**The Book of Isaiah**

Isaiah 1:1 During the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah

740-690 BC Prophesied principally to Judah and Jerusalem (the southern kingdom).

Isaiah means “The Lord is Salvation.

Isaiah lived in Jerusalem and, unlike his contemporary Micah of Moresheth, who was from the countryside, he was a man of the court and the city.

It is likely he was of royal lineage. He had access to the kings/court. An insider.

Isaiah ministered to Judah during the time of the divided kingdom.

Timeline:

732 BC Syro/Ephriam war (Isaiah 7, 2 Kings 15:37) Rezin of Syria/Damascus and Pekah of Samaria rebel against Assyria and try to conquer Judah under Ahaz. Isaiah counsels Ahaz to rely on God but he sought an alliance with Tiglath Pileser III (2 Kings 16:7-9) Judah was temporarily saved, but lost independence.

722 BC Ephraim/Samaria was destroyed by Assyria under Shalmaneezer V and his successor Sargon after a 3-year siege.

701 BC Sennacherib took all the cities of Judah and surrounded Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah in 701 BC. Isaiah 1:7 is the reality Isaiah was experiencing at that time.

Tiglath-pileser III 745-727 BC 2Kings 15:19-20 - known as Pulu in Babylon or Pul in Israel. Syro/Ephraim War, Jezreel.

Shalmaneezer V 727-722 BC Hosea 10:14, 2 Kings 17 Began destruction of Israel.

Sargon II 722-705 BC 2 Chronicles 28:1-27

Finished destruction of Samaria/Northern kingdom.

Sennacherib 705-681BC 2 Chronicles:29-33, Is 36:1-7, 37:21,35-37 - constant threat to Judah under king Hezekiah

Ahaz serves as a bad example of a godly leader. Isaiah 7-8

Hezekiah serves as an example of a godly leader. Isaiah 36-38

But Hezekiah messed up Isaiah 39

 Isaiah the prophet helped to save Judah at that time. Hopefully, Judah will be sufficiently chastened, but, unfortunately not. 115 years later Judah went into exile into Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. This, too, is prophesied in Isaiah 39

Isaiah prophesied the coming of Assyria (Isaiah 7:17) and of Nebuchadnezzar (Isaiah 39) and the return from exile under Cyrus (Isaiah 45:1) are prophesied by Isaiah.

Isaiah contains 111 separate predictions. Of the 1,292 verses in the book, 754 (59%) deal with future events.

Forty-seven chapters of this book were directly quoted or alluded to by Christ or the Apostles. With more than four hundred allusions, Isaiah stands second only to Psalms as the most cited book in the New Testament.

Isaiah is said by the Jews to have died by being sawed in two (Hebrews 11:37)

The greatest of all the prophets? Others might nominate Elijah, but we do not have his prophecies, or Moses who was a prophet, but not a traditional one.

Author: Isaiah, son of Amoz.

But, the consensus of modern scholarship is

Isaiah I Ch 1-39 and Isaiah II (Deutero Isaiah) Ch 40-66

Why? Change of subject. Isaiah Ch 1-39 focuses more on Assyria, Isaiah 40-55 focuses more on Babylon and Cyrus.

Greater messianic focus and the introduction of the Suffering Servant (who they say is Israel, not the Messiah).

Comment: This is possibly true. But it comes from a presupposition that the Bible is not inspired. Mentioning Cyrus or conquest by Babylon proves it was written after these things. Circular reasoning. Besides, Isaiah prophesies Jesus!

This is circular reasoning. Isaiah has a great unity of theme. Isaiah 1-39 is about current events. Isaiah 40-66 is about the future. I will treat Isaiah as a whole.

Outline of Isaiah that explains this dichotomy:

Isaiah 1-39 Messiah the King 9:1-7, 11:1-16, 32:1-8, 33:17-24 Assyria

Isaiah 40-55 Messiah the Servant 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12 Babylon and Persia

Isaiah 56-66 Messiah the Conqueror 59:20-21, 61:1-3, 61:10-62:7, 63:1-6 The whole world

Another Outline

God Judges the Nations (Ch. 1-35)

God Comforts his People (Ch. 36-48)

God’s Prince of Peace (Ch. 49-57)

God’s Program for Salvation (Ch. 58-66)

The themes of Isaiah are the themes of the Bible.

