

ISAIAH

All comments and references are from Gene Tucker in the New Interpreters' Bible unless otherwise stated.

- 1) – Probably put into its present form in c 350 BCE. /// Uzziah (Azariah) came to the throne in 780 BCE. Isaiah began his work in 740 BCE, the year that Uzziah died. This was a time of peace and prosperity in both Judah and Israel. Jeroboam II died in 745 and Tiglath-Pileser III became king of Assyria, and Israel had only 20-25 years of life left. Isaiah could see this clearly. Hezekiah died in 692 BCE. /// The book was written by at least three different people. Chapters 1-39 in late 8th century, 40-55 in 7th, 56-66 in 5th. In addition, there were probably redactions in the late 8th century, in the 7th century at the time of Josiah, in the exile in mid-5th century, and post-exilic in late 5th century. Furthermore, some material in 1-39 was added later – there are clear allusions to events two centuries after Isaiah, son of Amoz, lived. /// Little is known about the last days of the first Isaiah writer. But Jewish pseudepigrapha claims that he was sawn in half under orders from King Manasseh.
- 2) 1:1 – This verse was added by a later redactor. Probably meant to introduce either Chapters 1-12, or 1-39. Now must be accepted as introducing entire 66 chapters. /// Isaiah was not active during Uzziah's reign – see 6:1, where it says that Isaiah began his prophetic life in the year Uzziah died. /// Amoz was a brother of Amaziah, Uzziah's father, making him royalty.
- 3) 1:2-3 – A divine call to heaven and earth in the form of a prophetic lawsuit. The fundamental purpose of these two vss is to indict the Israelites for their failures, which will be specified later. But not just Israel but the entire “chosen people.”
- 4) 1:7-9 – Refers to an invasion and siege, very likely – but not definitely – by Sennacherib in 701 BCE. The “shelter, hut, city” shows the isolation of Jerusalem.
- 5) 1:24-25 – The enemy is the city of Jerusalem and *all* its inhabitants, not only the bad ones. The “you” is singular, meaning the city of Jerusalem.
- 6) 1:27-28 – These verses were probably added later. The “oaks” and “gardens” are cultic places where Canaanite fertility rites took place. A redactor was probably trying to tie this first chapter into the last chapter where reference to oaks and gardens is common.
- 7) 2:2-4 – Almost identical to Micah 4:1-4 – no way of knowing which depended on which. Probably both drew from an earlier Temple source.
- 8) 2:6-22 – This section is one of the most chaotic in the book. But the theme could be called “apostasy brings judgment.” A collection of diverse materials from various periods assembled under the same rubric: the fearsome day of the Lord.
- 9) 2:7 – There are numerous biblical texts in which divinatory practices are condoned: casting of lots, trial by ordeal, blessings and curses, swearing of oaths that are conditional self-curses. The line between magic and religion is difficult to draw.
- 10) 3:1-3 – The support and staff in vs. 1 are metaphors for the leadership of those listed in vss. 2-3. The interpretation to mean food and water is “almost certainly secondary, a note by some prosaic soul who could not leave the poetry alone.” /// The king is excluded because in Isaiah's theology he was divinely appointed. Why the priest was left out is a mystery. The enchanter is included, though prohibited (Deut 18:9 ff), because people turn to him anyway.
- 11) 3:12 – That women rule is a disaster and an insult!

