
Isaiah

JUDGMENT. HOPE. GLORY.

Overview & Outline

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF ISAIAH *

Isaiah is one of the 5 "major prophets" grouped together in the Christian Old Testament. The others are Jeremiah and Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel. They are not called Major Prophets because they are more important but because they are longer than the Minor Prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi).

The book of Isaiah is found near the middle of the Bible, and is sometimes called "The Bible in miniature" because it contains 66 chapters, paralleling the Bible's 66 books. Additionally, Isaiah contains two overarching themes. The first thirty-nine chapters consist mostly of God's strong pronouncements of judgment on the nations and can be compared with the 39 books of the Old Testament. Twenty-seven chapters, beginning with Chapter 40, consist mostly of messages of salvation available to those who believe in the promise of Messiah, and they share this theme with the 27 books of the New Testament. Jewish rabbis call Isaiah 40-66 "The Book of Consolation" because of its emphasis on deliverance and restoration. Warren Wiersbe says, "As you study Isaiah and discover God's prophetic plan for the nations of the world, don't miss his emphasis on the personal message of God's forgiveness. 'Though your sins be like crimson, they shall be as wool' (1:18). 'I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, like a cloud, your sins' (44:22, NKJV). 'I, even I, am He, who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins' (43:25, NKJV)" (p. 18).

In the midst of the overwhelming warnings of judgment found in Chapters 1-39, the student needs to be prayerfully alert for the messages of grace and hope that are there. Failure to do so can introduce or perpetuate the falsehood that the God of the Old Testament is different from the God of the New Testament.

Isaiah is also often called, "The evangelistic prophet." His book is frequently referred to as "the fifth gospel," or "the Gospel according to Isaiah." Ray Stedman says, "Woven throughout the book is the ever-growing revelation of God's plan of salvation (Isaiah literally means, "The salvation of Jehovah") seen in the picture of One to come: the Messiah, the servant of God. At first, the image of Messiah is dim and shadowy, but gradually it grows brighter and clearer until, in Isaiah 52 and 53, the figure of Christ steps right off the page..." (p 313). J. Alec Motyer states that Isaiah meant for his own disciples and the church to understand that "They on their part are the people of the word of God, called to patient obedience even though they fail, called to persist through opposition, threat and ceaseless odds. Guided by Isaiah, contemporaries looked forward to the exile, return and, at any moment beyond the exile, the medium-term and ultimate Messianism the prophet taught. Our position as still the people of the word of God and still taught by Isaiah is significantly different and significantly the same. In essence, Isaiah's book needs only simple adjustments to fit into our time-line. We stand precisely on 56:1, looking back to the work of the Servant (now fulfilled in the Person, life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus) and looking forward to the coming of the Anointed Conqueror." (p 33).

Isaiah in the New Testament

Sixty-one passages from the book of Isaiah are quoted 85 times in the New Testament. Only nine of the 27 books of the New Testament have no quote from Isaiah. Isaiah's fourth "Servant Song" (Isaiah 52:13-53:12) is quoted or alluded to nearly 40 times in the New Testament.

Isaiah is also called "the Romans of the Old Testament." Warren Wiersbe says, "I have a feeling that the Book of Isaiah was a favorite book of the Apostle Paul. He quotes from it or alludes to it at least 80 times in his epistles

and in at least three of his recorded messages (Acts 13:22-23, 34, 47; 17:24-29; 28:26-28). This interest in Isaiah may stem from the fact that Jesus quoted Isaiah 42:7 and 16 when He spoke to Paul on the Damascus Road (Acts 26:16-18). When Jesus encouraged Paul during his ministry in Corinth (Acts 18:9-10), He referred to Isaiah 41:10 and 43:5. Paul's call to evangelize the Gentiles was confirmed by Isaiah 49:6. Like the prophet Isaiah, Paul saw the vastness of God's plan for both Jews and Gentiles; and like Isaiah, Paul magnified Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Five times in his letters Paul refers to Isaiah 53" (pp 17-18).

