

Isaiah

- Dates mentioned in Isaiah
 - Dates are approximate. The estimates of different authors vary by as much as 20 years. Using the dates below, the fall of the Northern Kingdom was in 721 BC. The siege of Jerusalem that ended with the loss of the Assyrian army was in 714 BC.
 - (1:1) In the days of
 - Uzziah (810 – 758 BC, 2 Chronicles 26)
 - Jotham (758 – 742 BC, 2 Kings 15:32 – 38, 2 Chronicles 27)
 - Ahaz (742 – 727 BC, 2 Kings 16, 2 Chronicles 28)
 - Hezekiah (727 – 698 BC).
 - (6:1) In the year Uzziah died...Isaiah was commissioned as a prophet.
 - (7:1) In the days of Ahaz...But no mention is made of when in his reign this happened.
 - (14:28) In the year King Ahaz died...
 - (20:1) In the year Tartan came to Ashdod...
 - (36:1) In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah...Assyrian invasion
 - (38:1 – 6) Hezekiah told he had 15 more years.
 - (39:1) After Hezekiah recovered, so a bit less than 15 years before his death.
 - So, the book of Isaiah appears to be essentially chronological.
- **Chapter 1**
 - Summary: A listing of the evils of Judah. The king was not singled out (all the named kings were “good” albeit with a few problems. However, the royal family was chided (23). In 24 – 26, God threatened to purge the nation and restore it to its original system of judges. Only a remnant will remain (9).
 - Memorable lines
 - (2) I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against Me.
 - (3) The ox knows its master and the donkey its master’s crib. Israel does not know, My people do not consider.
 - (18) Come now, and let us reason together...Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow.
 - New Testament references
 - Isaiah 1:9 (Romans 9:29) Paul cited this prophecy historically to remind Jewish Christians that they were the few survivors. (Also Isaiah 10:22 – 23 cited in Romans 9:27 – 28)
- **Chapter 2**
 - Summary: A description of the “latter days,” when all nations come to Zion in peace to learn of the God of Jacob, and idols are forsaken.
 - Memorable lines
 - (3) For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
 - (4) They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.
 - (19) They shall go into the holes of the rocks and into the caves of the earth, from the terror of the Lord and the glory of His majesty when He arises to shake the earth mightily.

Isaiah

- **Chapter 3**
 - Summary: Although Uzziah greatly prospered the nation and built many defensive structures, God predicts a time of childish leaders who will destroy the country, as happened after the time of Hezekiah. After Hezekiah, only one good king (Josiah, 31 years) arose among them over 110 years and 6 kings.
 - Memorable lines
 - (6 – 7) “You have clothing; you be our ruler and let these ruins be under your power.” “I cannot cure your ills for in my house is neither food nor clothing; do not make me ruler of the people.”
 - (10 – 11) Say to the righteous that it will be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doing. Woe to the wicked. It shall be ill with them, for the reward of their hands will be given them.
- **Chapter 4**
 - Summary: More about the downfall of Israel. But, The Branch of the Lord comes and restores the remnant.
 - Memorable lines
 - (1) And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man saying, “We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by your name.”
 - (2 – 6) Description of the Messianic kingdom.
- **Chapter 5**
 - Summary: More about the downfall of Israel. A parable of a vineyard planted by God (Israel) which, despite the best of care, produced only wild grapes not suited for anything. So, God decided to destroy the vineyard. Captivity is described in the past tense (13), so Isaiah’s reference is likely to the Northern Kingdom. However, the people of Judah should have seen that they were due for similar problems (7).
 - Memorable lines
 - (21) Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight.
- **Chapter 6**
 - Summary: Isaiah’s vision through which he became a prophet. Verses 9 – 10 are heavy sarcasm. Although Isaiah would not see it, verses 11 – 13 describe the Captivity and the Restoration periods.
 - Memorable lines
 - (5) Woe is me for I am undone because 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.
 - (8) “Whom shall I send and who will go for us?” “Here am I! Send me!”
 - New Testament references
 - Isaiah 6:9 – 10 (Matthew 13:14 – 15, Mark 4:12, Luke 8:10, John 12:40, Acts 28:26 – 27) Jesus quoted Isaiah in answer to the question of why He spoke in parables (historical references brought to the present). Jesus noted that those who wished to open their eyes would understand. The others would not. John noted that many of the rulers believed. Paul used the same passage to explain why only some of the Jews in Rome accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

Isaiah

- **Chapter 7**
 - Summary: Ahaz was the least of the kings who reigned during the time of Isaiah, worshipping various pagan gods. As a result, he lost a war to Israel and Syria, but was able to retain Jerusalem. So, he appealed to the king of Assyria to help, sending much treasure and even going to Nineveh himself. Although the king of Assyria took the gifts, he did not send soldiers to help Ahaz. So, Ahaz was dismayed, assuming that Jerusalem and the rest of Judah would fall shortly to the combined forces of Israel and Syria. God sent Isaiah to assure Ahaz that Israel would be conquered within 65 years (7:8). Further, the kings of Israel and Syria will be dead before a child can be conceived, born, and weaned. However, Assyria would come and do much harm (7:17). Egypt will also invade (7:18). This all occurred in the days of Hezekiah, but Judah survived due to the intervention of God.
 - New Testament references
 - Isaiah 7:14 (Matthew 1:23) No ancient rabbis understood this to be Messianic. Although this chapter does not predict the virgin birth of Jesus in a way that the reader might expect the event to occur, the gospels declare that Jesus was born of a virgin clearly in Matthew 1:18, 1:20, and Luke 1:34. Matthew 1:23 cites this verse. Matthew 1:22 says, “All this was done that it might be fulfilled...” “Fulfilled” means that an historical reference is being used to illustrate a point. Just like in the days of Ahaz when everyone was certain that the nation was about to be wiped out, in the time of the birth of Jesus, the Jews had the same feeling. But, like in the days of Ahaz, within a few years, the adversaries would fail and the kingdom of God would arise.
- **Chapter 8**
 - Summary: Isaiah’s son will be used as an illustration of the coming calamity on Judah. Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (Speed the spoil, hasten the booty) illustrated that before the child could learn to speak, Israel and Syria would fall to Assyria. Further, Assyria will plunder Judah, but without a prediction of total destruction. Isaiah (and, through his prophecies, the faithful of Judah) was warned not to be taken in by the conspiracy theories of the day.
 - Memorable lines:
 - (6) Waters of Shiloah: the pool of Siloam, representing the monarchy of David.
 - New Testament references
 - Isaiah 8:12 (1 Peter 3:14) Isaiah predicted that the majority of the Jews would not follow the Messiah. Peter cites it as an example of his own time in which the faithful were a tiny minority among many competing theories.
 - Isaiah 8:14 (1 Peter 2:8) Peter drew a parallel between the leadership of the Jews in Isaiah’s time and his own, that the ways of God would trip up the leadership to their own destruction.
 - Isaiah 8:17 – 18 (Hebrews 2:13) The Hebrew writer noted that the faithful would be called His children, not servants like the angels.
- **Chapter 9**
 - Summary: At that time, the northwestern part of the Northern Kingdom was repeatedly overrun and plundered by several invaders. Isaiah predicts that even those people, who probably had espoused calf worship, would be included in the everlasting kingdom of the Messiah who would re-establish the throne of David.