- 12) 3:14 – The Lord accuses the leaders of robbing the poor.
- 13) 3:17 – The NIV and New English Bible say, “will make their scalps bald.”
- 14) 3:25-4:1 – So many men are dead that seven widows ask one man to marry them in order to take away their disgrace. Even if they can provide for themselves, they are targets for condemnation if they don’t have a husband, an embarrassing reminder of the role of women in ancient Israel.
- 15) 4:2-6 – A much later addition, after the exile, or at least after the destruction of Jerusalem. The “branch of the Lord” is probably a messianic prediction. See Ex 40:34 for correlation of the cloud of smoke covering the tent of meeting.
- 16) 5:1-7 – The pattern is: 1a – Isaiah as prophet, 1b-2 – the song, 3-6 – owner speaks, 7 – Isaiah as prophet. Taken as a whole, it is a juridical parable, a trial in which the owner (through Isaiah) argues a lawsuit before the Israelites. They pronounce judgment on themselves. Parallels Nathan and David and the rich man’s lamb.
- 17) 5:1 “My beloved” is “My friend” in the New English Bible, and is God. The vineyard is Israel and Judah. In the NIV, it is “loved one.” Tucker thinks “friend is better because the speaker (Isaiah) is a friend of the bridegroom/owner (God).
- 18) 5:7 – A play on words
 judgment = mišpāt bloodshed = mi_pāh
 justice = _ēdāqā outcry = _ē’aqā
- 19) 5:11 – The strong drink was probably beer because distilled liquor is a relatively modern invention. (JBD: But beer stronger than wine?)
- 20) 5:25b – “and his hand is still outstretched” indicates a continuing punishment by the Lord. Same phrase is repeated many times. But it is not clear what the punishment is for, when it started, or when it will end.
- 21) – 6:1-9:7 – A distinct literary unit, but probably not by Isaiah or any other single writer. Probably compiled by an editor(s). There is some chronology: 6:1, the year Uzziah died; , 6:9-10, the time of Ahza; 7:1-9, the Syro-Ephraimic war; 9:1-7, a crown prince is born.
- 22) 6:1 – Chapter 6 should have been the first chapter in the book. Isaiah was probably about 20 years old in this year, 740 BCE. Tiglath-pileser in Assyria came to power in 745 and began to expand his power, so Isaiah’s whole lifetime was threatened by Assyria. /// That the hem of the Lord’s robe “filled the Temple” indicates that Isaiah stood at the entrance of the Temple.
- 23) 6:2 – The seraphs covered their eyes because not even God’s attendants could look at him. “Covering their feet” is a euphemism for covering their genitalia.
- 24) 6:4 – The smoke is from incense and/or burnt offerings.
- 25) 6:9-13 – Isaiah’s mission is clear: to **prevent** repentance and healing because the Lord’s object is to destroy the people and their city, initially offering no hope. But vs. 13 offers a glimmer of hope. /// Jesus quotes these verses in Matthew 13:14-15, Mark 4:12, Luke 8:10, John 12:40. Paul quotes them in Acts 28: 26-27.
- 26) 7:1-2 – Greater detail in 2 Kings 16:1-20. Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser moved against Syria and Palestine. Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria aligned to fight him. When Ahaz refused to join them, they moved against Jerusalem in 734.
- 27) 7:3 – Shear-jashub means “ a remnant shall remain (or return).” He was probably born shortly after Isaiah’s call and was 4-5 years old at the time of the meeting with Ahaz. Isaiah was certain that, after the evil time at hand, better times were ahead. Even after

- exile, “a remnant will remain.” The fact that he could go directly to meet Ahaz is another indication of his royal status.
- 28) 7:5-12 – Isaiah tries to assure Ahaz that they need only remain neutral and let Tiglath-Pileser destroy Syria and Israel. But Ahaz wants to ally with Assyria, which Isaiah violently opposes because he is afraid Assyria’s religions would ascend in Judah. Isaiah tells Ahaz to ask God for a sign.
- 29) 7:9b – word play:
 ta’ä minâ – stand firm in the faith
 te’ämênû – stand at all
 both stem from the same form, the root of “amen.” (JBD: So does “Amen” actually mean “stand firm?”)
- 30) 7:13-25 – This refers to both a current and future prophesy. The current prophesy is that in three years (when the child can choose between good and evil) Tiglath-Pileser will take Damascus and destroy Syria. He does. Isaiah had the immediate future in mind, which was *not* Messianic.
- 31) 7:14 – Here, and in Matthew 1:21-22 where it is quoted, the word “almah” is used. Which actually means “young woman of marriageable age.” The Hebrew word for virgin is “betulah.” However, in the OT, “almah” is used seven times to refer to a young woman – Gen 24:43, Ex 2:8, Ps 68:25, Prov 30:10, Song 1:9 and 6:8, Isa 7:14. In every case the young woman *is* a virgin. In Gen 24:16, Lev 21:13, Deut 22:14, and many others, the word used is bethulah, meaning “virgin maiden.” It was the Greek translation, the “Septuagint, in ç 300 BCE, that introduced “parthenos” which does mean “virgin.” /// Isaiah had the immediate future in mind: the woman is already pregnant, perhaps Ahaz’s wife, or even Isa’s wife.
- 32) 7:18 – The fly is Egypt, the bee Assyria, the river Euphrates, the feet a euphemism for genitals.
- 33) 8:1-4 – The child he refers to is probably his own, Maher-shalal-hash-haz (“quick plunder”), because he makes the same prediction for him as for the predicted child Immanuel.
- 34) 8:3 – The name is enigmatic but clearly suggests disaster for Judah’s enemies (Syria and Samaria) at the hands of Assyria. The son is Isaiah’s; the prophetess may be his wife or a Temple functionary such as Miriam (Ex 15:20), and Deborah (Judges 4:4) and others. Tiglath-pileser did defeat Damascus in 732, and Ahaz sold out to him (2 Kings 16).
- 35) 8:6-8 – The stream represents the Davidic dynasty. The flooding river is the king of Assyria. The flood “up to the neck” indicates that Judah will be devastated but Jerusalem will survive.
- 36) 9:1 -- Zebulun and Naphthali were the sections of northern Israel annexed by Tiglath-pileser in 732 BCE. See 1 Maccabees 5:14 and note #7, and Matt 4:14-15, and footnote # 12.
- 37) 9:2-7 – Probably originally written as a hymn of thanksgiving to celebrate the birth of a great king like Hezekiah or Josiah, but later became an ideal vision of the future during captivity, then a prophecy of the Messiah. The early church applied it to Jesus.
- 38) 9:7-10:4 – Very similar to Amos 4:6-12 (which ends with “prepare to meet your God, O Israel.”)
- 39) 9:20-21 – Could be interpreted literally as starvation leading to cannibalism. But more likely a metaphor for military or political action of inter-tribal warfare in the northern kingdom and against Judah.
- 40) 10:5-19 – Assyria, God’s instrument against Samaria, has overreached itself and now brings