1. The sinfulness of Judah and Jerusalem

2. Appeal of God to turn to him—to repent.

3. Judgment if they do not.

4. The Messiah—the Suffering Servant—is coming to save.

5. Restoration of a Remnant

Sub themes of Isaiah (also important but not dominant themes)

1. God rules the nations.

2. The glory of God.

3. Social justice

Isaiah is about faith in God’s promises. Faith in God’s promises, not in the world’s power/Assyria & Babylon.

Isaiah 1-5 is a sort of prologue to the “beginning” of Isaiah in Isaiah 6.

It is tempting to start the class in Isaiah 6 and then to come back.

Isaiah 1 Introduction to Isaiah. This chapter includes most of the themes of the entire book:

The utter sinfulness of Jerusalem/Judah (v 3-8)

Tender appeal by Jehovah that Judah repent (v. 16-19)

The inevitability of judgment (v. 24-25, 29-31)

The possibility of salvation (v. 26-27)

Isaiah 1:1 Isaiah is a prophet to the Southern Kingdom (Judah and Jerusalem)

The chapter is like a courtroom scene, including witnesses, with Judah as defendant.

Isaiah 1:2-4

Hear me, you heavens! Listen earth! Isaiah is calling the heavens and the earth as witnesses to what God is telling Judah. Appealing to creation Reminds of Deut 30:19 You better pay attention!

Isaiah may be harkening back to Moses on purpose.

Also reminds of Romans 8:22 The whole creation has been groaning.

God: I have raised you and loved you like a parent does a child. I have always maintained *hesed*—covenant-love, loyal-love

Q: How has God been like a parent to us? Parallel: Hosea 11:1, 3-4.

Reminds of Ezekiel 16:6-10 A female child left for dead, but rescued by God.

But we have rebelled. How have we rebelled? How have you rebelled?

“The ox knows his master” Even dumb animals are spart enough to know who is master.

A donkey knows its owner’s manger

Our equivalent: A dog knows where the food comes from.

Q: Why does Israel (and do we) not know our master? (don’t bite the hand that feeds you) We forgot where home is.

v. 3 The word “know” here is *yada* which is an intimate knowing used even of the sexual relationship. Do you know God like this?

My people do not understand “people” = *ammi* (as opposed to *lo ammi* in Hosea not God’s people). God still loves Israel and calls her his children in spite of it all.

Q: If you were to interview the residents of Jerusalem, would they agree with the assessment in v. 4? Probably not. Who, me?

Whose guilt is great: Whose sin is a heavy load, weighing the down. Can you relate?

Implication: We are easily deceived about who our master is.

Isaiah 1:5-8 What do we see about God here? He has compassion. It breaks his heart to see Judah like this (Luke 13:34-35 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem… Again, it reminds of Hoseah 11:8 How can I give you up?)

BTW Isaiah 1:4 in NIV is woe, but better translated alas!

Note: v. 7 was literally true. 701 BC

v. 8 Jerusalem, the beautiful city, is left poverty-stricken.

“The key to national prosperity is righteousness, not sound fiscal policy.” (Motyer)

God: You drove me to this.

Isaiah 1:9 Here we have hope. Q: Who are these “survivors”? (a hard question…. These are the remnant, which is a common theme in Isaiah. Who is the remnant?)

What is the normal meaning in everyday usage of the word remnant?

The remnant: Anchor Bible: “What is left of a community after it undergoes a disaster.

The remnant is the small portion of the religious people who truly worship God and will, therefore be saved from destruction.

 Is 10:20-23, Zeph 2:7-11 Hosea 11:8-11 Ezek 5:1-3 What do we learn of the remnant from these passages?

The Jews in Jerusalem are thinking they are just fine, but only a remnant of them will be saved. Application: Most who call themselves Christians are like these Jews. The remnant here are those who are saved from destruction, and they are a small minority.

Isaiah 1:10-15 Why is God so angry? (He is, after all, calling us Sodom and Gomorrah)

What was the sin of Sodom? Ezekiel 16:49-51 Social injustice.

 Didn’t he ask them to bring these offerings? (yes!). So what is the problem? (Malachi 3:10-12 bring in the whole offering, 1 Sam 15:22 to obey is “better” than to sacrifice Hos 6:6 I desire *hesed*, not sacrifice)

Being religious but not practicing *hesed* makes me sick!

v. 13 Might our worship be “worthless assemblies”?

So, what do we learn, then? What should we do?

Isaiah 1:16-17 Repent! What would we say we should do when we repent? Stop sinning, read the Bible and pray.