Finally, Isaiah has also been called the "Shakespeare of the Bible" because of his mastery of the language, his rich and vast vocabulary, and his poetic skill. He incorporates both prose and poetry into his writings, which contain sarcasm, metaphor, personification, and many other skillful literary forms.

Considerations for your Study of Isaiah

Look for contrasts throughout Isaiah; for example, Sin and Grace, Judgment and Redemption, apostasy and a believing remnant, prophecy and historical fulfillment.

Isaiah may at times seem disjointed because the train of thought changes repeatedly. This is probably because Isaiah is a collection of warnings and prophecies made over a long period of time according to the leading of the Holy Spirit. In its introduction, the ESV Study Bible says, "The most obvious feature of the book of Isaiah is its massiveness. Its sheer length generates an immense scope of genres and themes..." Stick with it, and you will be blessed as God reveals Himself to you through this important prophecy.

Brief Background on the Prophet Isaiah

Isaiah was born into an influential upper class family. His name means, "The LORD (Jehovah, Yahweh) is salvation." He lived and ministered in Judah, which, by that time, had been reduced in size by the military activities of Assyria. His contemporaries were Amos, Hosea and Micah. His prophetic ministry began the year King Uzziah died (Isaiah 6:1) and spanned the reigns of three more kings, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah (Isaiah 1:1). (See Timeline)

SOME GENERAL GUIDELINES REGARDING PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION

1. Some prophecies deal with both near- and far-view events (Cf. Isaiah 7:14).
2. Some prophecies are conditional (Cf. Isaiah 58:13,14). They will not be fulfilled if the condition is not met.
3. Some prophecies have been fulfilled while others have not been fulfilled yet, and sometimes both can be found within the same sentence. (Cf. Isaiah 61:1-2 with Luke 4:18-19)
4. Some prophecies have a "double reference" (Cf. Isaiah 14:12-15). This means the prophecy can apply to more than one person/situation.
5. A difference of opinion exists regarding whether many prophecies should be taken literally or figuratively. For example, does the prophecy of a national re-gathering of the Jews in Israel apply to physical descendants of Abraham or to the church, Abraham's spiritual offspring? Those who interpret prophecy literally note that those fulfilled so far are consistently literal.

THEME, PURPOSE & SURVEY

THEME AND PURPOSE¹

The basic theme of this book is found in Isaiah's name: *salvation* is of the Lord. The word "salvation" appears twenty-six times in Isaiah but only seven times in all the other prophets combined. Chapters 1-39 portray man's great need for salvation and chapters 40-66 reveal God's great provision of salvation. Salvation is of God, not man, and He is seen as the supreme Ruler, the sovereign Lord of history, and the only Savior.

Isaiah solemnly warned Judah of approaching judgment because of moral depravity, political corruption, social injustice, and especially spiritual idolatry. Because the nation would not turn away from its sinful practice, Isaiah announced the ultimate overthrow of Judah. Nevertheless, God would remain faithful to His covenant by preserving a godly remnant and promising salvation and deliverance through the coming Messiah. The Savior will come out of Judah and accomplish the twin work of redemption and restoration. The Gentiles will come to his Light and universal blessing will finally come.

SURVEY OF ISAIAH

The "gospel according to Isaiah" has three major sections: prophecies of condemnation (1-35); historical parenthesis (36-39); and prophecies of comfort (40-66).

Prophecies of Condemnation (1-35): Isaiah's first message of condemnation is aimed at his own countrymen in Judah (1-12). Chapter 1 is a capsulized message of the entire book. Judah is riddled with moral and spiritual disease; the people are neglecting God as they bow to ritualism and selfishness. But Yahweh graciously invites them to repent and to return to him because this is their only hope of avoiding judgment. Isaiah's call to proclaim God's message is found in chapter 6, and this is followed by the book of Immanuel (7-12). These chapters repeatedly refer to the Messiah (see 7:14; 8:14; 9:2, 6-7; 11:1-2) and anticipate the blessing of His future reign.