the Lord's vengeance against itself. Its commanders are superior to the kings they face (v. 8). V. 12 is a later addition, indicating Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem under Hezekiah in 701. Vss. 16-19 describe the punishment of the king of Assyria: 1) his soldiers will die of a "wasting sickness." 2) His land will burn (perhaps metaphorically). 3) His lands and forests will be decimated.

- 41) 10:20-24 – A prophecy of the destruction of Samaria in 721, probably written after the fact and not by Isaiah, and also the reconciliation of a remnant of Israel with Judah.
- 42) 10:27b-32 – The invader is not named but the writer means for the reader to understand that it is Sargon II in 717 or Sennacherib in 701. However, all the places that can be identified are north of Jerusalem, whereas the Assyrians attacked from the south. Perhaps this is the itinerary of the coalition of Syria and Ephraim, 7:1-2
- 43) 10:33-34 – The Lord will strike down the Assyrians.
- 44) 11:2 – The seven spirits that will go to the seven churches, Rev 1:4
- 45) 11:6b – The Dead Sea scrolls read, "...the calf and the young lion shall browse together."
- 46) 11:9 – Cited by Habbakuk 2:14
- 47) 12:1-6 – A liturgical conclusion to the first major section of Isaiah. "You" in 1a is singular, indication the thanksgiving song of an individual. "You" in 4a is plural, a communal hymn of thanksgiving and praise. Not written by Isaiah; probably added when his sayings were being collected, edited and saved.
- 48) 13:2-22, 14:5-23 – Presume events of the 6th century or later, when Babylon fell to the Persians, led by Cyrus, who let the Israelites return to Palestine. /// The entire section is an announcement of judgment, the Lord intervening in human affairs, not only of Israel but also the whole world (v. 11).
- 49) 13:16-18 – Very similar to Psalms 137-9, which also makes readers "recoil in horror." We must identify with the oppressed people crying out for revenge, a reality that must be acknowledged even if we are not proud of feeling that way.
- 50) 14:1-2 – Between the announcement of judgment and the taunt song over the king of Babylon is the proclamation of the good news of the restoration of Israel.
- 51) 14:3-23 – The "king of Babylon" remains unnamed and it's futile to try to identify him. In the end, he seems to stand for the power of Babylon whose death is celebrated. Vs 4: The "taunt" is a parody of a dirge, its poetic meter and content patterned after a funeral song. /// Vs 12: In Luke 10:18, it is Satan who fell from heaven. But Tucker (NIB): The Day Star and Son of Dawn in v. 12 were Near East divinities, here used ironically. Vv. 13-15: See Matt 11:23 ff.
- 52) 14:28 – 727 BCE or 724. The real audience of the oracle is the Judaens, not the Philistines. The broken rod may be Ahaz, but more likely an Assyrian king, whose successor will be even harsher.
- 53) 14:31-32 – "No straggler in the ranks" refers to a well-disciplined, rapid army. /// The "nation" is Philistia, asking Jerusalem for help against Assyria.
- 54) **Chap 15-16** – Most of the towns listed have been located, but dating the proclamation of the events bemoaned has been futile.
- 55) 16:1-4a – Possibly instructions to messengers from Moab to take tribute to Jerusalem to beg for refuge for the outcasts.
- 56) 16:6 – This is probably the reason for the disaster. The "we" who report it are probably Israelites.
- 57) 16:12 – Might be an indictment of Moabite religion, or possibly just that even prayers will

not help.