God says: Start behaving rightly toward the poor, the oppressed the orphan and the widow. Practice social justice. Do justice.

Isaiah 1:18-20. Come, let us reason together. Let’s have a conversation about this. God is willing to appeal to our reason.

Q: What does God offer? God offers salvation. Scarlet → white as snow.

What is required? That we are willing (ie choose freely) to obey

Two choices:

Willingly obey

Resist and rebel. What do you chose?

Isaiah 1:21-23 No more justice in the land. Rulers are taking bribes. The rich get richer and the poor are taken advantage of.

A constant theme, especially in Amos and Micah, but also in Isaiah a lot.

The most common sins mentioned in Isaiah are idolatry and failure to treat people with justice.

v. 24 The result: I will vent my wrath on you! v. 25 I will remove the dross/impurities.

v. 26 Hope for Israel. v. 27 Zion (Jerusalem/Judah) will be delivered from my wrath.

v. 29-31 The idolators (sacred oaks, gardens) will be destroyed.

**Isaiah 2 The Mountain of the Lord**

A key chapter (parallel to Micah 4:1-8)

Isaiah 2:1-5 A kingdom prophecy. Judah and Jerusalem here is both literal and symbolical of the kingdom of God.

Kingdom Prophecies in Isaiah

1. The future temple which attracts Gentiles (2:2–4).

2. The glorious Branch (4:2–6).

3. The virgin birth of Immanuel (7:13–14).

4. The dawning of a new day in the birth of a child (9:1–7).

5. The Shoot of the stem of Jesse (11:1–10).

6. The conversion of Gentiles (19:18–25).

7. The new Jerusalem (54:9–13; 60:19–22).

Vs 2. Last days, what last days? Hebrews 1:2 But in these last days…

Acts 2:17 “In the last days…” (quoting Joel 2:28-32)

What is the mountain of the Lord? It is Mt. Zion, it is Jerusalem, it is the Kingdom of God. It is the Church.

v. 3 The Law will go out from Zion. Pentecost and the early church?

Many peoples… Genesis 22:18 Through you all nations will be blessed.

Vs 4. Is inscribed near the UN headquarters in New York. We can only hope….

What is the vision described here, how is it possible? God will bring peace and unity where there was war and division. This is the Kingdom of God. This is God’s vision. Do not hold your breath for the nations to do this.

v. 5 The precursor to “come let us go up to the mountain” (v. 3) is “Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord. Otherwise our evangelism will not produce “come let us go up.”

A parallel passage: Isaiah 11:1-16.

11:1-3 A root (nazer) of Jesse. Matthew 2:23 He will be called *nazer*ene

Because of the sin of Israel and Judah (Isaiah 7), the royal kingship will become a stump.

But by God’s grace, from that stump will come a shoot/branch.

Isaiah 11:2 Note the mention of the Holy Spirit here. The Spirit is key.

11:4-5 Messiah will bring (social) justice (rightness, fairness) and righteousness. The needy and the poor cared for.

11:6-9 A kingdom prophecy. A beautiful image of the kingdom. Already but not yet.

v. 8 Look at this metaphor!!! The infant will play near the cobra’s den. This is God’s vision for his Church, for his people, for his Kingdom.

11:10-16 The kingdom of God is a banner, a resting place, a gathered remnant, a highway to heaven.

Isaiah Ch 2-4 starts with Isaiah 2:2-5 and ends with Isaiah 4:2-6 This section begins and ends with hope. Ch 2-4 is like a sandwich. (inclusion)

Isaiah 4:2-6 The return of the glory of the Lord to the kingdom.

v. 2 In that day (again 2:2) the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful.

v. 3-4 The remnant will be cleansed.

v. 5 The Shekinah—the glory of the Lord, the cloud of smoke by day and the pillar of fire by night—will be with the people.

Jesus came and tabernacled among us John 1:18 He tabernacled among us. We beheld his glory—the glory of the one and only Son of God.

Branch → Cleansing → Booth/dwelling

Read Isaiah 2:6-22 What is God talking about here? The Day of the Lord.