Isaiah

- Memorable lines:
 - (6 – 7) These verses are often quoted, especially at Christmastime. Although they obviously describe the Messiah, no New Testament author cited them.
 - (9:12, 17, 21, 10:4) “For all His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still.” Isaiah repeats this refrain to remind the people that the devastation is real, but God still wants to rescue them if they will simply return to Him.
- New Testament references
 - Isaiah 9:1 – 2 (Matthew 4:15 – 16) Some rabbis understood verse 6 of this poem to be Messianic. The “forever” in verse 7 strongly indicates the Messianic kingdom. The portion from 9:1 – 5 seems to be the introduction to verses 6 and 7. Matthew calls it a fulfillment, meaning an historical example. Perhaps the first part of the poem described the Northern Kingdom in Isaiah’s day, whereas Matthew was applying it to the Galilee of his day. The Messiah was to come to all Israel, not just Judea or Jerusalem. So, Jesus being raised in Nazareth was a symbolic gesture by God.
- **Chapter 10**
 - Summary: Isaiah finishes the description of the devastation of Israel and Judah in 10:1 – 4, then switches to a description of the invader which God says He has sent. However, that invader will be punished for its arrogance (12), not recognizing the true power behind them (15). They would have known if they had remembered Jonah. Israel is comforted with the promise that a faithful remnant would return (20 – 23). The Assyrians will not totally destroy them (26).
 - Memorable lines:
 - (26) Like the slaughter of Midian at the Rock of Oreb. See Judges 7:24 – 25. This was accomplished in 2 Kings 19:35.
 - New Testament references
 - Isaiah 10:22 – 23 (Romans 9:27 – 28) Paul cited this prophecy historically to remind Jewish Christians that they were the few survivors.
- **Chapter 11**
 - Summary: Characterization of the Messiah, His character, and His kingdom. Gentiles will be included. The descriptions of peace (6 – 9) apply to the Messianic kingdom (not of this world), not the kingdoms of the world in general. Another remnant will be gathered (11 – 12). Presumably, the first remnant was the Restoration under Ezra. The second would be under the Messiah when the Diaspora were gathered along with the faithful among the Gentiles (gathering His elect from the four winds – Matthew 24:31 *et al*).
 - Memorable lines
 - (1 – 5) The description of the Messiah as a ruler would be highly unusual for an earthly king, but aptly describes the nature of this everlasting King.
 - (13) The animosity between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms will be healed.
 - (14 – 16) Israel’s traditional enemies, representing the world, will be overcome.
 - New Testament references
 - Isaiah 11:10 (Romans 15:12) Most rabbis agreed that Isaiah was predicting that the Messiah would rule over the Gentiles as well as Israel.

Isaiah

- **Chapter 12**
 - Summary: The close of the promises of destruction and recovery, of two remnants, one physical and one spiritual (the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah and the gathering of the elect from the four corners of the earth). In that day, the remnant will acknowledge that God was just in causing their captivity, and will praise God for bringing them back.
 - Memorable lines
 - (1) “O Lord, I will praise You; though you were angry with me, Your anger is turned away and You comfort me.”
 - (6) “Cry out and shout, O inhabitants of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst.”
- **Chapter 13**
 - Summary: Against Babylon. In the days of Isaiah, Babylon broke free from Assyrian domination due to the loss of the Assyrian expeditionary force at Jerusalem. But the conquest of Assyria by Babylon took nearly a century, long after Isaiah. Yet, God predicted through Isaiah the fall of Babylon to the Medes (17), who were not yet an organized force in the world.
 - Memorable lines
 - (6) “Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand.” Note that the “day of the Lord” was used to describe the fall of Babylon in 536 BC. (9) “Behold, the day of the Lord comes.” An easy way to determine if the “day of the Lord” is the “end or just another catastrophe orchestrated by God, check if anyone survives on earth. In this case, Medes and Arabs are named as survivors.
 - (20) “It [Babylon] will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation; nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, nor will shepherds make their sheepfolds there.”
- **Chapter 14**
 - Summary:
 - (1 – 23) Against Babylon. The promise of restoration is repeated. In addition, the Israelites will possess some neighboring peoples as their slaves, which happened in the fifth and sixth centuries, BC, until the time of Alexander the Great.
 - (24 – 27) Against Assyria, a threat to Israel that was contemporary with Isaiah. God promised to break Assyria in “the Land,” meaning Israel.
 - (28 – 32) Against Philistia. Judah had conquered Philistia. When King Ahaz died, the Philistines rejoiced, thinking that they would then be able to throw off that yoke. Isaiah predicted that they would be totally destroyed. 2 Kings 18:8 records that Hezekiah subdued the Philistines. The Babylonians finished the destruction.
 - Memorable lines
 - (12) This verse contains the only mention of Lucifer. Due to a lack of reading the context, many have taught that this was a name for Satan. But note that Isaiah clearly refers to Babylon. In verse 13, Lucifer desires to ascend to heaven and be exalted above God. It does not say he did it. Nebuchadnezzar had this goal, as did some after him.

Isaiah

- **Chapter 15**
 - Summary: Against Moab. Moab had broken away from domination by Judah and had become prosperous. Isaiah predicted its destruction, which would happen in the time of the Babylonians. The nation had been there more than a thousand years.
 - Memorable lines: (5) “My heart will cry out for Moab.” God was not pleased to do this, but rather sympathized.
- **Chapter 16**
 - Summary: Against Moab. Part of God’s wrath against Moab had to do with the way Moab dealt with escaping Israelites during the Babylonian invasion. Instead of protecting their distant cousins, they collected a bounty from the Babylonians by turning them in. Jeremiah made this same complaint.
 - Memorable lines: (4) “Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab.”
- **Chapter 17**
 - Summary: Against Damascus. In the time of Isaiah, Syria went from being a threat to Israel, to devastation at the hands of the Assyrians. This destruction is linked to the fate of the Northern Kingdom (verse 3). Syria and Israel were allied against Judah in the time of Ahaz. The latter portion of the chapter describes lean years for Judah, but there always seems to be a little bit left (gleanings). A resurgence of allegiance to God (and rejection of idols) will also happen. The invaders of Israel will be chased away by God.
 - Memorable lines: (14) “Then behold, at eventide, trouble! And before the morning, he is no more. This is the portion of those who plunder us, and the lot of those who rob us.”
- **Chapter 18**
 - Summary: Ethiopia (Cush) would be vitally interested in the advances made by the Assyrian army, so ambassadors would be sent out to gather information (2). At this time, Ethiopia controlled Egypt. The Ethiopians were known as great warriors, and also for being tall and smooth-skinned (unlike the heavily bearded Israelites). Ethiopia would suffer some loss (5 – 6) but would survive. Presumably because they later witnessed the fallen Assyrian army at Jerusalem, they would bring a present to the Lord of hosts (7).
- **Chapter 19**
 - Summary: Against Egypt. Egypt came under the control of Ethiopia (4) due to its civil war (2) and lack of wise counsel to the Pharaoh (3). As a result, Egypt would endure a period of hard times. God has a hand in causing this shift in power, causing God to intervene in the affairs of both Assyria and Egypt for the sake of Judah (21 - 22). Jewish cities would spring up in Egypt (18). These perhaps became the beginning of a sizable Jewish presence in Egypt which enlarged upon the invasion by the Babylonians and that captivity. The Maccabees solicited the Egyptian Jews to come back to Israel in the 160’s BC.
- **Chapter 20**
 - Summary: Isaiah was told to walk naked and barefoot for three years as a sign that Egypt and Ethiopia would be conquered by Assyria and taken captive (3 – 4). The Assyrians were not afraid that the Israelites would attack them from the rear, but were afraid that Egypt and Ethiopia would do so if Assyria took the time for the sieges of all the fortified cities of Judah without first subduing Egypt. There was nothing on

Isaiah

the other side of Egypt to fear. This conquest of Egypt and Ethiopia would cause much dismay in Judah because Judah was depending on military support from Egypt and Ethiopia (5 – 6).