- 58) 17:4 – “Jacob” is Israel/Ephraim, the northern kingdom. Linking Israel and Damascus presumes the same historical background as 7:1-9, the Syro-Ephraimitic war of 734.
- 59) 17:9 – Refers to the conquest of the Promised Land by Joshua. The “strong cities” are in the northern kingdom. The “God of your salvation: is Yahweh, replaced by Canaanite fertility gods.
- 60) 17:12-14 – Not clear. May be 1) the S-E war, 2) the Assyrian siege under Sennacherib, or 3) the end times.
- 61) 18:1-7 – Probably Ethiopian ambassadors instructed to return home with the message in 4-7, counseling against trust in entangling foreign alliances, trust in the Lord alone.
- 62) 19:1-5 – The Lord intervenes: 1) vs 2-4: civil war, 2) confusion of their plans, 3) hard master, not identified. All a punishment for Zoan’s arrogant princes.
- 63) 19:16-25 – Impossible to connect these five prose pronouncements to particular historical incidents. That five cities will speak “the language of Canaan” refers to the presence of Jews who brought Egyptians into the faith such as at Elephantine. Hebrew is one of the Canaanite dialects.
- 64) 20:1-6 – Probably in 711BCE when Philistia revolted against Assyrian rule, which failed because of reliance on Egypt, again serving as a warning against relying on foreign entanglements.
- 65) 21:1-10 – The only thing certain about this section is that Babylon will fall, perhaps when it was allied with Judah against Assyria c 690, or at the hand of Sennacherib in 689, or by Cyrus in 539, probably the latter.
- 66) 21:7 – Muslims say, “one donkey with Jesus riding, one camel with Mohammed riding.”
- 67) 21:11-12 – Dumah was in the Arabian desert. The answer to the question is enigmatic. May mean, “Beware of the cycle of good times and bad, and keep on asking which is which.” Or more simply, the present oppression would end but another would come.
- 68) 21:13-17 – Dedan and Kedar were grandsons of Abraham, sons of Ishmael. Here Dedan represents Arabic society, Kedar non-Jewish society in general. Tema is still there, its name transliterated from the Arabic as “Taymah.” We visited there when we lived in Saudi, just an hour’s drive from our home in Tabuk. See pictures we took, at Job 6.
- 69) 22:1-14 – The message and most of the details could be Sennacherib’s siege of Jerusalem and decimation of the Judaeen countryside in 701. /// The voice in 1-4 is probably the prophet Isaiah. He presumes both people and leaders have behaved badly, the leaders by running away and the people by celebrating instead of mourning. Yahweh therefore promises punishment on the Day of the Lord. This would be one of Isaiah’s last appearances. /// The siege was lifted and the people did not thank the Lord. Historians still debate the reason Sennacherib left without taking the city.
- 70) 22:6 – Aram was the eponym of Aramena tribes, like Elam was a son of Shem. See Gen 10:22
- 71) 22:8 – 1 Kings 7:2 describes the building of Solomon’s House in the Forest of Lebanon. 10:17 describes the weaponry he had made for store there.
- 72) 22:13 – Similar to Ecc 8:15, adds “and be merry,” and quoted by Paul in 1 Cor 15:32, unfavorably and in a different way: if there is no resurrection we might as well eat and drink for tomorrow we die.
- 73) 22:15-25 – Shebna is an interloper, has misused his power and royal money by carving out a tomb and buying expensive chariots. Isaiah is contemptuous and threatens exile to

Assyria (vss 17-18). Eliakim is given the post, but in v 25 he is deposed and all with him, predicting the fall of Jerusalem. ///Shebna was a common name and often had a theophoric addition: Shebnayahu (1 Chronicles 15:24), or Shebnaya (Nehemiah 9:4) both referring to Yahweh. All mean, “Pray, Yahweh, return.”

- 74) 23:1-18 – Agreed that Isaiah of Jerusalem did not write it, and probably added to as late as the post-exilic (Persian) period. The first 14 vss. are a general summons to communal mourning over the already accomplished destruction of the Phoenician cities, ordained by the Lord, “to defile the pride of all glory, to shame the honored of the earth (vs. 9). Tyre will “prostitute herself,” a contemptuous comparison. But then in vs 18 the wages of prostitution will be devoted to the Lord’s work.
- 75) 22:22 – Possibly the basis of Jesus’s speech to Peter in Matt 16:18-19 giving him “the keys to the kingdom.”
- 76) Chaps 24-27** – Overview: Called “Apocalypse of Isaiah,” but it is not, according to Gene Tucker (Prof of OT, Emory). Is prophetic, not apocalyptic. Latter is like the Book of Revelation, a revelation of the future in vision or dream, bizarre, and otherworldly, a mystery revealed only to the elect, about the end times. Prophecy expects God to act in history but not end it. This section includes material from many times and places: judgment, salvation, hymns, victory song, complaint song. /// Allusions to historical events “are so clothed in eschatological poetry as to be unidentifiable.” /// Another view from the Interpreters Bible: Probably written after 200 BCE during the misery of the Seleucid Empire, or later Roman Empire. The cities and countries mentioned would be the ones acting as tyrant at the time of the writing, the names purposely veiled to avoid accusation of treason. If written at the time of the Exile, e.g., it would have been Babylon. In 27:1-13, the time is obviously the Exile, proving that it was written long after Isaiah lived.
- 77) 24:10 – City of chaos: probably Babylon, in contrast to Jerusalem. Also may just represent all cities polluted by humans.
- 78) 25:7-8 – This imagery echoes Canaanite mythology where Mot (Death) swallowed all living creatures. But here Death is not a deity. It looks forward to a time when death will be no more. Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:1-4 are parallels but those passages indicate a revival of some, not all. /// Paraphrased by Paul in 1 Cor 26:54-55 – “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “Death, where is your sting?”
- 79) 25:10b-12 – Why this judgment of Moab is inserted here is a mystery. Maybe because the editor didn’t want Moab to be included among “all peoples” invited to the Lord’s banquet? See Genesis 19:37.
- 80) 26:5-6 – No clues as to which city this is – probably not Babylon, probably not a specific city.
- 81) 26:19 – A confusing verse: “their corpses” is actually “my corpse” in Hebrew. Resurrection of a nation, or an individual? In its context, it is probably an affirmation that the Lord will give life to a community that considers itself as good as dead. /// Quoted in 2 Maccabees 7:9, by the second son to be roasted by Antiochus IV.
- 82) 27:1 – In Babylonian mythology, Leviathan, with Tiamat, were defeated by Maarduk in the creation account. Leviathan is the dragon of chaos, is crushed into food for sharks in Psalm 74:14, is a fearsome sea creature in Job 41, is a playmate of God in Psalm 104:26. Here it is God’s last and oldest enemy, the force of evil.
- 83) 27:2-6 – The original song of the vineyard (5:1-7) concerned Jerusalem and Judah. This

