

## Introduction to the course

- 1) Welcome
  - i) The "Himalayas" of the OT.
  - ii) Jews saw Isaiah as the equal of Moses. Not good theology but indicates its importance
- 2) Purpose
  - a) Our purpose is to seek God and worship Him
    - i) Three elements of worship
      - (1) See: comprehend an aspect of God
      - (2) Know: appreciate fully, experience
        - (a) Come to know God
          - (i) Php 3:10 that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,
        - (b) Impact on my inner self
          - (i) mind: we realize something about God not known before
          - (ii) conscience: we come to better understand right and wrong
          - (iii) feelings: we are affected emotionally
      - (3) Respond: make a change in my walk based on my knowledge
    - ii) Read Isa 6:1-8 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. (2) Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (3) And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" (4) And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. (5) And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" (6) Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. (7) And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." (8) And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."
      - (a) See
        - (i) sitting on a throne: saw His sovereignty
        - (ii) Holy, holy, holy: saw His holiness
        - (iii) foundations shook...filled with smoke: saw His wrath
      - (b) Know
        - (i) Woe is me! Broken over his sin.
        - (ii) your guilt is taken away. Trusting God.
      - (c) Respond:
        - (i) Here I am, send me.

b) Response can take many forms

i) Praise

(1) Heb 13:15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

(a) a sacrifice of praise = lips that acknowledge His name

ii) Thanks

(1) Psa 97:12 Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!

(a) Thanks to His holy name

iii) Holiness

(1) 1Jn 3:3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

(a) Hoping in Christ leads us to holiness

iv) Works

(1) Eph 4:15-16 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (16) from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

v) Witness

(1) Mat 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

3) Structure of the class

a) A trek through the lofty peaks of Isaiah. Not cover everything in detail but see the high points: peaks, meadows, rivers, lakes, some flowers along the way.

b) Expect 1-2y long. Patterned after J Vernon McGee

c) Daily: 30 min lesson, 15 min application

## Introduction to the book

### 1) Author

#### a) Isaiah the man

i) "Isaiah" means "Yahweh is salvation".

ii) Father was Amoz.

(1) No Bible information. Jewish tradition says Amoz was a brother of Amaziah, king of Judah.

(2) Isaiah seems to have had easy access to the court.

iii) Married (Is 8:3 prophetess)

iv) A father with at least two children. Is 7:3 son Shear-jashub. Is 8:3 son Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

v) Prophesied in and around Jerusalem over about 60y

(1) Called in the year that King Uzziah died 740 B.C. (Is 6:1).

(2) Prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Is 1:1)

(3) Recorded the death of Sennacherib 681 B.C. (Is 37:38)

vi) Jewish tradition says he was executed under Manasseh by being sawn in two inside a hollow log. (Heb 11:37 may refer to this).

vii) Held in high regard by the Jews. Seen as great as Moses. Not good theology.

#### b) Views on authorship

i) Multiple authorship

(1) Modern view.

(2) Asserts that the book was written by multiple men over about 200y.

(3) Assigns parts to different authors

(a) Ch 1-39

(b) Ch 40-66

(4) Arguments for multiple authorship

(a) Nature of prophecy: a prophet, under divine inspiration, gives a message to his contemporaries relating to their situation. Is 40-66 refers to events remote from the eighth century.

(b) Variations in theological content. Is 1-39 deals w judgment; hope is centered in the monarchy. Is 40-66 deals w comfort and salvation; hope is centered in the Servant of the LORD.

(c) Variations in style. Is 1-39 is illustrative. Is 40-66 style is lofty w rhetorical questions and passages where God argues with His people.

- ii) Single authorship
    - (1) Traditional view
    - (2) Asserts that the entire book was written by one man: Isaiah son of Amoz living in Jerusalem in 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.
    - (3) Arguments for unity:
      - (a) Testimony of the Jews
      - (b) Testimony of the NT
      - (c) Unity of theology
      - (d) High literary quality overall
      - (e) Relatively little Babylonian material
  - iii) This course assumes a single author.
    - (1) Most arguments against unity seem to be based in denial of supernatural prophecy of future events.
    - (2) Passages w supernatural prediction designed to show Isaiah's readers the future effects of present behavior.
- 2) Historical setting
- a) Isaiah prophesied under four kings of Judah
    - i) Uzziah
      - (1) Became king at 16. Reigned for 25y
      - (2) Victories over Edomites, Philistines and Arabians. Ammonites paid tribute. Extended Judah's rule to the border of Egypt.
      - (3) Became a leper after his transgression offering incense in the temple.
    - ii) Jotham
      - (1) Became king at 25 after his father became a leper.
      - (2) Built cities, towers, castles, the upper gate to the temple.
      - (3) First appearance of the Syrian league: Rezin and Pekah
    - iii) Ahaz
      - (1) Became king at 20. Reigned 16y.
      - (2) Adopted pagan worship. Closed the temple.
      - (3) Made an alliance with Assyria.
      - (4) Set up an altar in the temple patterned after the altar in Damascus.
    - iv) Hezekiah
      - (1) Reigned 25 years
      - (2) Devoted to Yahweh
      - (3) Reopened the temple, reinstated the Passover, removed idols from the land.
      - (4) Resisted the Assyrian invasion
      - (5) Received the Babylonian envoys and showed them all his treasures.
  - b) Contemporary prophets
    - i) Amos in Israel: universal justice, the coming day of the LORD
    - ii) Hosea in Israel: Israel's unfaithfulness and God's redeeming love.
    - iii) Micah in Judah: judgment and forgiveness, the LORD as Judge and Shepherd-King

### 3) Structure

#### a) Historical

- i) 1-5 Introduction
- ii) 6 Call
- iii) 7-37 The Assyrian period
- iv) 38-39 Transition to the Babylonian period
- v) 40-66 The Babylonian period

#### b) Tests of National Faith

##### i) 7 Attack of Pekah and Rezin on Ahaz.

(1) Isa 7:1 In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah the king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not yet mount an attack against it.

