

## "Isaiah Bible Study, Lesson 1, An Introduction"

- ✍ We have the pinnacle of Hebrew writing contained in the book of Isaiah, comparative to the writings of Luke in the Greek New Testament:
    - 1) Very educated, Luke's Greek is extremely intellectual; the same is true of Isaiah's Hebrew, you can tell he's got an education. Every category of Hebrew rhetoric is in his book, this is the high ground of Hebrew in the Bible.
    - 2) Large book, Luke writes more than any other single writer in the New Testament, Isaiah writes more than any other prophet in the Old Testament. The Isaiah scroll of Qumran is 24 feet long, so, when Jesus opens to Isaiah 61 in His hometown synagogue to Isaiah 61, He had to unroll 20 feet of scroll to do it!
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### **1. There is some controversy surrounding Isaiah, it came as a result of how Isaiah is organized. It is broken, effectively, in half.**

- ✓ Two Isaiahs?, textual critics have held that Isaiah didn't write all of Isaiah because there was such a change in his writing from the first to the second half of his book. The book has 66 chapters, and the break comes after the 39th chapter. An interesting configuration note is that Isaiah is setup exactly like the Bible in general: 39 books in the Old Testament; 27 books in the New Testament. Isaiah is like a mini Bible in some respects: the first 39 chapters are very heavy, the last 27 are filled with hope and grace.

Things to consider:

- 1) Satan is actively pursuing any seeming contradiction in God's Word, never doubt it; expect it. It's a clear fact and the first strategy of the enemy we are introduced to in the Bible: First, a misquote Genesis 3:1. This leads to another misquote: Genesis 3:2-3. Always be sensitive to anything that tries to make us feel that we cannot rely on the Scriptures. Then an outright contradiction: Genesis 3:4-5.
  - 2) Are you the same as you were when you were young? I read my own sermons from decades ago and think "what a simpleton." We should expect the writers of the Bible to change as they age if there is an age progression with their writings (there certainly was with Isaiah). Actually, quite refreshing to see that these were real people and that their writings bear that out.
  - 3) The two-Isaiah or Deutero-Isaiah hypothesis was defeated before it was ever conjured up. The textual arguments can be refuted scholastically, we could spend our time knocking them off one by one because they don't hold water if we follow the rules of interpretation and common sense. But there is a gigantic shortcut to all of that refutation, the argument of deutero-Isaiah has been defeated by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament!
- ✓ "But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him. This is exactly what Isaiah the prophet had predicted: "LORD, who has believed our message? To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?" But the people couldn't believe, for as Isaiah also said, "The Lord has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts so that their eyes cannot see, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and have me heal them."" John 12:37-40. These come from the, supposed, two Isaiahs John 12:40 from Isaiah 6 and John 12:38 from Isaiah 53. John 12:39 tells that they both came from the same guy!
  - ✓ A key discovery of the Bible is its interdependency. When the Bible raises an issue or question it answers it somewhere else in the text. The Bible does not leave itself open to private interpretation, those that feel free to do so are either a.) ignorant or b.) deviant. The Bible is built anticipating that someone(s) from the outside would try to eliminate its message. In ancient communication they would make several copies and tell several trusted people a message so that if one of those avenues was eliminated they would still have the message preserved.
  - ✓ Today, we send out messages via electronics and one of the best ways to stop hostile jamming is to spread the message over the available bandwidth so that there is too much of an area for an enemy to counter. The Bible is designed the same way from a macro standpoint: its message (s) are spread over its entire bandwidth, where is the chapter on Baptism or on salvation, Trinity, deity of Christ, Forgiveness, Antichrist, apostasy, prayer, etc.? If you want to study any major doctrine of the Bible the best place to start is a chain reference because it comes from a chain of interlinked scripture references both Old and New Testament, it makes the Bible resistant to hostile jamming. Tear a page out of the Bible and what

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happens? You lose some of the richness of what God has said but you do not lose the doctrines. You lose some resolution, but you do not lose the picture. "He tells us everything over and over, one line at a time, one line at a time, a little here, and a little there!" Isaiah 28:10.

