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# Isaiah

## Summary

Isaiah's sweeping vision is a fitting entry to the loving sovereignty of God in the affairs of the crown jewel of His creation - people. Interwoven with the vivid and sometimes puzzling imagery of this remarkable book is a bright and shining hope of a God who loves and longs for His people so that He can restore them into a perfect eternal relationship with Him. The book is filled with remarkable predictions of a coming servant that will redeem the people of God into a right relationship with Him. Also, Isaiah lived in a time of military threat to the sovereignty of Judah from the regional power, Assyria. This threat formed the basis of much of Isaiah's prophecy to the kings he served, namely that they were to trust in God rather than military and political alliances. Later in his life, Isaiah prophesied the captivity and rescue of Judah resulting from a newly emerging threat, Babylon and their conquerors, Persia. While this prophecy was not realized until over 100 years after his death, the prophecy was remarkable for its stunning accuracy, including correctly naming the invading Persian King, Cyrus. As you read through Isaiah, be sure to stay on the lookout for the presence of its surprising main character – Jesus Christ! Isaiah contains more than 20 prophecies that were fulfilled 700 years later in the life of Jesus Christ. Even the layout of this book is remarkable; the first 39 chapters strongly resemble the first 39 books of the Bible, the Old Testament, in that they emphasize God's righteousness, holiness, and justice. The final 27 chapters of Isaiah, emphasize God's grace, mercy, and love.

## Author

Authorship is generally attributed to the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz (Isaiah 1:1) who served under four Judean kings (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah) from approximately 740 B.C. to 680 B.C. Isaiah was likely martyred for his prophecy under Hezekiah's wicked son, Manasseh, near 680 B.C. Authorship of the book is not without controversy, owing to the very different themes of the first 39 chapters and the last 27 chapters and to the remarkable predictions about the future of Israel that were completed and later fulfilled. There is no clear evidence for the historicity of these criticisms. Thus, many biblical scholars agree that Isaiah wrote the entire book.

## Date

The book was written throughout Isaiah's ministry as a prophet from 740-680 B.C.

## Primary Characters

The Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ (Isaiah 42, 49, 50, 52-53)

Isaiah (Isaiah 1-66)

Ahaz (Isaiah 7)

Sennacherib (Isaiah 36-37)

Hezekiah (Isaiah 36-39)

## Historical Moments

Isaiah's Vision (Isaiah 6)

The Sign of Immanuel (Isaiah 7)

The Siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib (Isaiah 36-37)

## Major Theological Themes

**Salvation Is of the Lord and No Other** - Our God is a loving God who more than anything desires a right relationship with His people. This is so important to Him that He lovingly foretells of a day when He would willingly send His only Son to suffer and die so that this relationship could be permanently restored.

**God Is Holy** - The book opens a little window into the magnificent splendor of our indescribable God. This is the high view of God. When we see God from this place, in consideration of our own waywardness, we, like Isaiah, are moved to cry out that *all our righteous acts are like filthy rags* (Isaiah 64:6).

**God Is Trustworthy** - A major theme of the book is God's call for His people to place their complete trust and dependence on Him. The book paints a clear picture of a God who is worthy of that trust and dependence on Him.

## Lessons Learned from Isaiah

**God Is Magnificent, Holy, Trustworthy, and Sovereign** - God has provided a perfect plan of redemption for us in the form of His son, Jesus. Though we will inevitably struggle with sin in this life, God has provided a way to be in a restored relationship with Him through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. We need only accept this unmerited gift and we will spend eternity in perfect relationship with Him.

**The Bible Is Inspired, True, Interesting, Alive, and Can Be Fully Trusted** - Have you ever doubted the trustworthiness of the Bible? Do some of the stories seem just too unbelievable to be true? Isaiah's prophecy should be a source of great confidence for you. Many of the events recorded by Isaiah were fulfilled, in some cases hundreds of years later, with stunning accuracy. Our remarkable God is sovereign over all, including time. His word is to be trusted. With our emphasis on immediacy, we do not always see the working of His ways immediately, or in some cases even in our lifetime, but the message of Isaiah is that we can rest confidently on the word of our God who is indeed sovereign over all. Isaiah's prophecy is a spectacular testament to this fact.

**Jesus Christ Is Returning** - To encourage and comfort the nation of Judah, Isaiah accurately predicted the coming of a suffering servant that was ultimately fulfilled seven hundred years later during Jesus' life on earth. However, Isaiah also foretells that Jesus is coming a second time to wear the crown of a conquering King and to reign supremely over a new heaven and a new earth where all the previous wrongs will be set completely right. This should produce incredible hope in those who belong to God. Do you long for freedom from the pains and afflictions of this world? Isaiah's message is to hold on, for in that day when *the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more* (Isaiah 65:19).