TDOTL: Obadiah 4, Amos 3:2, Amos 5:2 Micah 3:12 Zephaniah 1:14-18 Is. 2:12 Is. 13:6-9 Is. 13:10-13 Is. 34:4, 8-10 Jer. 46:10 Lam. 2:22 Ezek. 13:5 Ezek 30:3 Joel 1:15 Joel 2:1 Joel 2:11 Joel 2:31 The theme of Joel is TDOTL

Joel 3:14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

The Day of the Lord is a valley of decision

Amos 5:18-20 Obad. 15 Zeph. 1:8 Zeph. 1:14 Zeph. 1:18-2:3 Zech. 14:1 Malachi 4:5

**The Day of the Lord signifies “The moment when Jehovah grasps the reigns, which he seems to have held slackly before, when the currents of his moral rule, which have been running sluggishly, receive a mysterious quickening, and the Lord’s work on the earth is at last fully performed.”**

**Or “The Day in which Jehovah will manifest himself as God.”**

The Day of the Lord is a day that God’s kingdom comes with power to build up or to destroy.

So, what is TDOTL like?

v. 10 The unrighteous are hiding in the rocks.

v. 12-17 The proud, the rich and prosperous… All will be brought low.

v. 20 TDOTL is a day people throw away what they formerly valued greatly.

Ezek 7:19-20 On TDOTL they will throw their silver and gold into the streets. Why? It will not be able to deliver them. That fancy car. That awesome vacation home. That masters degree…

Phil 3:7-8 Loss… less than nothing… garbage…

v. 22 Great advice Stop trusting in mere humans.

Let’s continue the content of the “sandwich.”

Read Isaiah 3:1-11

v. 1 God will remove both supply and support.

v. 8 Jerusalem staggers. Judah is falling. This is what happens when we do not rely on God, but on idols or worldly powers.

v. 9 The prideful, arrogant, self-reliant look on their faces speaks for themselves.

“I’m good.” “I’m too busy.”

v. 11 Disaster.

Isaiah 3:13-14 God is sitting as judge. And he judges the “Christians first of all.”

You ruined my vineyard.

This is the worst possible sin: to bring in sin, slothfulness, division into God’s church and to take advantage of the weak and poor disciples.

Is 3:18-23 Speaks for itself.

Isaiah 5:1-30 “The Song of the Vineyard” An Old Testament Parable

Isaiah 5:1-5 God’s vineyard

Is 5:1-2 God created a vineyard and he loved the vineyard.

The vineyard was Israel and Judah (v. 7) in context, but for us it is the church.

v. 2 He cleared the land, took out the stones and added the choicest vines. That is what God has done for his church and even in your life. He created a life for us and gave us work to do.

v. 2 He set up a watchtower. God protects the church.

v. 2 He created a winepress. God gives us work to do, but expects a crop.

v. 4 What more could I have done for you, O church/O Israel and Judah?

v. 4 When I came to pick grapes, there were only bad grapes. How does God feel about this?

They spent more time arguing over doctrines and sitting on committees than sharing their faith and helping the poor.

So it will be destroyed, its wall broken down and it will be a wasteland (v. 5)

Isaiah 5:8-30 God calls them out for their sin.

Isaiah 5:8-13 They were seeking wealth at the expense of the poor—driving the poor off their land. v. 9 But their great houses will become desolate.

v. 13 Therefore, they will go into exile. They will not be part of God’s church.

Well, that is exactly what happened in 722 and 586 BC.

v. 20-23 for example

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil.

We need to keep calling sin sin. It is not “making love.” It is adultery.

It is not “boys will be boys.” It is pornography, orgies.

 -wise in their own eyes

 -drunkards “heroes at drinking wine” = calling evil good

 -injustice in the courts acquit the guilty and convict the innocent

Isaiah 6-12 forms the second section of Isaiah.

It begins with Judah in deep trouble, with judgment on the wings.

But God calls Isaiah, Isaiah delivers his message, and God gives hope in the prophecies of Is 7, Is 9 and the final hopeful passage Isaiah 12:1-6.

However, also in this section Ahaz rejects Isaiah’s advice, rejects faithful reliance on God and brings on the inevitable destruction of Judah.

Isaiah 6 Isaiah’s commission. The year is 739 BC (the year Uzziah died)

Isaiah 6:1-4 Isaiah has a vision of God, similar to Ezekiel 1, Ezekiel 10 and Rev 4 and the cherubim.

The chief quality of God here is holiness! Holy! Holy! Holy! Revelation 4:8

God is wholly holy. He is separate. He is other. He is pure and unadulterated. He is without sin or blemish. Moral majesty.

v. 3 The whole earth is full of his glory. This can only be seen through the eyes of faith.

6:5-6 As we would react in God’s presence. Woe is me!!! I am a sinner. Like Peter in the boat when Jesus calmed the story.