- song anticipates a return of the northern kingdom, Israel.
- 84) 27:7-11 – A difficult passage. Vss 7-9 probably interpret God’s judgment on Israel, the fortified city being Samaria which had continued in idolatry (sacred poles, etc).
 - 85) 27:12-13 – This **is** apocalyptic – the coming of the Day of the Lord, when God will reign with justice, when good will prevail over evil, when God will intervene in human society.
 - 86) 28:7 – Switches to the prophets and rulers of Jerusalem. /// “Strong drink” is beer. Distilled liquor was unknown there then.
 - 87) 28:10ff – Meaning in Hebrew unclear – perhaps the mumbling of drunken priests instead of the divine word of peace, and will be conquered by the Assyrians.
 - 88) 28:15 --This was the treaty with Sennacherib of Assyria, who had conquered the northern ten tribes of Israel and carried them off. Isaiah does not think this treaty will keep Judah safe this time. See Ch 29.
 - 89) 28:20-22 – The treaty with Egypt will provide no protection. The Lord is the author of the invasion. /// Mount Perazim is where David defeated the Philistines (2 Sam 5:17ff). /// Valley of Gibeon See Joshua 9:3ff where the inhabitants of Gibeon tricked Joshua into sparing their city.
 - 90) 28:23-29 – A parable. The farmer is God. The crop is Jerusalem and Judah. There is a time for judgment and a time for salvation (time to plant, time to sow). The violence is limited to separating grain from chaff. Judah and Jerusalem may be crushed but not destroyed.
 - 91) 29:1 – “Ariel.” Meaning uncertain, but closely corresponds to a Hebrew term translated “altar hearth” in Ezekiel 43:15, so probably refers to the Temple Mount.
 - 92) 29:4-8 – The dust represents the people of Jerusalem who are barely alive, not yet dead. Sennacherib has decimated the countryside and laid siege to Jerusalem, then withdraws unexpectedly.
 - 93) 29:11-12 – Resembles Isaiah’s commission in 6:10 to make the mind of the people dull, stop their ears, and shut their eyes so that the Lord’s judgment could run its course.
 - 94) 29:17 – Lebanon – a metaphor for Judah or Israel. The fruitful field is their enemy.
 - 95) 29:22-24 – Impossible to know what this refers to.
 - 96) 30:1-7 – -Judah was rebelling against Assyria and relying on Egypt to help, a vain hope since Egypt was militarily weak then. Rahab is the chaos dragon slain by the Lord, a synonym for Egypt. /// Zoan was the capital of the Hyksos Kingdom, known to the Hebrews as Tanis and to us as Memphis.
 - 97) **Chapter 32** – This chapter is probably not from the time of Isaiah, variously dated from time of Josiah in the 7th century, up to exilic or even post-exilic period.
 - 98) 32:9-15 (including vs. 19 to be read between 14 and 15. Probably refers to the fall of Jerusalem to Babylonians in 598 and 587 BCE.
 - 99) Chapter 33 evokes more questions than answers! 33:1 Is the destroyer Assyria (701) or Babylon (597)?
 - 100) 33:7-9 – The point is that in the absence of fear of the Lord, human order collapses.
 - 101) 33:10-13 – Another abrupt shift. The Lord speaks directly – probably to people in general – about his searing fire.
 - 102) 33:14b-15 – Is the question by God? The answer is by another voice, possibly a priest.
 - 103) 33:21 – A Canaanite myth? A home of gods with sufficient water but protected from attack by ships? Contrasting Jerusalem with Babylon and its canals? Whatever, there will be plenty for all and no sickness.