- **Chapter 21**

- Summary:

- (1 – 10). Against “the Wilderness of the Sea,” which is Babylon. Babylon threw off the yoke of Assyria late in Isaiah’s career. Babylon’s climb to dominance took almost another century, long after Isaiah’s death. Further, Isaiah predicted that Babylon would fall to the Medes and Elamites (Persians), almost two centuries in advance. Elam and Media were not even countries at the time, but only regions containing independent city-states.
- (11 – 12). Against Edom (Seir, the mountain with which Edom identified). Dumah is a location in northern Edom and also is the word for silence. Only the sleepless ask the watchman how long until day. The watchman answers that the dawn is soon, but will be followed by another night. Edom was conquered by the Assyrians, then the Babylonians, after which they were no more (silent).
- (13 – 17). Against Arabia. “Forest” is somewhat figurative, although the region did contain significant scrub trees in that era. The Arabs, known for their hospitality, would be hosting those who fled invasion. Verse 16 places this in Isaiah’s time, so their guests would be fleeing the Assyrians. Within a year, the Arabs would be devastated by the Assyrians, their army reduced greatly. Historically, the last two kings of Assyria styled themselves kings of Arabia, too, on their monuments.

- New Testament reference

- (9). “Babylon is fallen, is fallen.” John used this image in Revelation 14:3 to describe the fall of Jerusalem. John could not be referring to the literal Babylon, since it was destroyed and predicted to never be rebuilt (Isaiah 13:20). The section in Revelation concerning this destruction included the line “in which our Lord was crucified” (Revelation 11:8).

- **Chapter 22**

- Summary: Against Jerusalem (the Valley of Vision). See verse 8. Isaiah laments that the people of Jerusalem have the wrong attitude, rejoicing over small respites in the advances of the Assyrians when they should be lamenting their plundering (when Hezekiah gave all the precious metals to the king of Assyria). Elam and Kia, at that time vassals of Assyria, are mentioned as providing troops. Judah looked to their armaments in the House of the Forest (built by David as the armory), but such was futile. They had seen much damage to the city in the war so far, yet had not turned back to God. Sheena and Eliakim (verses 15 – 23) were both in the group of main advisors to Hezekiah (2 Kings 18 – 19). In that place, no conflict is given between them, but here, Eliakim replaced Sheena as chief financial minister due to Sheena’s arrogance.

- New Testament references

- Isaiah 22:13 (1 Corinthians 15:32) Often attributed to the Epicureans (Epicurus died in 270 BC), this line comes from Isaiah who was describing those who celebrated brief victories while ignoring long term devastation. Paul used it

Isaiah

concerning those who deny the concept of resurrection and therefore commit all resources to living in the present.

- Isaiah 22:22 (Revelation 3:7) John used this line to describe Jesus, who, like Eliakim, would be entrusted with all the valuables of the kingdom.

- **Chapter 23**

- Summary: Against Tyre. The Phoenician empire stretched across the Mediterranean (here, particularly Tarshish, probably Gibraltar, and Cyprus). They had establish several major trading seaport fortifications. Egypt (5) would lament due to the disruption in the trade routes, since Egypt relied on Phoenician ships to market their grain. The Babylonians were predicted to destroy them first (13), which they did, although the Phoenicians withdrew to an island in the harbor or Tyre and survived, albeit much weakened. After about 70 years (15), the Phoenicians began a resurgence. But, the Greeks invaded. Alexander built a causeway from the mainland to the island using the rubble of the city and totally destroyed it. They never recovered.

- **Chapter 24**

- Summary: This begins a new section, mostly dismal, about the tribulations of that day. Further, these descriptions may be applied to the world in general (17). This punishment extends to spiritual beings as well as humans (21). However, a faithful remnant will remain (13 – 16). The Lord of Hosts shall reign (23).

- **Chapter 25**

- Summary: Continuing from chapter 24, the attention shifts to glorifying God (3 – 4). The vision expands to “all people” (6) and “swallow up death forever” (8). The remnant will rejoice (9). Moab, in particular, will be destroyed, which is a digression from the universal theme.

- **Chapter 26**

- Summary: Continuing from chapters 24 and 25, a positive message about “in that [future] day.” (1). The righteous nation (2) will have perfect peace (3). The poor will tread on lofty cities (6). Yet, the wicked will not understand (10 – 11). The righteous have accomplished nothing, others wait on the Lord (18). The dead shall rise (19).

- **Chapter 27**

- Summary: Continuing “in that day.” The three reptiles (1) are likely Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon, as in chapters 19 – 23. See verses 12. In this period of history, Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt afflicted Israel, including the Captivity. God promises that Israel would be summoned back to the Promised Land from those places (13) as the three adversaries are crushed.

- **Chapter 28**

- Summary: .
 - (1 – 4). The leaders of the Northern Kingdom are characterized as drunkards. Drunkenness has been a problem in ever age. So, this reference certainly has reference to the drinking habits of the day. In a figurative sense, the leaders were drunk with the power they perceived in the various alliances they formed with Syria, Egypt, and Assyria, all of which were broken by the other party. The various countries who deceived them are characterized as tempests, storms, and floods.
 - (5 – 6). But a remnant will be rescued.

Isaiah

- (7 – 13). Judah also has problems, again characterized as drunkenness. The priests and prophets will be blinded by their reliance on treaties. “Whom will he teach knowledge?” (9). Sarcastically, Isaiah suggests that only small children will be unaffected by the prevailing sentiment to be successfully taught, albeit simplistically.
- (14 – 29). The leaders of Judah are addressed specifically, urging them to give up their confidence in politics. He reminds them that God is their cornerstone (16). The reality of their destruction is repeated, followed by a reminder of how God has come to their rescue in the past (21, Mount Perazim when David overcame the Philistines, and Gibson when God made the day longer to enable Joshua to complete his victory). The chapter closes with an agricultural illustration that different crops require different methods. God uses the methods appropriate to them as a crop, sometimes more or less violent, but always productive.
- Memorable lines:
 - (10 – 13). Precept upon precept, line up line. The people of the day ridiculed Isaiah’s messages as simplistic, like the lessons taught to school children. They leaned heavily on philosophy and political science instead.
 - (15). The position of the leadership in Judah was characterized as a compact with death with lies as a refuge and falsehood as a hiding place.
- New Testament References:
 - Isaiah 28:11 (1 Corinthians 14:21) Isaiah’s point was that the message of God would be hammered home by the “stammering tongues” of the Assyrian language. Several portions of this poem were considered Messianic. Paul compared Isaiah’s application to the miraculously learned languages (tongues) of the first century. The words of God were not always brought in Hebrew. Rather, “tongues” illustrated that the message of God can come in any language. Just as the Assyrian language brought the unbelievers of Samaria to their senses, so the multitude of languages used to spread the gospel would be a sign to unbelievers in the first century, that the Creator related to all, not just one ethnic group.
 - Isaiah 28:16. Although this is not the verse cited in eight places in the New Testament, it is similar to Psalm 118:22. The precious cornerstone laid in Zion would be the Davidic monarchy, culminating in the Messiah.
- **Chapter 29**
 - Summary:
 - (1 – 8). Ariel is “the Lion of God,” meaning Jerusalem, David’s capitol. Jerusalem will be besieged and the people would be brought very low. But, destruction is not mentioned, so this corresponds to the siege of the Assyrians. But, the foes, who were from several nations around the Empire, will instead be turned to dust or chaff, which came to pass in the deaths of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night. The Assyrians will be like the hungry who dream of food, yet awake hungry, or the thirsty who dream of water yet awake still thirsty.
 - (9 – 10). Judah will be “blind” because the prophets will be removed.