The prophet moves from local to regional judgment as he proclaims a series of miracles against the surrounding nations (13-23). The 11 nations are Babylon, Syria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus (Syria), Ethiopia, Babylon (again), Edom, Arabia, Jerusalem (Judah), Tyre. Isaiah's little Apocalypse (24-27) the picture universal tribulation followed by the blessings of the kingdom. Chapters 28-33 pronounce six woes on Israel and Judah for specific sins. Isaiah's prophetic condemnation closes with a general picture of international devastation that will precede universal blessing (34-35).

Historical Parenthesis (36-39): This historical parenthesis looks back to the Assyrian invasion of Judah in 701 BC and anticipates the coming Babylonian invasion of Judah. Judah escapes captivity by Assyria (36-37; 2 Kings 18-19), but they will not escape from the hands of Babylon (38-39; 2 Kings 20). God answers King Hezekiah's prayers and delivers Judah from Assyrian destruction by Sennacherib. Hezekiah also turns to the Lord in his illness and is granted a 15 year extension of his life. But he foolishly shows all his treasures to the Babylonian messengers, and Isaiah tells him that the Babylonians will one day carry his treasure and descendants to their land.

Prophecies of Comfort (40-66): Having pronounced Judah's condemnation, Isaiah comforts them with God's promises of hope and restoration. The basis for this hope is the sovereignty and majesty of God (40-48). Of the 216 verses in these nine chapters, 115 speak

¹ From *Talk Through the Bible* by Kenneth Boa & Bruce Wilkinson

of God's greatness and power. The Creator is contrasted with idols, the creations of men. His sovereign character is Judah's future restoration. Babylon will indeed carry them off; but Babylon will finally be judged and destroyed, and God's people will be released from captivity.

Chapters 49-57 concentrate on the coming Messiah who will be their Savior and Suffering Servant. This rejected but exalted One will pay for their iniquities and usher in a kingdom of peace and righteousness throughout the earth. All who acknowledge their sin and trust in him will be delivered (58-66). In that day Jerusalem will be rebuilt, Israel's borders will be enlarged, in the Messiah will rain in Zion. God's people will confess their sins in His enemies will be judged. Peace, prosperity, and justice will prevail, and God will make all things new.

Outline of Isaiah

CONDENSED OUTLINE¹

- **Prophecies of Condemnation (1-35)**
 - Prophecies Against Judah (1-12)
 - Prophecies Against Other Nations (13-23)
 - Prophecies of the Day of the Lord (24-27)
 - Prophecies of Judgment and Blessing (28-35)
- **The Historical Parenthesis (36-39)**
 - Hezekiah's Salvation from Assyria (36-37)
 - Hezekiah's Salvation from Sickness (38)
 - Hezekiah's Sin (39)
- **Prophecies of Comfort (40-66)**
 - Prophecies of Israel's Deliverance (40-48)
 - Prophecies of Israel's Deliverer (49-57)
 - Prophecies of Israel's Glorious Future (58-66)

EXPANDED OUTLINE

PART ONE: PROPHECIES OF CONDEMNATION (1:1-35:10)

- **Prophecies Against Judah (1-12)**
 - The Judgment of Judah, 1:1-31
 - The Day of the Lord, 2:1-4:6
 - The Parable of the Vineyard, 5:1-30
 - The Commission of Isaiah, 6:1-13
 - The Destruction of Israel by Assyria, 7:1-10:4
 - Sign of Immanuel, 7:1-25
 - Sign of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, 8:1-22
 - Prophecy of the Messiah's Birth, 9:1-7
 - Judgment on Ephraim, 9:8-10:4
 - The Destruction of Assyria by God, 10:5-12:6
 - Destruction of Assyria, 10:5-19
 - Remnant of Israel, 10:5-19
 - Restoration of the Messiah's Kingdom, 11:1-16
 - Thanksgiving in the Messiah's Kingdom, 12:1-6
- **Prophecies Against Other Nations (13-23)**
 - Prophecies Against Babylon, 12:1-14:23
 - Prophecies Against Assyria, 12:24-27
 - Prophecies Against Philistia, 14:28-32
 - Prophecies Against Moab, 15:1-16:14
 - Prophecies Against Damascus and Samaria, 17:1-14
 - Prophecies Against Ethiopia, 18:1-7
 - Prophecies Against Egypt, 19:1-20:6
 - Prophecies Against Babylon, 21:1-10
 - Prophecies Against Dumah (Edom), 21:11-12
 - Prophecies Against Arabia, 21:13-17

