

Study 45: Isaiah, Part 1 Isaiah 6

Isaiah was the son of Amoz (not Amos), and may have been the cousin of King Uzziah. It is thought that the father of Isaiah was the brother of Uzziah's father. Isaiah's name means, "Yahweh saves," or "The Lord is salvation," and he was a contemporary of the prophets Amos, Hosea and Micah. Isaiah's wife was also a prophetess (Isa 8), and they had at least 2 sons together: Shear-Jashub¹ and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.²

According to some critics of the Bible, the book was written by at least 2 different authors. They base this assumption on the apparent difference of literary style between chapters 1-39 and the other 27 chapters (there are 66 altogether). The first 39 chapters are full of judgment and woe. Chapters 40-66 are filled with blessings and hope for the future. This raises the question: Does God know what's going to happen ahead of time? (OK, say it with me: "DUH!"). Though the chapter divisions weren't added until comparatively recently, this doesn't mean God was unaware of where they would be placed. That's not to say the chapter and verse divisions are inspired. (Hardly!)

John 12:37 Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. 38 This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet:

"Lord, who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

This is a quote from Isa 53:1, so-called "second Isaiah."

John 12:39 For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere:

40 "He has blinded their eyes
and hardened their hearts,
so they can neither see with their eyes,
nor understand with their hearts,
nor turn—and I would heal them."

A quote from Isa 6:10, so-called "first Isaiah" (cp. Matt 13:11-15). Apparently, the inspired apostle John didn't know that it wasn't really Isaiah that wrote the verses he quotes here!

Isaiah began his prophetic ministry after seeing a vision of the Lord:

Isa 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory."

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"

And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

9 He said, "Go and tell this people:

"Be ever hearing, but never understanding;
be ever seeing, but never perceiving."

¹ *Shear-Jashub* means *a remnant will return*.

² *Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz* means *quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil*.

10 Make the heart of this people calloused;
make their ears dull
and close their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed.”

11 Then I said, “For how long, Lord?”

And he answered:

“Until the cities lie ruined
and without inhabitant,

until the houses are left deserted

and the fields ruined and ravaged,

12 until the Lord has sent everyone far away

and the land is utterly forsaken.

13 And though a tenth remains in the land,

it will again be laid waste.

But as the terebinth and oak

leave stumps when they are cut down,

so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.”

Uzziah, king of Judah, died in 740 BC. Isaiah’s ministry extended through the reigns of the Judean kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah (716-687 BC), and perhaps the first years of Manasseh (687-642 BC), by whom, according to tradition, Isaiah was killed by being sawn in two (see: Heb 11:37).³ He was contemporary with the last five kings of Israel: Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hosea. The fall of Israel’s capital city of Samaria to the Assyrian King Sargon II in 722 BC occurred during his ministry. This was when the northern kingdom of Israel was carried away into Assyrian captivity, from which it never returned. Some “Christian Identity” groups make much of what became of these tribes, tracing their movements into various nations, and take great pride in finding their ancestry tied to these people. Remember one thing, though. Although they were Israelites when they were taken captive, these people became *Gentiles* when they were dispersed.

Jer 3:8 [The Lord said,] “I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries.”

The northern kingdom of Israel became a people without a covenant (i.e., Gentiles). Remember, it is *covenant* that makes an Israelite an Israelite! They were told that in the latter days, they would join once more with Judah when they both repented.

Jer 3:15 [The Lord said,] “Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding. 16 In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land,” declares the Lord, “people will no longer say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the Lord.’ It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made. 17 At that time they will call Jerusalem *The Throne of the Lord*, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the Lord. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. 18 **In those days** the people of Judah will join the people of Israel, and together they will come from a northern land to the land I gave your ancestors as an inheritance.”

This is a picture of Gentiles coming into the Church in the last days and beyond. The “land” is the true Promised Land of the New Covenant:

Rom 4:13 It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be **heir of the world**, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

³ The *Martyrdom of Isaiah* tells the Jewish legendary story of the prophet Isaiah’s death at the hands of king Manasseh of Judah. See: <http://www.ccel.org/c/charles/otpseudepig/martisah.htm>. It is also mentioned in the Talmud that after Isaiah hid from Manasseh in a cedar tree, the king had the tree cut down, and Isaiah died when he was cut in two (“sawn asunder” Heb 11:37, KJV).