Isaiah

- (13 – 21). Judah will say, “Who sees us?...”He did not make us”...”He has no understanding.” But, when the Messiah comes (19), the poor will understand. The leaders will not.
- (22 – 24). In the time of the Messiah (23), Jacob will see the outcome of the promise to him, and many will fear the Lord, and many who had erred and complained would come to understand.
- Memorable lines:
 - (11 – 12). Isaiah’s vision would be like a sealed book (unable to be opened) or as a book to the illiterate (not able to read it)
 - (16). Although not quoted, the figure of speech is very similar to Paul’s argument in Romans 9:20 – 24. The difference is that Isaiah was saying that their elevation of their own thoughts and philosophies had the Creator-creation hierarchy turned around. Paul’s point was that they should not question the potter’s choices.
- New Testament references:
 - Isaiah 29:10 (Romans 11:8) Just as in Isaiah’s time, only a small fraction of Israel would understand.
 - Isaiah 29:13 (Matthew 15:8 – 9) Jesus noted that the problems of Isaiah’s time were still present.
 - Isaiah 29:14 (1 Corinthians 1:19) Paul quotes Isaiah to show that mechanical religion makes one blind to spiritual things.
- **Chapter 30**
 - Summary:
 - (1 – 5) Against the diplomatic mission undertaken by Israel to Egypt to help them defend against the Assyrians. The Egyptians are ashamed to be associated with the Judean ambassadors.
 - (6 – 11) Against Egypt. The beasts of the South are hippos. The Egyptians will help in vain, which is what happened when they finally came against the Assyrians, just after the 185,000 Assyrians died in one night. Verse 9 – 11 are a description of Israel directed to Egypt, perhaps to get the Egyptians to reconsider and not become allied with Judah.
 - (12 – 17) Because Judah persisted in ignoring God, preferring political alliances, Judah will be broken like pottery into small shards. They will flee battles against smaller foes.
 - (18 – 33) The Lord will wait that He may be gracious, which sounds like a variation of restoration. Several rabbis considered this to refer to the Messiah. Proper teaching will resume and understanding will return. Idols will be forsaken. Agricultural prosperity will return. Assyria will be beaten down (31). The Tophet in verse 33 is where Molech was, so the figure of speech is that Assyria will be burned up like the child-sacrifices to Molech.
- **Chapter 31**
 - Summary: More against entangling alliances with Egypt, including a line from a Glen Yarbrough song in 1966 (1). Isaiah probably was recalling Psalm 20:7 written by David about 300 years earlier. God promised to make the alliance come to naught, yet He also promised to protect Jerusalem (5). God appealed to Israel to throw away

Isaiah

their idols and return. He predicted that the Assyrians would fall by a sword not of man (8).

- **Chapter 32**
 - Summary: The chapter begins and ends with the righteous king, but the middle (5 – 14) describes the impending destruction because of the foolishness of the people. But, the end shifts back to the kingdom of the righteous, including a prediction of “the Spirit being poured out upon us from on high.” (15) Note the reference to “forever” in verse 17. See also Isaiah 44:3, Joel 2:28, Ezekiel 39:29.
- **Chapter 33**
 - Summary: A reminder that what goes around, comes around (1). So Isaiah appeals, “Lord, be gracious to us.” (2 – 5) Isaiah summarizes the devastation to come (7 – 9), but says that, after that, “Now I [God} will arise.” (10 – 13) The sinners of Zion will be afraid, but the righteous will be protected (14 – 16). Isaiah predicts forgiveness (17 – 24) in a time that sounds Messianic (20), although no rabbis thought so.
- **Chapter 34**
 - Summary: All the world is called to witness (1 – 4) the destruction of Edom (5 – 17). God is specific about the prediction (16) that Edom will never rise again (10). Historically, the Babylonians finished Edom, killing most but taking some captive. When the Persians released the captives of Assyria and Babylon, the Edomites did not return. Either they were too intermarried to desire to return, or they simply failed to make a success of their return. Malachi used that result as proof that God still loved Israel (Malachi 1:2 – 3, quoted by Paul in Romans 9:13). The land of the Edomites was taken over by a nomadic tribe, the Nabateans, who built new cities in a few places so they could control the trade routes through the area. However, the land remained desolate and has never recovered to this day.
- **Chapter 35**
 - Summary: No heading separates this chapter from the previous, but the topic clearly changes from the devastation of Edom to the glorious future of Zion. “Everlasting” appears in verse 10.
 - Memorable lines:
 - (8) It shall be called the Highway of Holiness...Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray.
 - (10) The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy...
 - New Testament references:
 - Isaiah 35:3 (Hebrews 12:12) Although Paul does not mention where he got the image, the ideas are identical.
 - Isaiah 35:5 (Matthew 11:5, Luke 7:22) When sending proof to John the Baptist, Jesus applied this prediction to Himself.
- **Chapter 36**
 - Summary:
 - This section is historical, written in prose, whereas the vast majority of the preceding has been poetry. A parallel may be found in 2 Chronicles 32 and 2 Kings 18:13 – 19:37.
 - (1 – 2) The Assyrians besieged Jerusalem last, having already taken all the other fortified cities. The aqueduct by which they stood probably was the one built by

Isaiah

Solomon to bring in water from a hill to the south. The pool was outside the city wall.

- (3 – 10) The ambassadors of the two armies met first. The Assyrians cautioned Hezekiah not to depend on the Egyptians, who had failed before. They teased the Israelites that Hezekiah had destroyed the very gods that might have saved them. They promised 2000 horses as a bonus for surrender. Finally, they claimed to be doing the bidding of the God of Israel, which was true.
- (11 – 20) The Judean ambassadors asked that the Assyrians speak Aramaic rather than Hebrew so the Judeans on the wall could not understand the negotiations. So, the Assyrians intentionally spoke loudly in Hebrew so the people could hear, and essentially repeated the previous offer, with the addition of a promise of exile, but to a place similar to their own, and being taken peaceably rather than as other nations had been taken, in cruelty and devastation.
- (21 – 22) Hezekiah had ordered his ambassadors not to negotiate, but only to gather information, which they did.