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- Prophecies Against Jerusalem, 22:1-25
- Prophecies Against Tyre, 23:1-18
- **Prophecies of the Day of the Lord (24-27)**
 - Judgments of the Tribulation, 24:1-23
 - Triumphs of the Kingdom, 25:1-27:13
 - Israel's Praise for Kingdom Blessings, 25:1-12
 - Israel's Kingdom Song, 26:1-21
 - Israel Blossoms in the Kingdom, 27:1-13
- **Prophecies of Judgment and Blessing (28-35)**
 - Woe to Ephraim, 28:1-29
 - Woe to Ariel (Jerusalem), 29:1-24
 - Woe to Egyptian Alliance, 30:1-31:9
 - Behold the Coming King, 32:1-20
 - Woe to the Spoiler of Jerusalem (Assyria), 33:1-24
 - Woe to the Nations, 34:1-17
 - Behold the Coming Kingdom, 35:1-10

PART TWO: HISTORICAL PARENTHESIS (36-39)

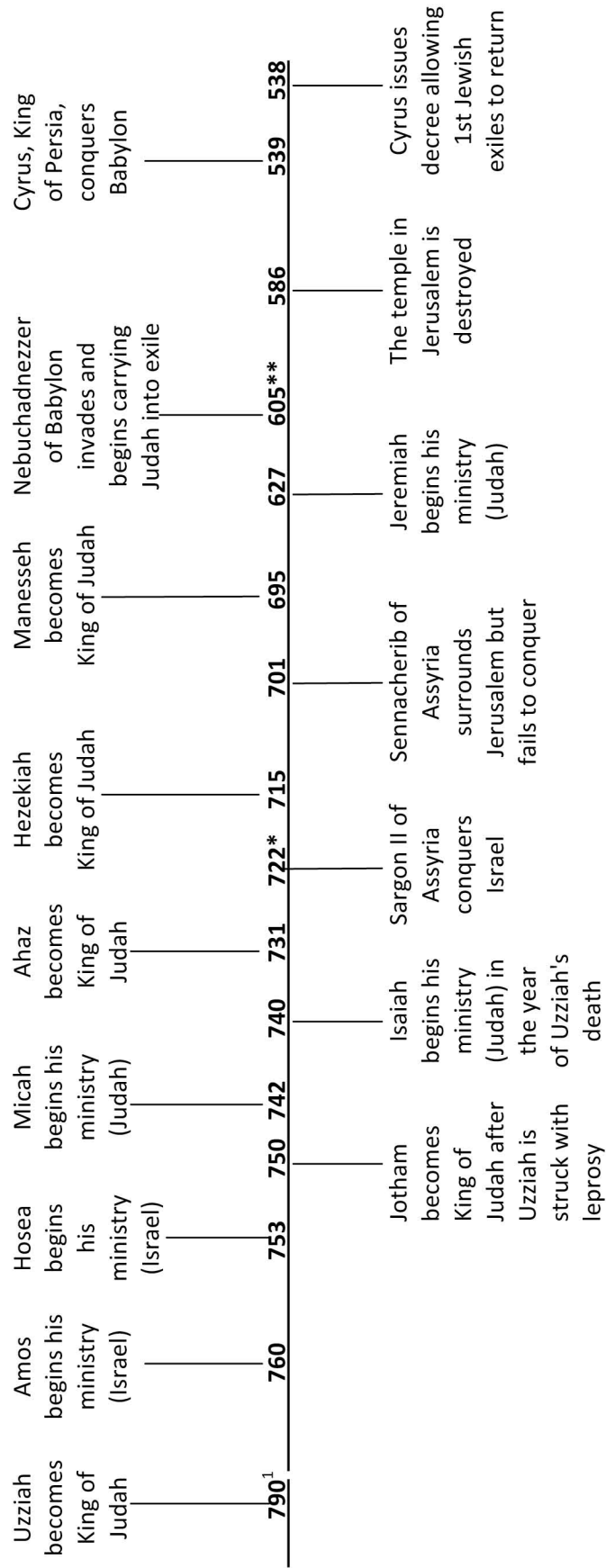
- **Hezekiah's Salvation from Assyria (36-37)**
 - Assyria Challenges God, 36:1-22
 - God Destroys Assyria, 37:1-38
- **Hezekiah's Salvation from Sickness (38)**
- **Hezekiah's Sin (39)**