How would you like to meet God face-to-face?

What would it feel like in the waiting room for this meeting? What would you be thinking about?

The unclean “lips” are particularly important for Isaiah the prophet.

6:7 A live coal. From the altar of sacrifice? Lips symbolic of his being a spokesperson for God. Isaiah is forgiven. He is holy so he can speak for God.

6:8 Whom shall I send. I imaging Isaiah looking around, but he is the only one in the room.

God says to any of us: Whom shall I send?

 A great attitude. Do you have this attitude? If you say this, where might God send you? (into your neighborhood, to the hospital,…)

Isaiah 6:9-10 Isaiah’s commission. God says I am sending you to stubborn Israel and Judah.

They hear but do not listen. They see but do not grasp.

Quoted in Matthew 13:14-15

Isaiah’s commission: Preach about repentance to a people for whom, other than a remnant, it is already too late. His message, simple as it is, will result in doom, not salvation for his hearers.

Isaiah 6:11-13 OK. Send me, but for how long?

Answer: until the job is done. Where is God sending you and for how long?

v. 11-13 is exactly what happened, both to the North in 722 and to Judah in 701. It also happened, most fully and finally, in 586 BC under Nebuchadnezzar.

Our job is not to bring God’s judgment to the people. Our job is to bring the truth to them and if judgment falls on them that is on them, as they say.

v. 13b. A tiny ray of hope. Judah will be a stump, from which a branch will sprout.

Isaiah 7 Do not ally yourself with the world. Unfaithful Ahaz.

Isaiah 7:1-9 Ephraim and king Pekah (the Northern Kingdom) is allying with Aram and king Rezin (Syria) to attack Judah. They are rebelling against Assyria. This is the Syro/Ephraimite war of 734 BC.

v. 2 A scary situation for Judah. What should they do? Who should they turn to?

v. 3 God had Isaiah name his son Shear-Jashub? (a remnant will return)?

God days I will protect you and a remnant will return.

v. 4 This is how we should react when things look really bad—when it feels like our enemies will overpower us.

 -be careful.

 -keep calm.

 -do not be afraid or lose heart. Trust in God.

v. 7 Rezin and Remaliah’s son (Pekah of Samaria. Is there sarcasm here? Old what’s-his-name…) are mere humans. [If you trust God] it will not happen.

v.9 A great quote. But… If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.

Like we said, the key message to humans of Isaiah is that we need to maintain faith and reliance on God.

So, who will you rely on? Assyria or God?

Isaiah 7:10-12. Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign—a miracle from God. Is this a good thing? Should we ask for a sign? Ahaz does not turn to God.

Isaiah 7:13-17 God says, “I will give you a sign,” alright… But you, Ahaz, will not see that sign.

v. 14 The sign? The virgin (young maiden) will give birth to a son who will be God-with-us. Jesus is called God-with-us in Matthew 1:22 and Matthew 28:20.

Aside: The Hebrew word young maiden, *alma* is ambiguous. It is not the word virgin, but it is never used of a married person in the Bible and the Septuagint has virgin, as only this would be a sign. So, yes! This is a prophecy that the successor to Ahaz/David will be born of a virgin.

Jesus is God-with-us. Ahaz should have recognized this, but he did not look for the sign. Instead, he trusted in Assyria.

v. 16 This is a double-prophecy. The prophecy was fulfilled in Ahaz’ day, but not in a good way. The son of Ahaz is Hezekiah. 722 BC (12 years later) The land of Rezin (Aram) and Pekah (Samaria/Ephraim/Israel/Northern Kingdom) were laid waste v. 17 The Lord… will bring the king of Assyria.

Isaiah 7:18-25 This is exactly what happened! The Lord whistled for bees from Assyria. Assyria will come, will destroy Samaria and nearly destroy Judah.

Isaiah 8:1-4

Write on the scroll Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil).

He says this before his wife conceives.

How would you like to have a son named Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz?

v. 3 The prophetess is Isaiah’s wife.

v. 4 Judgment is coming on the North.

Isaiah 8:5-11

v. 6-8a This is exactly what happened in 701 BC under Sennacherib in which all of Judah was taken except for Jerusalem under siege (v. 8 reaching up to the neck)

but. v. 8b Immanuel! God is with us. He will save Jerusalem. We will see this in Is 36-38. Assignment: Please read this section!

v. 18 Isaiah: (like 6:8, but to include his two sons who are symbols)

Isaiah 9:1-7 The Lord’s deliverance.