- **Chapter 37**

- Summary: The rest of the story. Only the message from God is in poetic format. The rest is prose.
 - (1 – 5) The ambassadors reported to Hezekiah. Hezekiah went to the Temple to pray. He also sent the ambassadors to Isaiah to ask him to appeal to God concerning this matter.
 - (6 – 7) Isaiah replied that they should not be afraid, that the Assyrian king would hear a rumor and return to his own land and die violently there.
 - (8 – 13) The king of Assyria was diverted to Libnah, probably the one in the Sinai desert (Numbers 33:20 – 21) to meet the invading Ethiopians, since the one in Judah is only a few miles from Lachish. The king of Assyria sent a message to Hezekiah not to gain confidence from this brief respite from hostilities. He reminded Hezekiah that the gods of many nations had all failed to stop him.
 - (14 – 20) Hezekiah appealed to God by presenting the Assyrian letter in the Temple. Hezekiah suggested that the other gods had failed because they were not gods, so God should save them to prove that He was the one true God.
 - (21 – 35) God's response through Isaiah is directed at the king of Assyria: How dare you ridicule the Creator? So, the siege you have planned will last three years, then you will fail. You will not enter the city.
 - (36 – 38) The final prose paragraph briefly describes the loss of 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, the retreat of the Assyrian army, and the assassination of the king in his own palace by his sons.

- **Chapter 38**

- Summary: The story of Hezekiah being granted 15 more years of life. See also 2 Kings 20 and 2 Chronicles 32:24 – 26.
 - (1 – 5) Isaiah predicted that Hezekiah would die of his present illness. So, Hezekiah prayed for more time. God had Isaiah go back and rescind the previous prediction and instead guaranteed Hezekiah an additional 15 years.
 - (6) This illness happened during the Assyrian siege.

Isaiah

- (7 – 8) The sign to Hezekiah was that his sundial would run backwards 10 degrees.
- (9 – 20) Hezekiah wrote a poem about his experience with God. He reminded God that the dead can no longer praise Him. But the living can.
- (21 – 22) Isaiah instructed Hezekiah's attendants to put a fig poultice on the boil that threatened his life. It worked. Verse 22 is out of place, referring to the sign in (8).
- **Chapter 39**
 - Summary: After Assyria lost their main expeditionary force at Jerusalem, Babylon rebelled and began its campaign to conquer Assyria, which took about another century. They immediately sent ambassadors to Jerusalem, ostensibly to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery, but more likely to discover the methods used to defeat the Assyrians, plan for an alliance, then capture Judea. Hezekiah's vanity caused him to give those ambassadors a guided tour of all he had. Isaiah asked Hezekiah what he had done. Upon hearing the response, he predicted that Babylon would conquer Judah and deport many, including making eunuchs of much of the royal family who would then serve in the Babylonian court.
 - If the assumption is correct that Isaiah's prophecies are approximately chronological, Hezekiah had not been paying attention. Isaiah prophesied against Babylon in chapter 13, 14, 21, and 27.
 - (8) Not Hezekiah's finest moment.
- **Chapter 40**
 - Summary:
 - (1 – 2) Isaiah had already delivered predictions of Judah's future defeat by Babylon, along with Babylon's demise. So, the astute observer in that day would be looking forward to the Messianic kingdom. Most rabbis arrived at that conclusion.
 - (3 – 5) The glory of the Lord shall be revealed.
 - (6 – 26) The greatness of God.
 - (27 – 31) Cautions against self-deception plus encouragements to persevere.
 - Memorable lines:
 - (15) The nations are like a drop in a bucket (the origin of the modern euphemism).
 - (19 – 20) Slight sarcasm about idol-makers. "A carved image that will not totter."
 - (27) "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by God."
 - (30 – 31) Isaiah described those who hope in the Lord as those who never tire.
 - New Testament citations:
 - (3 – 4) (Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4 – 6, John 1:23) The rabbis expected the forerunner of the Messiah to fit this description. The gospel writers all applied this prophecy to John the Baptist.
 - (7 – 8) (1 Peter 1:24 – 25) Peter applied this Messianic poem to the gospel. James 1:10 – 11 used the same imagery without referencing Isaiah.
 - (13 – 14) (Romans 11:34, 1 Corinthians 2:16) In Romans, Paul used Isaiah's poem about the majesty of God to describe the "mystery," the plan of God.

Isaiah

Paul gave this a slightly different twist when he concluded in 1 Corinthians 2:16, that believers know the mind of God, in contrast to the best minds which the natural world has to offer, who cannot.

- **Chapter 41**

- Summary:

- (1) The coastlands usually refer to the many islands in the Aegean Sea, between Greece and Turkey.
- (2 – 7) Continuing the theme of the latter part of chapter 40, God telling the pagan nations in the Mediterranean that He had raised up the Assyrians. The idolatrous nations of the Mediterranean turned to their idols to encourage themselves.
- (8 – 16) God assured Israel that He still considered them His chosen people and would strengthen them.
- (17 – 20) Despite the present distress, God will provide.
- (21 – 24) God challenges Israel to present their case, that they know better than God.
- (25 – 29) God re-iterated that He has raised up Assyria, mostly because He could not find a righteous person in Israel to raise up.

- Memorable Line: (8) Abraham My friend. Jehoshaphat used the same line in a prayer in 2 Chronicles 20:7. James 2:23 referenced one of them.

- **Chapter 42**

- Summary:

- (1 – 13) The nature of the Messiah. (6) As a light to the Gentiles. (8) The former things have come to pass, and new things I declare. (10) Sing to the Lord a new song.
- (14 – 25) “I have held My peace a long time.” Disaster is on the horizon. God will exalt the Law, but the people will be plundered.

- New Testament Citations:

- (1 – 3) (Matthew 12:18 – 21) This Messianic poem was referenced by Matthew to explain why Jesus did not oppose the religious leaders with force, why He was gentle, and why His message was for Gentiles, too.
- (44), also 44:6 and 48:12, and maybe 41:4, (Revelation 1:17) Isaiah used the phrase, “I am the first and the last,” several times to describe God. In Revelation, Jesus applies it to Himself.

- **Chapter 43**

- Summary:

- (1 – 21) God assured Israel that they were redeemed, that they will be reassembled from afar. Significant numbers had left Palestine before the Assyrians came, more were captured and exiled, and the exile under the Babylonians had been predicted. So, God promised to call them back.
- (22 – 28) But, despite the promises, Israel has not turned back to God, so disaster will happen.
- (3) The Persians liberated the Israelites, but conquered the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and South Arabians.

- **Chapter 44**

- Summary:

Isaiah

- (1 – 2) Addressed to the whole nation. Jeshurun is a poetic name for the whole nation, parallel with Jacob.
- (3 – 8) God declares the prosperity of the future of Israel. Israel will have pride in its history and God.
- (9 – 20) The folly of idolatry.
- (21 – 28) Further predictions of the restored and redeemed Israel, including rebuilding of the cities. Cyrus, who was born about a century after this was written, and who did not become King of Persia until about 560 BC, is named specifically. Hence, in the 1800's several popular scholars decided that the portion of Isaiah after chapter 40 was written by another Isaiah who lived in the Restoration period. But, all ancient copies of Isaiah are continuous, having no break between sections. Isaiah predicted that Cyrus would issue the decree that Jerusalem be rebuilt, specifically mentioning the foundation of the Temple.
- **Chapter 45**
 - Summary:
 - (1 – 14) The message to Cyrus continues, which began in 44:26. God promised to help Cyrus subdue many nations, and validates the promise (and that God was responsible for Cyrus' success) by publishing his name before he was born (3 – 4), even though Cyrus had not known God. As a side point, note that the Persian Empire lasted about 2500 years, until the Shah went into exile in 1979. Cyrus has a choice: rains of righteousness (8) or woes of questioning (9 – 10). Cyrus will release the captives of previous empires and finance the rebuilding of Israel, all without compensation (13). However, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Arabia will become his vassals, who will see the hand of God in their conquest (14)
 - (15 – 25) Israel praises God for their restoration (20). "all you ends of the earth" (22) implies a larger audience.
 - New Testament Reference: 45:23 (Romans 14:11) Paul cites Isaiah's point about Judgment as a reason not to judge how others choose to live for God.
- **Chapter 46**
 - Summary:
 - (1 – 7) Against idolatry, specifically Babylonians deities (Bel and Nebo). So, this would be from the time of the visit by the Babylonian ambassadors and afterwards. The Babylonians would retreat, their beasts of burden loaded down with their failed idols. God assured the Israelites that not only did He carry them as they were formed as a nation, but also would continue to do so, in contrast to the idols who cannot answer.
 - (8 – 13) Recall the history of God's involvement in Israel. Recall that God is not like those idols. "Calling a bird of prey from the east" likely refers to the Persians since Babylon is pictured as being defeated and Cyrus is in chapter 44 and 45.
 - Memorable lines:
 - (10) "Declaring the end from the beginning." Many cite this line to assert that God knows the future. Such a conclusion does not fit with the point being made, which is the God's counsel will stand and that He will do what He pleases. Rather, this asserts that God is not just reacting to the actions of

Isaiah

humans, but rather has a plan, similar to Colossians 1:16, Ephesians 1:4 – 5, Romans 8:29 – 30, *et al.* Isaiah used the same thought in 48:3.

- (13) “I bring My righteousness near; it shall not be far off; My salvation shall not delay. I will place salvation in Zion”

- **Chapter 47**

- Summary: Judgment on Babylon. At the time of this prediction, Babylon had only recently thrown off the yoke of Assyria and was fighting to take Assyrian territory. Isaiah predicts their fall after they achieve greatness and believe themselves to be invincible. God reminds the Babylonians why they were successful, because God was angry with Israel (6). But the Babylonians assumed they had done it themselves despite reminders all through the history of Babylon from Daniel.
- Memorable lines:
 - (9) “But these two things [widowhood and loss of children] shall come to you in a moment, in one day.” Babylon fell in one day when the Persians diverted the Euphrates around Babylon, then marching in on the paved riverbed (Daniel 5:30 – 31).

- **Chapter 48**

- Summary: God reminds Israel that, although they have been going through the motions, their allegiance to God has not been according to truth or righteousness. He knew they were an obstinate people from the beginning of the nation, so knew that they would do things like this. So, God told them about their distresses and their rescues in advance so they could not reasonably think their idols did them. However, for His own sake, God will defer His anger and not cut them off (compare to the Wilderness period). The Babylonians will not prevail (14 – 15), although previous prophecies have announced that Babylon will destroy them and take them into captivity. If Israel has only listened, they would have had “peace like a river” (18 – 19). Their release from Babylon will be like their release from the wilderness (20 – 21), perhaps implying that God needed to grow a new generation of faithful people.
- Memorable line:
 - (1) “...but not in truth or in righteousness...”
 - (8) “...were called a transgressor from the womb.” The subject is Israel, not every human individually.
 - (12) “I am the first and the I am also the last”
 - (22) “There is no peace for the wicked.”

- **Chapter 49**

- Summary: In response to Israel’s lament, “The Lord has forsaken me and my Lord has forgotten me,” (4, 14), God reminded Israel of their long history together and His promises. Further, people far away (1, 22, 26) will know that Israel is God’s chosen child. Due to the references to the inclusion of Gentiles (6), this was considered Messianic. Return from captivity and prosperity are promised.
- New Testament Citations:
 - 49:6 (Luke 2:42, Acts 13:47) The prophet Simeon applied Isaiah’s messianic words to the infant Jesus. Paul and Barnabas used the same quotation to remind Jews that Gentiles were included in the messianic kingdom.
 - 49:7 – 12 (2 Corinthians 6:2) Paul used this messianic poem to remind the Corinthian Christians that the gospel is a one-time offer and for all.

Isaiah

- **Chapter 50**

- The remainder of the book is, primarily, about the Messiah. Such information delivered seven centuries before the fact might have been confusing to those who tried to take individual messages from Isaiah and apply them without a context. However, Isaiah had previously announced, in chapters 13 – 16, 21, 27, and 46 – 49, the captivity of Judah in Babylon, the destruction of Babylon by the Medes and Elamites, and the rise of Persia who would release them (chapters 44 – 45). During that captivity, Daniel filled in the history of the five centuries before the Messiah, and Zechariah added additional details. So, no chronological misapplications were defensible, although many tried.
- Summary:
 - (1 – 3) God uses divorce and being sold into slavery as illustrations of the current state of the relationship between God and Judah. The certificate of divorce is in Deuteronomy 24:1. God’s answer to His rhetorical question is that Judah has separated itself from God through their sin. God’s second rhetorical question is, “Why has no one answered My call?” Followed by, “Do you think I am not able to rescue you?”
 - (4 – 11) Isaiah begins speaking as a messenger of God, declaring that his words are wisdom from God, intended to give comfort to the weary, although he himself will be abused by most of the hearers. But, he is confident that God will rescue him. His final condemnation of those who will not listen in, “You shall lie down in torment.” The fire and sparks in verse 11 could be a pagan ritual, or could represent the theology of idols and evil of that era.

- **Chapter 51**

- Summary: Encouragement to the faithful of Judah in the midst of Isaiah’s predictions of devastation. Remember the promise to Abraham (2). Remember how God destroyed Egypt (Rahab), the serpent (water monster). Remember the parting of the Red Sea (10, 15) and creation (13, 16). God’s righteousness will endure (6, 8). God laments that Judah has none to guide her (17 – 18).

- **Chapter 52**

- Summary: Continued encouragement to the faithful of Judah. (3) “You shall be redeemed without money.” Captive peoples or individual slaves often were ransomed from their slavery by relatives who avoided capture. 45:13 told Cyrus that he would restore them without payment. (7 – 8) More about the joys of the restoration. (11 – 12) The faithful are reminded to depart from the unruly, with a promise of being able to escape in peace. (13 – 15) Many ancient rabbis attributed this passage to the Messiah. The chapter appears to make a transition from speaking to the nation to speaking of the Messiah. The Messiah would achieve high station, but be uncommonly ugly, but at the same time have an impact of foreign rulers. Further, Gentile kings would be startled by the unexpected message. The fact that 13 – 15 refers to the Messiah is confirmed by 53:1 in which the Messiah is described only with a pronoun, implying that the subject of what went before supplies the details of who He is.
- New Testament citations:
 - 52:5 (Romans 2:24) Paul compares the Jews of his time with those of Isaiah’s. The name of God was blasphemed because of them because God caused them to

Isaiah

be carried into captivity because of their unbelief. In Paul's time, most Jews lived far from Israel (and could not keep the Law), and the country of Israel had been divided and was ruled by Gentiles. Their pride in being Jewish was misplaced. A similar line is in Ezekiel 36:22.

- 52:7 (Romans 10:15) Isaiah's beautiful messianic poems about the spread of the gospel are cited by Paul as a motivation to participate in evangelism. A similar statement may be found in Nahum 1:15.
- 52:11 (2 Corinthians 6:17) The same poem includes the lifestyle of the carriers of the gospel: Isaiah says that they leave the world as conquerors, not fugitives.
- 52:15 (Romans 15:21) Paul found inspiration in Isaiah's description of the spread of the gospel, that the message would be brought to those not expecting it.