PART THREE: PROPHECIES OF COMFORT (40-66)

- **The Prophecies of Israel's Deliverance (40-48)**
 - Comfort Because of Israel's Deliverance, 40:1-11
 - Comfort Because of God's Character, 40:12-13
 - Comfort Because of God's Greatness, 41:1-29
 - Comfort Because of God's Servant, 42:1-25
 - Comfort Because of Israel's Restoration, 43:1-44:28
 - Comfort Because of God's Use of Cyrus, 45:1-25
 - Comfort Because of Babylon's Destruction, 46:1-48:22
 - Destruction of Babylon's Idols, 46:1-13
 - Destruction of Babylon, 47:1-15
 - Declaration of Judah's Chastening, 48:1-22
- **Prophecy of Israel's Deliverer (49-57)**
 - The Messiah's Mission, 49:1-26
 - The Messiah's Obedience, 50:1-11
 - The Messiah's Encouragement to Israel, 51:1-52:12
 - The Messiah's Atonement, 52:13-53:12
 - The Messiah's Promise of Israel's Restoration, 54:1-17
 - The Messiah's Invitation to the World, 55:1-56:8
 - The Messiah's Rebuke of the Wicked, 56:9-57:21
- **The Prophecies of Israel's Glorious Future (58-66)**

- Blessings of True Worship (58:1-14)
- Sins of Israel, 59:1-21
- Glory of Israel in the Kingdom, 60:1-22
- Advents of the Messiah, 61:1-11
- Future of Jerusalem, 62:1-12
- Vengeance of God, 63:1-6
- Prayer of the Remnant, 63:7-64:12
- The Lord's Answer to the Remnant, 65:1-16
- Glorious Commission of History, 65:17-66:24

TIMELINE OF ISAIAH



¹ All dates are BC

* The ten tribes are carried off into captivity and completely assimilated into the new culture.

** Most of the people of Judah are carried off into captivity. A remnant returns after Cyrus, King of Persia, conquers Babylon.

The Kingdom of Israel

The Great Sea (Mediterranean sea)

Regions and Tribes:

- DAN**
- NAPHTALI**
- ZEBULUN**
- ISSACHAR**
- MANASSEH**
- EPHRAIM**
- BENJAMIN**
- JUDAH**
- SIMEON**
- REUBEN**
- GAD**

Major Cities and Towns:

- Sidon
- Zarephath
- Tyre
- Kanah
- Cabul
- Hazor
- Kedesh
- Ashtaroah
- Aphek
- Edrei
- Ramoth-gilead
- Mahanaim
- Succoth
- Penuel
- Jazer
- Rabbath-ammon
- Heshbon
- Medeba
- Aroer
- En-gedi
- Hebron
- Bethlehem
- Jerusalem
- Gezer
- Beth-horon
- Bethel
- Shiloh
- Shechem
- Mt. Ebal
- Mt. Gerizim
- Joppa
- Libnah
- Beth-Shemesh
- Lachish
- Gerar
- Ziklag
- Beer-Sheba
- Hormah
- Rehoboth