(2) Isaiah prophesied deliverance and called for faith. Ahaz trusted in an alliance with Assyria.

##### ii) 36 Attack by Assyria on Hezekiah.

(1) Isa 36:1 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.

(2) Isaiah prophesied deliverance. Hezekiah trusted in God and the Assyrian army was destroyed by divine intervention.

##### iii) 39 Envoys from Babylon. Hezekiah welcomed the envoys and showed all Judah's treasures.

(1) Isa 39:1 At that time Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered.

(2) Isaiah prophesied the coming exile of Judah to Babylon, but also that one day the exile would be over.

#### c) Thematic

##### i) 1-37 The book of the King: Who rules history?

##### ii) 38-55 The book of the Servant: How will God redeem His people from captivity?

##### iii) 56-66 The book of the Conqueror: How will God fulfill His promises for His people?

#### 4) Application

- a) The single-author view asserts that Isaiah prophesied accurately about people and events in the future.
  - i) If this is true, what does it tell us about his God?
    - (1) He is omniscient: He knows the past, present, future.
      - (a) Isa 46:8-10 "Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, (9) remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, (10) declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'
        - (i) Declaring the end from the beginning.
    - (2) He is sovereign: He will accomplish His purpose.
      - (a) Isa 46:8-10 "Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, (9) remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, (10) declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'
        - (i) My counsel shall stand. In spite of opposition.
        - (ii) I will accomplish all my purpose.
    - (3) He is a God of revelation: He chooses to reveal His purpose and His acts.
      - (a) Isa 44:8 Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any."
        - (i) told you from of old...declared it.
        - (ii) We are not to fear.
        - (iii) We can be God's witnesses.
      - (b) Isa 42:5-9 Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: (6) "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, (7) to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. (8) I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. (9) Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them."
        - (i) I now declare. Revelation
        - (ii) the former things. Israel's history under the Mosaic law.
        - (iii) new things: the gospel of grace
          1. I have called you. Speaking to the Messiah.
          2. a covenant for the people. The new covenant in His blood.
          3. open the eyes of the blind. Regeneration.
          4. bring out the prisoners. Redemption

- (4) He is a trustworthy God: We can depend on His word.
  - (a) Isa 9:6-7 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (7) Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.
    - (i) a child is born. The promised Messiah.
    - (ii) on the throne of David. Fulfilling the promise to David that His throne would endure forever.
- ii) How does this affect us?
  - (1) Awe
  - (2) Security
- iii) How can I apply these truths in my life?
  - (1) Omniscient. I know that God is not surprised by what is happening.
  - (2) Sovereign. In all circumstances, I trust that God is accomplishing His purpose, and that He has arranged good works for me to participate with Him.
  - (3) Revelation. In His word, He has revealed exactly what I need to know.
  - (4) Trustworthy. I can trust in His word completely.

- b) During Isaiah's lifetime, Judah dealt with two world powers (Assyria and Babylon), and experienced three major crises. Speaking as the prophet of the LORD, Isaiah's message was always, "Trust in the LORD."
- i) What does this tell us about his God?
- (1) He is the Lord of history. Events do not control God. Rather He moves the affairs of men so that His purpose is accomplished. This is true regardless of what nation is dominant at the time, or what event is taking place.
  - (2) He uses means to accomplish His purpose.
  - (3) He holds people morally accountable. He blesses those who fear Him, and brings judgment on those who deny Him.
  - (4) Isa 10:5-12 Isaiah's explanation of history
    - (a) Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger; the staff in their hands is my fury! (6) Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. (7) But he does not so intend, and his heart does not so think; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few; (8) for he says: "Are not my commanders all kings? (9) Is not Calno like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad? Is not Samaria like Damascus? (10) As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols, whose carved images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria, (11) shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols as I have done to Samaria and her images?" (12) When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the boastful look in his eyes.
      - (i) the rod of my anger. Assyria is God's instrument to punish His people.
      - (ii) but he does not so intend. Assyria is moved by their own imperial arrogance.
      - (iii) when the Lord has finished all his work. Assyria's actions are under God's control. They can go no further than He allows. When their work was done, the Assyrian army was destroyed and the Assyrian king sent back to die in his country.
      - (iv) he will punish. God will judge Assyria for their actions.
- ii) How do these truths affect us?
- iii) How can I apply these truths in my life?
- (1) The Lord of history. All the affairs of my life are ordered by my Father.
  - (2) Means. All of the things, people, and institutions in my life are tools in my Father's hand to accomplish His purpose. Thus they can be received with praise and thanksgiving.
  - (3) Moral accountability. What I do matters to God. It is important that I fear Him and acknowledge Him in all my ways.



## **References**

Scripture quotations are from The ESV Bible® (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publications. Used by permission, all rights reserved.

Motyer, Alec, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary in Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, Intersity Press, 1999

Stevenson, Peter, *A Commentary on Isaiah*, BJU Press, 2003

Young, Edward, *The Book of Isaiah*, Eerdmans, 1972