• Chapter 53

- Summary: The chapter was generally accepted by ancient rabbis as describing the Messiah. (1) Similar to the call of Isaiah, 6:9 – 10. (2 – 3) Not at all handsome, as politicians have always found important. (4) describes Him as the One who takes away our emotional sickness and pain. (5 – 8) reveals His sacrificial nature. Note that His ability to heal us emotionally is mentioned before our redemption. (9) is an odd prediction, satisfied by Joseph of Arimathea. (10 – 12) The society valued descendants greatly, so the description emphasizes that He will have know His offspring and He will see prosperity.
- New Testament Citations:
 - 53:1 – 2 (John 12:38, Romans 10:16) John used this description of the Messiah to explain why Jesus was not widely accepted. Paul used the same thoughts to explain why only a fraction of Israel believed.
 - 53:4 (Matthew 8:17) This messianic description by Isaiah was applied to the healing Peter's mother-in-law (among others). Old Testament translators would have done well to use Matthew's inspired commentary.
 - 53:5, 9 (1 Peter 2:22 – 24) Peter implied that we carry the sins of others when we bear injustice well.
 - 53:7 – 8 (Acts 8:32-33) The Ethiopian asked Philip if the prophet spoke of himself or another. Philip began there are preached Jesus.
 - 53:12 (Luke 22:37) Just before departing for the Garden, Jesus applied this poem to Himself.

• Chapter 54

- Summary: The presentation shifts from describing the Messiah to how the hearer should respond to the Messiah.
 - (1) Again using the cultural importance of having children, even those considered cursed because of their lack of children would rejoice and have many "children."
 - (2 – 3) Enlarge your tent to accommodate all the kids.
 - (4 – 8) The ignominy of the past will fade as the new progeny abound. The widow will be redeemed as in Levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5 – 10). The period of destruction and captivity will be considered a moment in history by comparison to the Messianic kingdom.

Isaiah

- (9 – 10) The period of destruction and captivity may be compared to the Flood in which God swept away the (sinful) majority so as to protect the righteous. God promised not to destroy everything with a flood again, implying here that He will not destroy Israel by destruction and captivity again. The destruction of Jerusalem and the second temple in 70 AD was a wake-up call to the Jews of that day. They must have missed the kingdom upon which kindness would not depart.
- (11 – 17) A description of the Messianic kingdom. Since the early church had much violence done against them, these promises must be in the realm of spirits, not in the physical world. Faithful spirits will not be overcome and they will be spiritually rich.
- New Testament Citations:
 - 54:1 (Galatians 4:27) The chapter break is unfortunate. The result of chapter 53 is chapter 54. Paul quotes the result of Jesus “surrendering Himself to death” (53:12): the lowly would rejoice in the Kingdom. They would be the children of promise, like Isaac.
 - 54:13 (John 6:45) Jesus applied this song, which began in 52:13, to Himself, making the outrageous claim that those serious about God would come to Him.
- **Chapter 55**
 - Summary: The benefits of the Kingdom
 - (1 – 5) Obtain spiritual food in an everlasting covenant based on mercy (fixing the root cause of the problem). This message will go out to unknown nations, causing an influx of these unknown nations into the kingdom.
 - (6 – 7) A call to repentance so as to be prepared for this new kingdom. Receive mercy, and pardon.
 - (8 – 9) God’s thoughts are higher than man’s thoughts. The point: (1) trust that the promises will happen, (2) be confident despite being fuzzy on how it will work.
 - (10 – 13) The Word is likened to rain which promotes growth. The kingdom will be characterized with peace and joy and unexpected fruits.
- **Chapter 56**
 - Summary: The open-door policy of the kingdom, and the ignorance of the leadership of Israel
 - (1 – 8) The one who loves justice and doing what is right will be accepted. Some foreigners were excluded under the Law (Moabites and Ammonites “even to the tenth generation,” but Edomites and Egyptians only to the third generation. Exodus 23:3 – 8). The ancient rabbis broadened this ban to include all foreigners, which became a problem when Gentiles wanted to join themselves to local synagogues in Turkey, Greece, and Rome. Eunuchs were specifically excluded in Exodus 23:1, which is an interesting backdrop for the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26 – 40. But, all will be accepted in the eternal kingdom.
 - (9 – 12) The leadership, variously called watchmen or shepherds, are characterized as unintelligent, greedy, fond of drink, and certain that tomorrow will always be better.
 - New Testament citation:

Isaiah

- Isaiah 56:7 (Matthew 21:13, Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46) In the second “cleansing the Temple” scene, Jesus cited this line. Its context is that God will include all people, not just Jewish people, in His kingdom. The counterpoint, a robbers’ den, is from Jeremiah 7:11
- **Chapter 57**
 - Summary: Contrast of the self-proclaimed righteous versus those called righteous by God.
 - (1 – 2) The people of Isaiah’s day considered long life to be a mark of success and of God’s approval. Isaiah pointed out that when the righteous or merciful meet an untimely end, such is to their benefit, not their loss, since they do not need to deal with the corruption of earth any longer.
 - (3 – 10) God ridiculed the pursuit of the idolatry and entangling alliances despite their constant failures.
 - (11 – 21) God asked, rhetorically, if perhaps they had strayed because He had been silent for some time. He tells them to try letting their idols save them. God reminded them that He was looking for those with contrite hearts, that He would not be angry forever (based on the earlier predictions of Restoration after the Captivity).
 - New Testament similarities:
 - (19) Ephesians 2:17 uses the same line, although Paul did not specify that he was borrowing a line from Isaiah.
 - Familiar line:
 - (21) No peace for the wicked.
- **Chapter 58**
 - Summary: God told Isaiah to explain to Judah why they were having such a difficult time when, in their own eyes, they were obeying the Law and being appropriately hard on themselves with fasting. Note: not about the eternal kingdom or the time of the Messiah.
 - (1) God’s charge to Isaiah.
 - (2 – 3a) Isaiah sarcastically gives Judah’s lament that God was not acknowledging their dedication to the Law and their fasts.
 - (3b – 5) God reveals that they are using the fast to exploit their workers and slaves. In this period of Assyrian destruction, many had to sell themselves into slavery. The booty from the dead Assyrian soldiers would have gone to the owners, not the slaves.
 - (6 – 12) God tells for what He is really looking: a “fast” of wickedness that results in helping the downtrodden. If they do that, He will again draw near to them.
 - (13 – 14) If they will use the Sabbath to seek God rather than their own pleasure, all will go well.
- **Chapter 59**
 - Summary: More about the problems of Isaiah’s day. Despite Hezekiah being classed among the “good” kings, the wealthy of the population were taking advantage of the situation for their own benefit while at the same time complaining that God was not helping them as they thought He should.