Geographical Features:

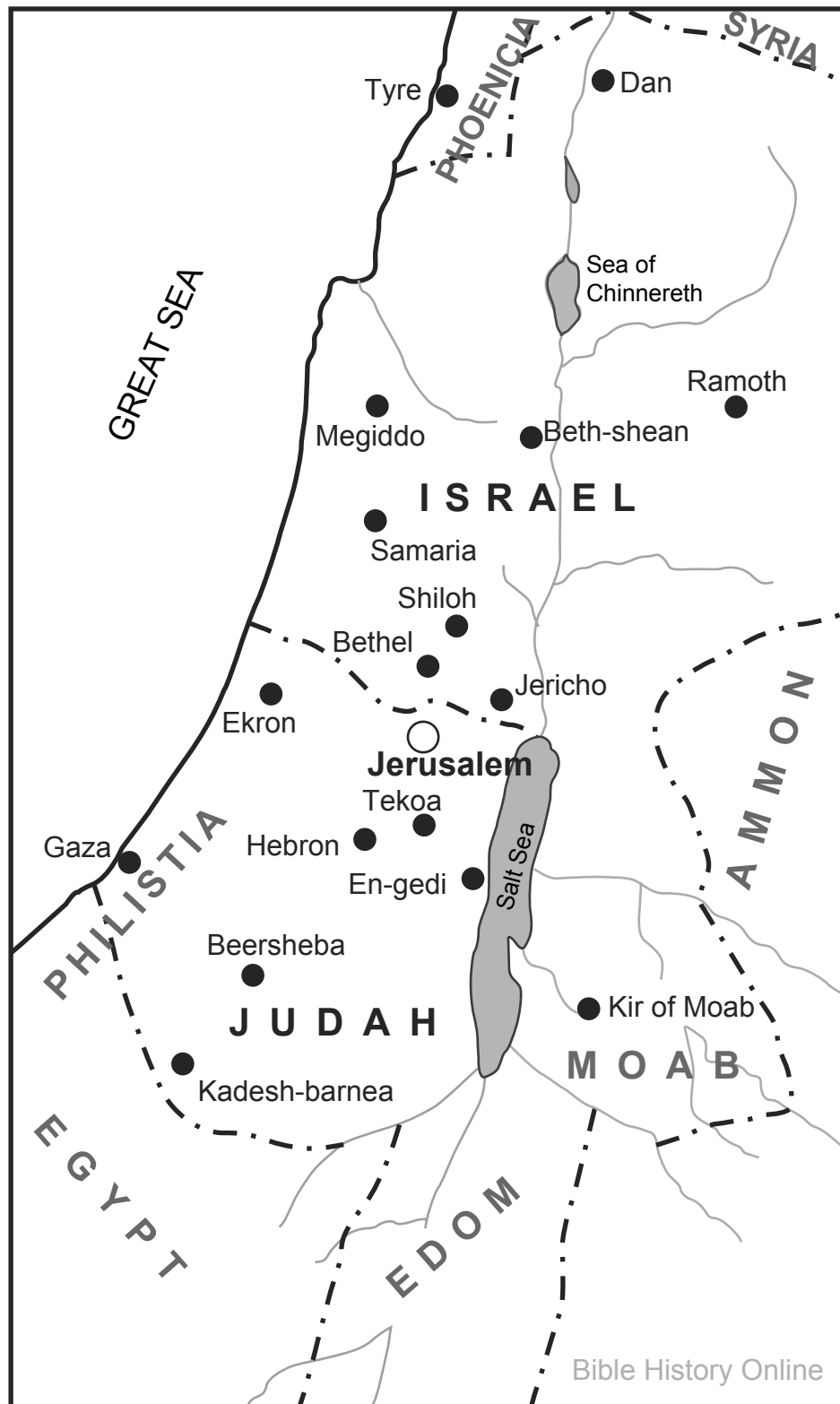
- Jordan River
- Sea of Galilee
- Dead Sea
- River of Egypt
- Wilderness of Zin
- Philistines
- Cherethites
- Kenites
- Bashan
- AMMON
- MOAB
- EDOM