- 104) 34:14 – Apparently no one really knows what this should be. In the New English Bible it is "desert owls." The Hebrew word is *lilith*, to the Jews a monster of the night, or a night hag. Later, in the Talmud, rabbis personified her as the beautiful woman who was Adam's wife before Eve was created. He couldn't stand her shrewishness nor she his soberness and they parted. She joined with the serpent in bringing about the fall and has remained a special danger to children.
- 105) 35:1-6 – A Messianic prophecy, esp. v. 5. See Math 7:22ff and Mark 7:32ff.
- 106) **Chaps 36-39** closely parallel 2 Kings 18:13-20:9. Pure narrative, placed between Isaiah and Second Isaiah after the Babylon captivity. Probably to bridge the Assyrian period and the Babylonian exile. Should be read 38, 39, 36, 40, to follow proper chronology. Chapters 38 and 39 occurred 15 years before Sennacherib's siege, so belong between chapters 35 and 36.
- 107) 38:21-22 – These two verses belong between vss 6 and 7. The New American Bible and 2 Kings 20:1-11 have it correctly.
- 108) The rest of Isaiah was not written by Isaiah. Chapters 40-55 were written by someone who lived 150 years later, at the time of Cyrus (see Ch 45:1). This is "Second Isaiah," or "Deutero-Isaiah."
- 109) 40:1-2 – God is challenging those in the heavenly council, the heavenly host. The notion of a divine entourage is common, especially in the psalms, but also elsewhere in the OT – see 1 Kings 22:19: "all the host of heaven standing beside him..." /// The "double punishment" means only that Zion is fully forgiven, not that God has *unjustly* humiliated Zion.
- 110) 40:12-31 – Although there is a resemblance to the divine speech from the whirlwind in Job 38-41, this is not a rebuff but a reminder for Israel of things they have forgotten. Elihu in Job 36:22-25 uses very similar language in his final speech to Job.
- 111) 40:18-20 – Intrusive here. Should be in 44:9-20 where the prophet teaches about the specific problem of idolatry.
- 112) 40:22-31 – This is a transition from the "pretrial" speech of the heavenly host to the trial itself. Israel/Jacob has a concern that God has disregarded his people. Israel/Jacob is exhausted, which has been wrongly translated into disregard by God (Christopher Seitz).
- 113) 41:1-7 – The trial begins. Witnesses are called from the farthest reaches of the inhabited world. The visitor from the East is usually considered to be Cyrus of Persia. But Seitz says it could also be Abraham in his victory over the four kings from the east, followed by his homage to Melchizedek (Gen 14:17-20).
- 114) 41:8-13 – "An oracle of salvation" for Jacob/Israel. There are no enemies to be found because God has taken care of them.
- 115) 41:20 – A complete reversal of 6:10.
- 116) 41:21-29 – The other nations are challenged to present proof that their gods can act. They cannot, because they don't exist, they are "empty wind." V. 25 occurred 10 years later than v. 41:2
- 117) 42:1-13 – The first "servant song." The next two, 49:1-6, 50:4-11. The servant presented is royalty, in this case Israel, presented to the divine council. Its mission is justice and law. These words were spoken by God at the transfiguration of Jesus in Matthew 17:5 ff. Also at John's baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:17. See also Matt 12:18. /// Note similarity of 42:1 to Mark 1:11 and Psalm 2:7. /// Vs 2 indicates the gentleness and justice of his arrival and actions. /// Vss 10-13 – a hymn, a striking contrast to the

- faithful, quiet bearing of the servant.
- 118) 42:14-25 – Describes the mission of both God and Israel: opening blind eyes, dispelling darkness, which God will tolerate no longer. /// Vs. 22: This erroneous description of life in exile proves that Isaiah was not there. /// Vss 24-25 similar to Jeremiah 3:24-25, where a present generation accepts responsibility and asks forgiveness for sins of a previous generation and for their own sins.
- 119) 43:1-2 – Westerman thinks this refers to the exodus. Seitz (NIB) thinks it's the covenant God made when he changed Jacob's name to Israel.
- 120) 43:27 – The “first ancestor” is probably Jacob, perhaps Adam. The “interpreters” are the prophets.
- 121) 44:5-20 – The call to come forward and produce evidence marks this unit as a trial speech. No witnesses appear because they have nothing to say. The entire idol satire is Israel shown to be deaf and blind, though formed by God. V.5 – an allusion to the Babylonian custom of tattooing the owner's name on the hand of his slave. V. 6 – see Rev 1:8, 17; 21:6, 22:13.
- 122) 44:21-23 – Israel is to remember that God does not forget.
- 123) 45:14-17 – Whatever wealth and merchandise accrue from Cyrus's subjugation of nations accrue not for Cyrus but for Israel and the acknowledgment of the God of Israel. /// The “hidden God” refers to the fact that Cyrus was doing God's work without knowing that it was God who directed him.
- 124) 46:1-2 – Bel and Nebo were Babylonian gods. Bel (Baal in Phoenecian) means "lord," and refers to the Sumerian En-lil, Marduk (Merodach in Hebrew) and others. Nebo was the god of wisdom, son of Marduk. Neb in Nebuchadnezzar. /// “A brilliant play on who carries whom and what in fact is burdensome,” but the exact sense is unclear. Israel has been a burden carried by God. Bel and Nebo are like beasts of burden and are sinking under an undesignated load.
- 125) **Chapter 46** – Summary of the chapter: Israel forgiven, Cyrus commissioned, Babylon defeated, Zion restored, God's glory revealed.
- 126) **Chapter 47** – God speaking to the Babylonians throughout.
- 127) 47:1-4 – Queen Babylon becomes a common slave girl.
Two plays on words:

sit – šēbî	earth -- hä'_res
captivity – šēbî	ground – lä'_res
- 128) 47:7 – God admits to anger at the Israelites, turning them over to the cruel Chaldeans.
- 129) 48:14 – “Jacob” and “Israel” no longer appear after this verse; they are replaced by a personified Zion. Many think this is Cyrus, but Christopher Seritz (NIB) says: This is clearly **not** Cyrus, but someone (a servant?) who has been commissioned by God's spirit. This verse may be associated with 49:1-6, even misplaced here. But, commentators are not agreed on who is being referred to!
- 130) 49:1-7 – Generally agreed to be a “servant song.” (Others: Chapters 42, 50, 52-53) The servant has already been called, has been active, and laments that he has labored in vain. But the Lord disagrees and now enhances his commission from just Israel to all the nations.
- 131) 49:8-1-3 – The servants (Israel) now promise that God's intention with the servant will finally prevail. He will be a “covenant to the people,” just as Moses cut a covenant for the people. Quoted by Paul in 2 Cor. 6:2.

- 132) 49:17 – NSRV has builders, NIV has builders, New American has rebuilders. Confusion arises because the Hebrew words are very similar.
- 133) 49:19-26 – All those born in the diaspora during the exile are now coming home. They had been raised “by kings and queens” but now are being released from even the mighty.
- 134) 50:1-3 – The rhetorical question in vs. 2 refers to the failure of God’s own people, Zion’s children, but not Zion herself. Expecting now an oracle of salvation, we get death and desert, evocations of Babylon and Assyria in Isa 8:7, 21:1.
- 135) 51:9 – Other references to Rahab (the dragon): Psalm 74:14, Psalm 87:4, Isaiah 27:1, Job 26:11-12.
- 136) 52:6 – This is the servant speaking, not God. It is his “signature,” marking the end of his discourses, which follows in vss 7:12.
- 137) 52:11 – Ezra 1:7-11 gives the inventory of these vessels, totaling 5,400 pieces, taken by Nebuchadnezzar and placed “in the house of his god,” and returned to the Israelites by Cyrus to take back to Jerusalem.
- 138) 52:13-53:12 – The 4th servant song. This is spoken by the servants of the servant. V. 9 -- Not adequately explained in the NIB. E. Sellin suggests that it is an allusion to Moses: Moses died in an unclean land (Amos 7:17) and his grave was hidden in the wilderness. V. 12 – This clearly identifies the servant with Moses, who bore the sins of a nation (Deut 4:21-24) and whose intercession stayed a judgment (Deut. 9:25-29).
 “The spoils” has several possible explanations:
 1) The whole salvation plan of God
 2) The servant will be integrated again into the community from which he was separated by his suffering.
 3) As with Jeremiah (39:8. 45:5) the servant’s life will be spared as booty or as a “prize of war.”
 See also John 12:37-50, Hebrews 9:28, Matt 20:28.
- 139) **Chapter 54** – Christopher Seitz (NIB) believes that Third Isaiah starts here, not with Chapter 56. The entire chapter “offers a conscious counterpoise to Isaiah’s opening chapter.”
- 140) 55:2b,3a – “Heed me” in some Bibles, “listen carefully” in NRSV, “listen” (“incline the ear”) in some – reverses Isaiah 6, made possible by the proclamation of the servants in chapters 40-52.
- 141) 55:3b – Some believe this indicates a transfer of Davidic covenant to the people. Seitz (NIV) believes this is too strong a claim. Rather, that aspect of the Davidic covenant has been enlarged to encompass the people at large. (I don’t see much difference!)
- 142) 55:8-9 – Kierkegaard and Barth (and others) claim that the nature of God is incomprehensible to man.
- 143) Chapters 56-66 are considered to be written after the exile, about 450 BC. Designated as he "Third Isaiah" by most exegetics. It was a time when Ezra and Nehemiah were exhorting the Judeans to divorce their foreign wives. Jonah and Ruth were written to protest that harsh policy. Third Isaiah says that if foreigners observe Jewish laws, they should be welcome in the Jewish faith. In 56:1-8 we find a “skeletal message” which will be “fleshed out” in Chapter 58.
- 144) 56:5 – “Monument” in Hebrew is yād, a euphemism for “penis.” So what was lost to the eunuch will be restored, and be better than children.
- 145) 56:8 – The original vision of the Isaiah of Jerusalem is now seen coming to fruition.

