic prophetic declarations of Cyrus the Great in the Bible, acting to restore the nation of Israel from Babylonian captivity.
6. In chapters 6 and 40, Isaiah finds himself summoned into the presence of God to receive a specific commission. The first commits Isaiah to a ministry of judgment, the second to a ministry of comfort. *Webb - The Message of Isaiah; Page 31*
7. According to the rabbinic literature, Isaiah was a descendant of the royal house of Judah and Tamar (Sotah 10b). He was the son of Amoz (not to be confused with Prophet Amos), who was the brother of King Amaziah of Judah.
8. He was a prophet primarily to the Kingdom of Judah, which passed through repeated seasons of rebellion and revival. He authored the book that bears his name between 739 and 681 B.C.
9. He is sometimes called the “Evangelical Prophet” because of his emphasis on the Messiah.

## 5. Authorship

1. The fragmentation of the Isaianic literature among multiple authors and along an extended time-line is historically the product of the nineteenth-century rationalism which refused to countenance predictive prophecy. *Motyer - Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec, page 25.*
2. There is, however, no external, manuscriptal authority for the separate existence at any time of any of the three supposed divisions of Isaiah. In the case of the first Isaiah manuscript from the Dead Sea Scrolls (Qa), for example, 40:1 begins on the last line of the column which contains 38:9 – 39:8. *Motyer - Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec, page 27.*
3. Theological detail, chapters 1–39 assert six main principles: the LORD as Lord of history (e.g. 10:5–15) and supreme over idols (e.g. 2:12–20); the promise of a remnant (e.g. 1:27; 4:3; 8:11–20; 10:20); the reconciliation of God and sinner on the basis of atonement (6:6–7); the vision of the restored Zion (e.g. 1:26–27; 2:2–4; 4:2–6); and the Davidic Messiah (e.g. chapters 7–12). These six areas are also the theological substance of chapters 40–55. *Motyer - Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec, page 30.*

## 6. Whose vision is it?

“It comes to us clothed in a human person, alive with human passion and cast in human language. It is the human aspect of the vision that makes it accessible to us.” *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, page 26.*

## 7. What is the source of the vision?

Though received by Isaiah, it originates as the divine word from God “and exists only because ‘the LORD has spoken’”. *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, page 26.*

## 8. Who is the vision for? All people on heaven and earth

While the vision concerns a specific city and nation in the eighth century BC, we shall see when we get to the beginning of chapter 22 that this is merely the vantage point from which the prophet looks out. The vision is in fact breathtaking in its scope, embracing all nations and reaching to the very end of time. *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, page 41.*

1. **What is the Vision about?** The center-piece of Isaiah’s inaugural vision is the truth of atonement by substitutionary sacrifice. *Motyer - Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec, page 29.*
2. **Renewal:** “It is about renewal on a massive scale; the re-creation of the universe. Isaiah’s vision begins with the historical Jerusalem of his own day, corrupt and under judgment (1:8), and finishes with the end-time city of God, the new Jerusalem, the joy and delight of the whole earth.” *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, page 26.*
3. **Gods Plan:** It deals with God’s dealings with his people from the eighth century BC (1:1) right down to our own time and beyond, to the things that will bring history to a close and usher in eternity (66:22-24). Its sweep is huge. In a very real sense the vision is as big as the mind of God himself. *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, page 26.*

## 9. What is the focus of the Vision?

At the heart of Isaiah’s vision is the startling revelation that the Messiah must suffer. Its sharpest focus is on the one who came to the (cross) ~~window~~ for us all. That is, if you like, the depth of it, the truth that lies at the center. But like a well-cut diamond, the vision has surface as well as depth, and we will be able to appreciate its many facets only as we attend carefully to the way it has been shaped and presented to us as Holy Scripture. *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, page 29-30*

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2. When Isaiah is summoned into the presence of this holy God he knows himself to be ruined, for he is unclean and lives among an unclean people (6:5). But no sooner is the confession made than a live coal is taken from the altar and applied to his lips, and he is told that his guilt is taken away and his sin atoned for (6:6-7). The implication is clear. Forgiveness is possible only when atonement is made, and atonement is provided by God himself. It is a gift from his altar. This is the key to understanding the ministry of the Servant of the LORD in the second part of the book. He is the final answer to the mystery of how God can forgive and remain just. He does it through a perfect sacrifice which he himself provides. *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, page 31.*

### **Why is Isaiah important?**

3. In terms of theological significance, the book of Isaiah is the 'Romans' of the Old Testament. It is here that the threads come together and the big picture of God's purposes for his people and for his world is most clearly set forth. *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, page 37.*
4. *There are 66 references to Isaiah in the New Testament.* in Acts 8:26-35 we catch a glimpse of how this same understanding of Isaiah's vision was to open into the great outward thrust of the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. In the midst of a remarkable ministry in Samaria, Philip is told to go southward to the desert road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza. There, in one of those amazing moments made by God, he comes upon an Ethiopian eunuch, returning home from Jerusalem and reading the book of the prophet Isaiah. It is not just any passage he is reading, but Isaiah 53, where the Servant is led like a lamb to the slaughter. *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, page 38.*