Other Labels:

- Sidonians (Phoenicians)
- Mt. Lebanon
- Leontes R.
- Yarmuk R.
- Jabbok
- Mt. Nebo
- Caleb

Bible History Online

MAP OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL DURING THE PERIOD OF THE KINGS



ISAIAH

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

Following are prophecies of Messiah in Isaiah, most of which are have been fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ and some are still to be fulfilled.

Messianic Prophecies in Isaiah

	Prophecy in Isaiah Messiah will:	Fulfillment		Prophecy in Isaiah Messiah will:	Fulfillment
1	Be born of a virgin 7:14	Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-35	9	Be announced by a messenger 40:3-5	Mark 1:2-3; Luke 3:4-6; John 1:23
2	Be a stumbling stone to Israel 8:14	1 Peter 2:8	10	Be gentle to the weak 40:11; 42:3	Matthew 9:36; 12:15-22; Hebrews 4:15;
3	Bring light and joy to Israel beginning in Galilee 9:1-2	Matthew 4:12-16	11	Make a new covenant with Israel 42:6; 49:8-9; 55:3,4	Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 8:6-13
4	Reign over the world 9:6; 66:23	Philippians 2:9-11 (Not yet fulfilled)	12	Be called before birth to be a light to the Gentiles 42:6-7; 49:1, 5-6	Romans 15:12, Luke 2:25-32; Acts 13:47, 26:23
5	Come from David's family and reign on David's throne 9:7; 11:1-5	Luke 1:69-70; Acts 2:29-33	13	Restore Israel spiritually 49:5-6; 59:20-21	Romans 11:25-27 (Not yet fulfilled)
6	Be descended from Jesse, the father of David 11:1, 10	Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-32	14	Be worshipped by Gentiles 49:7; 53:1,3	Romans 15:21
7	Be anointed by the Holy Spirit 11:2, 42:1	Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22	15	Be rejected by Israel 49:7; 53:1, 3	Matthew 27:20-25; Mark 15:8-14; Luke 23:18-23; John 1:11, 19:14,15
8	Judge in righteousness, justice and faithfulness 11:3-5; 42:1,4	Not yet fulfilled	16	Be beaten, mocked, and spat upon Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67; 27:26-31

ISAIAH

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

17	Make the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame leap and the tongue shout. Heal & restore Isaiah 35:5-6	Numerous including Matthew 11:3-6; John 11:47 Matthew 4:23	23	Voluntarily suffer 50:6; 53:7-9	Acts 8:32-33; 1 Peter 2:22-25
18	Be exalted 52:13; 53:12	Philippians 2:9-11 Not yet fulfilled completely	24	Be buried with the rich Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:59,60; Mark 15:46; Luke 23:52,53; John 19:38-42
19	Be heard and not believed Isaiah 53:1	John 12:37,38	25	Triumph over Death 53:10	1 Corinthians 15
20	Take on Himself the sins of the world 53:4-6, 10-11	Matthew 8:17	26	Be crucified with criminals Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27; Luke 22:37; 23:32,33
31	Be silent in front of his accusers Isaiah 53:7	Matthew 26:62,63 and 27:12-14	27	Be our intercessor Isaiah 59:16	Hebrews 9:15
22	Live a sinless life Isaiah 53:9	John 8:29; 1 Peter 2:22	28	Accomplish two missions Isaiah 61:1-3	First: Luke 4:16-21 Second: Not yet fulfilled

STUDY OUTLINE

In this study, we will see Messianic portraits of:

- I. The King (Isaiah 1-39)
- II. The Suffering Servant (Isaiah 40-57)
- III. The Anointed Conqueror (Isaiah 58-66)