Isaiah 9:1-2

Obviously a prophecy of the Messiah, how does Jesus fulfil vs 1-2?

Matt 4:12-17  Nazareth is almost exactly on the border between the tribal territory of Zebulun and of Naphtali (see the maps in the power point)

This is also the region first conquered by the Assyrians under Tiglath Pileser in about 733 BC (no more gloom)

Isa 9:6-7  To us a child is born… A messianic prophecy. What will Messiah be like?

Governor/king

Wonderful Counselor (Holy Spirit?), Mighty God (Jesus?), Everlasting Father

Prince of Peace.

v. 7 Messiah/Jesus will reign on David’s throne. The promise to David in 2 Sam 7:16.

Isaiah 10:1-4 Q: What gets God angry here?

-oppressive decrees

-depriving poor of their rights

-withhold justice for the marginalized, immigrant, women, children, homeless, old without families

-taking advantage of old people, single mothers, orphans

This is huge in Isaiah!

For those of us who do not have political power, what ought we to do?

Isaiah 58:5-8 Social justice.

Luke 4:18-20 This is Jesus’ ministry. This is quoted in Isaiah 61:1-2 so we will get back to this.

v. 3-4 Q: What is God’s point here? (that on judgment day, the things they had relied on will not save them.

Reminds of Ezekiel 7:19

Isaiah 10:5-6. What is the deal here? Whom is he using to do what to whom?

Q: How might something very different, but loosely analogous happen to us?

Mention but do not read: Assyria will do God’s work, but she, too will be judged. God rules the nations.[Isaiah 10:7-16 How is the king of Assyria, God’s instrument feeling about being used in this way?

Q: What is the point of v. 15?]

10:20-25 Figuratively, who are this remnant? v. 20 They are the ones who do not rely on Assyria/the world (him who struck them down) for their strength, but on the Lord.

v. 21 Where will they return to? To God.

v.24 What are the qualities of this remant? Not afraid of the world/Assyria

Isaiah 11:1-9 Already covered

Isaiah 12:1-6 A psalm of Isaiah. The closing of the sandwich of Ch 6-12 Q: What are some of the things we ought to be praising God for?

v. 2 God is my salvation (remember: Isaiah means the Lord is salvation)

The Lord is my strength and salvation.

So, what should we do?

v. 4 Praise the Lord and proclaim his name to all the nations!

v. 6 Shout it aloud! Great is the Holy One of Israel.

We are skipping Isaiah Ch 13-30. Our “excuse” for doing this is that these passages apply to those, figuratively, who are outside of God’s people.

Summary of Isaiah 13-24:

Judgement against Babylon, the Philistines, Moab, Damascus, Cush, Egypt, Jerusalem, etc…

Isa 24:1-3 and 24:21-23. You get the idea? Go back sometime and read those chapters on your own.

Isaiah 25-30 Israel and Judah will be judged. (mostly)

Isaiah 31:1-9 The situation: Assyria was threatening the very existence of Judah at this time (see Isaiah 36 and 37). What was the only hope for “saving” Judah? The world says to rely on Egypt, the other superpower of the day.

Q: Who might be “Egypt” for us? Why do we want so badly to rely on Egypt?

Q: What should we do instead? The Holy One of Israel. Yaweh.

v. 3 They are mere mortals. Their horses are mere flesh. Heb 13:6 (quoting Psalm 118:6-7) “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”

v. 4 God is like a lion who fears nothing! “It is not frightened by their shouts.”

The Lord will do battle with Sennacherib.

v. 5 He will shield Jerusalem.

v. 6 Return, Israel.

v. 7 Assyria will fall, but not by human sword.

Isaiah 32:1-4 v. 1 A new kind of king will reign.

A righteous king.

A just king. Messiah!

32:2 He will be a shelter from the wind, and a refuge from the storm, a stream of water in the desert.

How has God been this for you? When has he been this? When we trusted in him.

v. 3-4 Then eyes and ears will be opened and fearful hearts will understand.

Isaiah 6:9-10 will be undone by Messiah.

Now, we will cover Isaiah 36-39 Historical Interlude

Here we switch from prophetic poetry to historical narrative.

Here we contrast unfaithful Ahaz to his faithful son Hezekiah.