- 146) 56:9-12 – A perversion of the feast depicted in 55:1-2 (eat and drink without cost), and the image of a careless watchman contrasting with Ezekiel 3:17 and Isaiah 40:1-11. The controlling image is surfeit of food, drink, and sex.
- 147) 57:2 – Difficult to translate. NIV: “find rest as they lie in death.”
- 148) 57:6-13 – A change of addressant from children to mother. This is Zion’s infamous counterpart, Lady Babylon, with her cult of death, the final destiny of idol worshipers.
- 149) 57:14-21 – “God breaks down and humbles those who strive toward a righteousness of their own making.” (Seitz NIB) “God’s just cleansing reduces us before the Lord in order to prepare us for restoration.”
- 150) 58:1-14. – Reference to Ezra’s and Nehemiah’s effort to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls to strengthen the observance of the Sabbath. Read in synagogues on the Day of Atonement, in churches on first day of Lent.
- 151) 59:2 -- A classic definition of sin, with metaphorical examples.
- 152) 59:3-4 – The sudden shift from second to third person puts greater distance between the indicter and the crimes themselves.
- 152) 59:9-15a – The prophet speaking for the people, emphasizing that “the entire community suffers over and above what their own transgressions have brought upon them.” (Seitz)
- 153) 59:21 – Clear connection with 61:8-9, where the person referred to in 61:1, and his descendants, *become* the covenant itself. The covenant “with them” refers to those who have turned aside from transgression in Jacob.
- 154) Chapter 60 – Read on the Feast of the Epiphany, celebrating the manifestation of Jesus to the Gentiles. "Jerusalem" refers to a heavenly Jerusalem. Along with the wise men coming from the east, this is the beginning of the Church.
- 155) 60:10 – -If the walls have not been built yet, Nehemiah has not yet come, so this was written c 450 BC, a century after Second Isaiah and three centuries after First Isaiah.
- 156) 62:4 – In most translations, the original words are used: "My Delight" is Hephzibah. "Espoused" is Beulah-land. In "Pilgrims's Progress," Beulah-land is a pleasant room where the pilgrim waits before going into heaven.
- 157) 63:1-6 – A dialogue between God and a sentinel. The sentinel asks, “Who goes there?” God answers that he comes from Bozrah, a royal city in Edom. His garments are splattered with the blood of the Edomites, in assuring Zion’s vindication. There is a clear connection to Isaiah 34, where Edom is judged by God and is conquered in blood battles with Babylon.
- 158) 63:9 – A textual problem: any translation must present the idea of a contrast between God’s presence and a potential go-between. The NRSV and the New American has done this.
- 159) 63:16-17 – “The reference to ‘Our Father’ in the context of broken covenant indicates how central the creation account (in Genesis) has become in times of distress.” (Seitz) The “hardening of heart” refers to both the pharaoh of the exodus and the Isaiah call in 6:9-13.
- 160) 64:6 – Translation problem. The NRSV makes it sound like God is responsible for the servants’ sinning. The New American says only that God has hidden his face and “delivered us up to our guilt.”
- 161) 65:10 – Achor, a valley near Jerusalem where Achan was stoned (Joshua 7:24). Here symbolizes the idyllic state of contentment and peace of the Messianic age (Hosea 2:15).
- 162) 65:17-25 – A recycling of Isaiah 11:6-9.

Reference to the serpent and the curse in Genesis 3:14.

Reference to advanced years like the ages of the great ancestors in Genesis

Reference to thorns and thistles of Genesis 3:18

Reference to Isaiah's briars and thorns in 5:6, 7:24-25, etc.

Reference to children being born without pain in contrast to Genesis 3:16.

Reference to life as a tree, but not contrasted with the tree of good and evil in Genesis
2:15-17

- 163) 66:3 – Difficult to understand. Seitz thinks it means that proper worship wrongly undertaken, and improper worship conducted with rigor and enthusiasm, neither have God's blessing, but have God's severe and final judgment. False worship is not only empty and vain; it is wicked. Karl Barth: "The atheism that is the real enemy is the 'Christianity' that professes faith in God...while in its practical thinking and behavior it carries on exactly as if there were no God."
- 164) 66:17-25 – This vision "is not high-flying rhetoric but a genuine description of what God accomplished in Jesus Christ."
- 165) 66:19 – Tarshish: Gibraltar. Put: Libya. Lud (Lydia): SW part of Turkey. Moshech: Armenia and Azerbaijan, at eastern end of the Black Sea. Tubal: NE Turkey. Javan: Greece.