### 2. We refer to Isaiah as one of the major prophets.

- ✓ "Major" refers to the amount written not to the relevancy, importance or dependability of the text. Isaiah, the son of Amoz, was a man of rank, had direct access to the king, most believe he was of the line of David, related to the kings of Judah, a close cousin of King Uzziah. There are some traditions about Isaiah that we get from extrabiblical sources such as the writings of Hebrew fathers, we learn from these that he was killed by a relative, king Manasseh (sawn in half).

### 3. Isaiah 1.

- ✓ Isaiah 1:1 spans four kings = their kingdoms spanned 96 years; Isaiah's tenure wasn't that entire length but a significant portion of it. Isaiah is focused primarily on Judah. You may recall that there was a major split in Israel after Solomon with the north 10 tribes calling themselves Israel and the southern remaining tribes calling themselves Judah. Judah became dominate and lasted much longer after the northern tribes fell into sin very early. The reason we call the sons of Israel "Jews" is because of the kingdom of Judah.
  - ✓ Isaiah writes while Assyria is the dominate empire in the world; they take the northern kingdom into captivity, but Isaiah doesn't write about them, primarily, he writes about Babylon and its world dominion. Babylon doesn't dominate for more than 100 years after Isaiah writes and was nothing more than a small colony on the Euphrates River at the time of his writings. This sounded bizarre in the day he wrote it. But Isaiah talks about Babylon's destruction and the rise of Persian empire and even calls by name the most dominate of its kings, Cyrus. With the writings of Isaiah in hand, the Jews approach Cyrus who had newly been made king and asked to be allowed to return to their land showing Cyrus what Isaiah had written about him 150 years in advance.
  - ✓ Isaiah 1:2-3, the heaviest parts of Isaiah are the first several chapters: judgment, indictments for their prolific sins. Do your animals know you? They are not on the same order of intellect as humans, but humans do not know their Creator! It's not an intellectual or educational problem, it's a sin problem! Our dogs are devoted to us, would stick with us no matter what; but does God get this kind of devotion from us? When He calls do we listen? Does He have our undivided attention? Our pets can really put us to shame!
  - ✓ Isaiah 1:4, we have the capacity to cause God anger and pain, wow. Disobedience is one thing and is dealt with through punishment, but what do parents do with a child who is ungrateful? Just hurt!
  - ✓ Isaiah 1:5-8, Daughter of Zion? Jerusalem, very interesting city! It was besieged 40 times, destroyed 32 times, and has had four major wars just since 1948!
  - ✓ Isaiah 1:9-15, if He didn't judge them, He'd have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah; if God doesn't judge our country, the same applies. God is interested in relationships not formalities; not religion without intimate faith in Him, all our religiosity means nothing without relating directly to Him in our lives.
  - ✓ Revelation 11:3-4; 7-8 expects you to know the first chapter of Isaiah. Revelation requires a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament before it can be interpreted correctly.
  - ✓ Isaiah 1:16-17 "Wash yourselves." Interesting they have always been fastidious about washing but there is no amount of water that can cure sin.
  - ✓ Isaiah 1:18, why would God care so much for people like us? Why do we matter to Him? This is Jerusalem's report card, has the church more or less insight than the Jews of that day? To whom much is given much will be required!
  - ✓ Isaiah 1:19-21, Harlot?, Spiritual adultery; running after things and not God, seeking fulfillment in anything but God, Idolatry with and actual idol is rare compared to the idolatry of things and people. Of course, the church is called the bride of Christ, but before her, Israel is depicted as the wife of God.
  - ✓ Isaiah 1:26, that will be a glorious day!
  - ✓ Isaiah 1:27-31, speaking of those who make idols, wood overlaid with silver or gold; the oaks and the gardens were the places of this false worship.
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