Outline:

Isaiah 36-37 Hezekiah trusts the Lord and the Lord saves the remnant in Jersualem from Sennacherib and Assyria

Isaiah 38 Hezekiah’s illness. Hezekiah’s prayer. Isaiah intercedes. Hezekiah is healed. Hezekiah asks for a sign (unlike Ahaz)

Isaiah 39 Hezekiah’s fatal error—trusting in Babylon. Jerusalem will be taken into captivity in Babylon (but not for about 90 years)

An Aside: History, Archaeology and Isaiah:

From the Sennacherib Cylinder in the British Museum:

As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke. I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts, and to the countless small villages in their vicinity. I drove out of them 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses,

mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting and considered [them] booty. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage.

Also:

2 Kings 20:20-21

"Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah--all his might, and how he made a pool and a tunnel and brought water into the city--are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Hezekiah rested with his fathers."

The Siloam Inscription in Hezekiah’s tunnel states "The boring through is completed." This is the beginning of an inscription that was originally written in ancient Hebrew and discovered at the tunnel that king Hezekiah had built.

"And this was the story of the boring through. While the workmen were hacking their way from opposite ends, and while there were still three cubits to be bored through, they heard voices calling from each side, for there was a crevice in the rock. And on the day when the boring was completed the stone-cutters hacked their way toward each other until they met. The water flowed from the spring to the pool twelve hundred cubits, and the height of the rock above the heads of the stone-cutters was a hundred cubits."

Isaiah 36:1-22 The 14th year of Hezekial 701 BC.

Sennacherib took all the fortified cities of Judah, including the brutal destruction and captivity of Lachish. Describe what is going on here. What is Sennacherib’s strategy?

Let us imagine that in this case, Sennacherib (or his field commander) will represent Satan. What is Satan saying to you? What are you tempted to feel right now?

Satan’s schemes. Satan to you: v. 5 On whom are you relying?

v. 6 Egypt is a splintered reed of a staff.

v. 7 On Jehovah? I already took all your towns. Don’t rely on Hezekiah. He is a fanatic. He even tore down your high places.

v. 8 The world says, “Come, let’s bargain. I’ll give you 2000 horses (if you can put riders on them, you pipsqueak nation)

v. 10 God told me to do this.

v. 16 This is what Satan says: Make peace with me. I will take care of you (but you will be my slave)

v 18-20 Have the other gods saved them?

v. 20 A fatal error on the part of the field commander: How can Jehovah deliver Jerusalem from my hand?

v. 21 (wisely) They refused to answer Satan.

Isaiah 37:1-20 Hezekiah’s faithful response.

Read Is 37:1-4 Hezekiah sets a great example of how to trust in Jehovah:

v. 1 Hezekiah puts on sackcloth. He humbles himself before God at the temple.

v. 2 He seeks the advice of his spiritual mentor, Isaiah.

v. 3 Hezekiah repents and decides to rely on Jehoavah, not on Egypt. He accepts that he brought this tragedy on Judah himself.

Isaiah tells him to pray for the remnant in Jerusalem. Great symbolism.

Read Isaiah 37:5-7

As Isaiah prophesies, Sennacherib hears a rumor and withdraws temporarily.

Read 37:14-20 Hezekiah’s prayer.

[v. 26 I ordained it. God gave Sennacherib his victories. v. 28 I know you, Sennacherib]

God’s answer: Read Isaiah 37:30-35 God rules the nations.

- In the third year…

-a remnant

-from Mt. Zion a band of survivors.

Isaiah 37:36 God vindicates the faith of Hezekiah

Isaiah 38 Hekiah’s illness Hezekiah asks for a sign (nearly identical to 2 Kings 20

Read Isaiah 38:1-6

Hezekiah has a terrible illness.

Isaiah tells him to prepare to die.

Hezekiah “turned his face to the wall” (ie prayed). He weeps bitterly and asks God to change his mind.

Because of Hezekiah’s faith, God relents and gives Isaiah 15 more years of life. He lived to 685 BC. Also, God promises to deliver Judah from Sennacherib.

Hezekiah returns from death “on the third day.” (2 Kings 20:8)

38:22 Hezekiah asks for a sign (where Ahaz refused to do so in Isaiah 7) and God gives him a sign. The shadow goes backward.

**Isaiah 39 Hezekiah’s fatal error.** Transition to Isaiah 40 Part II of Isaiah and to Babylon/Persia.

Isaiah 39:1-8

v. 1-2 Marduk-Baladan of Babylon sends envoys to Hezekiah. At this time, Babylon was a major independent power, but it was a possible rival of Assyria.

Babylon appeals to the pride of Hezekiah. You are one of the great leaders. You are my equal.

