

## Comfort for the People of God

### *The Story of the World Part 21*

Isaiah 40-66; Coast Community Church Pastor's Class; Earl Miles; 5-27-18

#### Writer

- Isaiah means 'Yahweh is Salvation.'
- Prophet to Judah from about 740 to 681 BC (1:1)
- Prophets functioned as a divine voice for warning and encouragement and accountability for the kings and priests and people.
- Lived in Jerusalem (7:3)
- Husband and father (7:3; 8:3, 18)
- Tradition says he was sawn in two under Manasseh (see Hebrews 11:37).
- He is the author of the whole book (John 12:38-41).

#### Setting

*Setting for chapters 1-39:* Isaiah's own times in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BC and the rising threat of Assyria.

*Setting for chapters 40-55:* audience is the Jewish exiles in Babylon in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

*Setting for chapters 56-66:* audience is the returned exiles and future generations.

#### Genre

The book of Isaiah is in the genre of prophecy which includes both forthtelling (proclamation) and foretelling (prediction). Foretelling often has a figurative element because of the word being given through visions. Much of Isaiah is written in poetic form with some apocalyptic (24-27).

#### Outline

It does not have a narrative line but is a collection of individual compositions – moving from bad news to good news and back again.

- I. Coming Judgment with Exile and Mercy (1-39)
- II. Encouragement to the Exiles in Babylon (40-55)
- III. Encouragement for the Returned Exiles and Future Generations (56-66)

#### Purpose

Isaiah answers the question: *What about God's promises of land to Abraham and a kingdom to David in light of the exile to Babylon?*

#### Key Passages

- **1:1-2:5** This passage is a microcosm of the book. Isaiah records the idolatry of Israel and God's coming judgment along with His promised mercy to a remnant.
- **6:1-13** The central theme is God himself and especially, the holiness and mercy of God.
- **7:1-16** Isaiah records one historical crisis under Ahaz who trusted in Assyria instead of God (2 Kings 16:5-9).

- **37:21-38** Isaiah records a second historical crisis under Hezekiah who trusted in God initially against Assyria but reached out to Babylon (39:1-8).
- **40:1-11** Isaiah predicts the coming of John the Baptist and the Messiah, Jesus.
- **44:9-20** The foolishness of manmade idols is vividly portrayed.
- **52:13-53:12** Isaiah predicts the suffering and death of Christ.
- **65:17-25** Isaiah predicts the new heaven and new earth.

**Themes\*:**

1. God is concerned about the heart, not simply outward religion. (1:10-17; 58:1-12; 66:1-4)
2. God is at work to form a people for Himself from all the nations (2:2-4; 19:19-25; 25:6-9; 56:3-8; 66:18-23) who will enjoy Him and a new world forever (14:1-2; 41:8-16; 43:3-7; 45:14-17; 49:19-26; 60:1-22).
3. God hates pride. (2:10-17; 10:33-34; 13:11; 16:6; 23:9; 28:1-4)
4. God will destroy man's foolish idols. (2:20-21; 19:1; 31:6-7; 44:9-20; 46:1-7)
5. God will rightfully judge Israel but He will save a remnant for the triumph of His grace. (1:9; 6:1-12:6; 35:1-10; 40:1-2; 49:13-16; 51:3; 54:7-8; 55:12-13)
6. God does judge unrepentant people by giving them over to deafness and blindness. (6:9-10; 28:11-13; 29:9-14; 42:18-25)
7. The promised Messiah is the only hope, pictured as the promised Davidic king (4:2; 7:14; 9:2-7; 11:1-10), the servant of the LORD (42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12), the anointed preacher of the gospel (61:1-3), and the victor over all evil (63:1-6).
8. God uses all things – creation, history, and even sin – for His glory. (10:5-19; 13:1-27:13; 36:1-39:8; 40:12-26; 44:24-45:13)
9. In light of God's sovereignty, man's duty is to turn to God and trust in Him alone. (7:9; 10:20; 12:2; 26:3-4; 28:12, 16; 30:15-18; 31:1; 32:17-18; 36:1-37:38; 40:31; 42:17; 50:10; 55:1-7; 57:13, 15; 66:2)
10. We are prone, when feeling abandoned by God (40:27; 49:14; 51:12-13), to put our trust in people and things of the world instead (7:1-8:22; 28:14-22; 30:1-17; 31:1-3; 39:1-8).
11. God will display His glory for His name's sake and His cause. (4:2-6; 11:10; 35:1-2; 40:3-5; 52:10; 59:19; 60:1-3; 66:18)
12. God tells us what is going to happen before it does so we will know that He is in control. (41:1-4, 21-29; 44:6-8; 44:24-45:13; 46:8-11; 48:3-11)
13. Looking at God's past faithfulness and looking forward to God's promised blessings, move us to pray and obey now. (56:1-2; 62:1-64:12)
14. Nothing is more to be feared than the wrath of God. (5:25; 9:12, 17, 19, 21; 10:4-6; 13:9, 13; 30:27; 34:2; 59:18; 63:1-6; 66:15-16, 24)

\*(based on info in the ESV Study Bible)