Isaiah

- (1 – 8) Direct accusation about iniquity, lies, injustice, deceit, and taking advantage of the poor.
- (9 – 16a) Isaiah enumerates the sins of the people as though he were confessing for them.
- (16b – 21) God responds to this apparent repentance. There being no intercessor, God said that He would provide His own (16). The idea that a Redeemer will come to Zion is introduced, a Messianic image. The Jews had little information on how God would handle their sin, since they had nothing with which to pay their debt to justice. So, they had to trust that God would handle it, in this passage, through a Redeemer who would prevail for many generations (20 – 21).
- Memorable lines:
 - (1) Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy that He cannot hear.
 - (2) Your iniquities have separated you from your God.
- New Testament Citations:
 - 59:7 – 8 (Romans 3:15 – 17) This is another of Paul's list of descriptions of wicked people. The passages Paul cites do not imply that all people are this way, since there are innocent people in each passage, whom the wicked torment. Paul's point, based on the contexts, is that much wickedness is in the world, not that all people are desperately wicked.
 - 11:5, 52:7, 59:17 (Ephesians 6:14 – 17, 1 Thessalonians 5:8) Isaiah's beautiful messianic poems about the spread of the gospel are cited by Paul as a motivation to evangelism.
 - 59:20 – 21 (Romans 11:26) Paul cites this prophecy to remind the early Christians that God's plan was for the Gentiles to enter the Kingdom before the faithful of Israel would turn. Verse 27 cites Isaiah 27:9.
- **Chapter 60**
 - Summary: A hopeful description of the eternal (v 21) kingdom, in contrast to the devastation of Isaiah's day until the time of the Messiah.
 - (3) The Gentiles (who would be in deep darkness) will come to your light.
 - (5) The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you. This is partly literal (the large numbers imply significant assets), but more likely figurative (drawn by their glory – their parade of godly character traits). Notes: Ephah was a son of Midian; Sheba may be southern Arabia or East Africa; Nabaioth and Kedar were the first two sons of Ishmael.
 - (11) Leaving the gates open was a sign of peace.
 - (15) Their past devastation made other countries ridicule them. In the Messianic kingdom, they will be standards of excellence.
 - (19) Instead of the sun and moon, the Lord will be your everlasting light (see Revelation 21:23, 22:5).
- **Chapter 61**
 - Summary: A description of the future (after the devastations previously announced), all the way to the Messianic kingdom (v 8).
 - (3, 4, 7) The immediate audience is the nation of Judah in the time of Isaiah whose devastation will be reversed.

Isaiah

- (5) The theme of all nations coming in is repeated.
- (9) They are the posterity the Lord has blessed.
- (10 – 11) Joy, salvation, and righteousness will characterize this kingdom and be its drawing card.
- New Testament citations:
 - 61:1 – 2 (Luke 4:18 – 19) Jesus read this passage to those attending the synagogue in Nazareth and said it was fulfilled in Him. He was the culmination of a chapter that spanned seven centuries, from Isaiah to Jesus.
 - 61:6 (Revelation 1:6, 5:10) The idea that all Christians are priests was not a new thought with John or Peter (1 Peter 2:5, 9).
- **Chapter 62**
 - Summary: A continuation of the promise that the devastated Jerusalem will become a light to the world.
 - (1) God will not rest until Israel’s righteousness and salvation goes forth.
 - (2) Israel will be called by a new name (a new essential quality).
 - (4) No longer forsaken or desolate but a delight and “married.”
 - (5) The marriage illustration for God and His people (see Ephesians 5:21 – 33).
 - (8) In the past, surrounding nations often stole their crops and livestock.
 - (10) Make smooth the highway, as 40:3, Matthew 3:3 and parallels.
 - (11) Surely your salvation is coming.
- **Chapter 63**
 - Summary: A personification of Edom makes its case. Some translations capitalize pronouns in verses 1 – 6, as if God were speaking, but the speaker is clearly Edom. Historically, Edom had been an adversary throughout its existence. Aside from not permitting Israel to pass through its territory in the Wilderness period (Numbers 20:14 – 21), Edom aided the Philistines and Arabs against Judah (2 Chronicles 21:16 – 17, condemned by Obadiah), and the Egyptians (Joel 3:19), participating in the slave trade of Israelites captured by the Philistines (Amos 1:6, 11 – 12).
 - (1) Edom portray himself as speaking righteousness, mighty to save.
 - (3 – 6) Edom claims to have trodden the winepress of wrath alone, without assistance, thereby saving himself. See similar imagery in Revelation 14:10 concerning God and Babylon (Jerusalem).
 - (7) Edom “mentions” the kindness of God on Edom and on Israel.
 - (8 – 14) A review of God’s dealings with Israel as their Savior and Redeemer. But, they rebelled and “grieved His Holy Spirit” (see Ephesians 4:30), so He fought against them. “Then He remembered” Moses and the Wilderness.
 - (15 – 19) “Where are Your seal and Your strength, the yearning in your heart toward me?” Edom was a descendant of Abraham, so they claim the God of Abraham as their own. Idolatry in Edom is mentioned, but not universally, no worse than that found in Israel (2 Chronicles 25:). “Why have You made us stray?”
- **Chapter 64**
 - Summary: A plea to God to renew His protection of Judah (or all of Israel). Isaiah recalls their history of God’s miraculous protection of the past, acknowledges the iniquity of the present, and prays that the former relationship can be restored.

Isaiah

- New Testament citation: 64:4 (1 Corinthians 2:9) Isaiah's messianic song in which he prays for a rebuilding of the Temple more than 100 years before it was first destroyed was quoted by Paul to remind his readers that God's ways, in general, are unexpected. Only the first part of verse 9 is from Isaiah. The rest, as wrote Philip Doddridge, may be from an apocryphal book attributed to Elijah. However, the 1 Corinthians 2 passage has a lot in common with the Septuagint wording.
- **Chapter 65**
 - Summary:
 - (1 – 7) God details the sins of Israel: rebellion, idolatry, unclean foods, arrogance. The brick altar reference is because sacrifices under the Law were to be on undressed stone (Exodus 20:25). God promises to repay these iniquities.
 - (8 – 25) God describes the benefits to the faithful who will be the remnant that will be preserved. That remnant will return. "Gad" and "Meni" in verse 11 are the names of pagan gods, so the following indictments are puns. Contrasts are drawn between the fate of the rebellious and the righteous.
 - New Testament citation: 65:1 – 2 (Romans 10:20 – 21) Paul points out that Isaiah predicted that Israel would fail to follow the Messiah, but would find a following among the Gentiles.
 - Memorable lines:
 - (5) The source of the "holier than thou" idiom.
 - (17) The source of John's image of a new heaven and new earth in Revelation 21:1.
 - (19 – 22) The source of John's image of a new heaven and new earth in which there are no tears and no death (Revelation 21:4).
- **Chapter 66**
 - Summary:
 - (1 – 2) God asks why they think the Temple is so important, since He had made everything. Rather, God looks upon those of contrite spirit. (Acts 7:49 – 50) Stephen quoted this line to point out the Israelites over-emphasis on the Temple
 - (3 – 5) God lists how He sees the various pseudo-religious activities of Israel.
 - (6 – 11) Israel is like a mother giving birth. Although not stated, the child seems to be the Messiah.
 - (12 – 17) This description of the Messianic kingdom (that which was given birth in the previous section) will include great comfort, joy, and strength for the righteous but indignation upon "those who sanctify themselves."
 - (18 – 21) The Messianic kingdom will go out from Jerusalem to all nations, gathering all the faithful. Some of the faithful gentiles will be leadership material.
 - (22 – 24) The Messianic kingdom (new heavens and new earth) will remain before God forever. All the faithful will worship Him. But the others will be where the worm dies no and the fire is never quenched (Mark 9:48) – a figure of speech for the garbage dump.