Foolishly, Hezekiah, after not relying on Egypt or Assyria, considers an alliance with Babylon. We should not form alliances with “the world.”

Hezekiah shows the envoys all the wealth of the temple.

v. 3-7 Isaiah confronts Hezekiah. Lack of trust in God is the ultimate sin in Isaiah.

v. 6 All the things you boastfully showed to the Babylonian envoys will be carried of as plunder to Babylon.

Truly, this was a fatal error!!

v. 7 Some of your (royal) descendants will be made eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

This is exactly what happened about 90 years later when Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael became eunuchs in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar when Judah submitted to Babylon and the items of the temple were carried to Babylon.

v. 8 Selfishly: Phew! At least there will be peace in my lifetime!

Remember our outline:

Isaiah 1-39 Messiah the King Assyria Isaiah 40-55 Messiah the Servant Babylon and Persia Isaiah 56-66 Messiah the Conqueror The whole world

Isaiah Part II Ch 40-55 Messiah the Servant.

Isaiah 39: You will go into captivity in Babylon.

Judah: But what about your promises that a remnant will return and be saved?

God’s answer: Isaiah 40-42.

Isaiah 40:1-2 Comfort, Comfort my people… Her hard service has been completed. Her sin has been paid for.

This is about the judgment of being sent into Babylon and, later, the return of a remnant from captivity in 536 BC, after 70 years. This is a prophecy.

This is a Day of the Lord—but one when God comes to comfort, not to judge.

God is coming to save and to restore.

It is not unlike Jeremiah 29:10-14 After 70 years “I will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I banished you. This passage is about the remnant whom God will save and bless.

It is about us who also were banished from the presence of God and were held in captivity by Satan.

The message? Comfort! Do you need comfort right now? [A great passage on comfort: 2 Cor 1:3-7]

Isaiah 41:9-10 Another great passage on this topic.

God says to us (and to Judah). I chose you to be my servant (he will switch the metaphor of servant to Jesus later).

“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand (Jesus/Messiah)

Isaiah 40:3-5 But it is also about the formation of the Church as a remnant. A kingdom prophecy.

Quoted in Matthew 3:3 Mark 1:1-4 John the Baptist is the one spoken of by the prophet Isaiah.

A straight way in the desert. Valleys raised, mountains flattened. God is clearing the way.

v. 5 The glory of the Lord will be revealed. John 1:14 We have beheld his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father full of grace and truth.

40:6-30 I am the Lord. I am great. I am sovereign. I rule the nations.

v. 6-8 Cry out! All people are like grass… but the word of the Lord endures forever.

v. 11 Like a gentle shepherd to his flock.

v. 12-14 I am the sovereign Creator. v. 14 Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him?

v. 17 Before him, all the nations (including Assyria, Babylon and Persia) are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing!

v. 18 How am I to be compared to the other “gods?”

a metalworker casts it.

A person too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot (at least not right away!)

v. 22 A great memory verse How great is Jehovah? He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

v. 31 conclusion: Those who hope in the Lord (like Hezekiah did) will renew their strength…

Isaiah 41:1-2 God is calling one from the East in righteousness to his service. Who is this servant? It is Cyrus. He hands nations over to him. God is in control.

41:8 Who are these descendants of Abraham? Galatians 3:6-14

Isaiah 41:8 The Servant is, depending on the context, Israel and/or the Church (41:8, 49:3), or the Messiah (50:4-9, 53:9). Thorough treatment in Motyer p. 26.

(we already looked at 41:9-10)

We are skipping to Isaiah 42.

Isaiah 42:1-9 is the first of four “servant songs” (also 49:1-13, 50:4-9 and 52:13-53:12)

Isaiah 42:1-4 Look! My servant in whom I delight! The suffering servant here is Jesus.

v. 3 a bruised reed he will not break.

In some passages, Jesus is, symbolically a lamb and in others he is symbolically a lion. Q: Which is he in this passage? (a lamb)

Revelation 5:5-6 Q: In what ways is Jesus like a lion?

Any specific examples? (Matthew 16:23 Get behind me, Satan, Matthew 23, esp. v. 29-37 whitewashed tombs, but notice right after he is a lamb again Mat 23:37-39 Jerusalem, Jerusalem)

In what ways is he like a lamb?

Specific examples (John 8:11 then neither do I condemn you. Luke 9:51-56 did not call down fire , Matthew 9:35-38 compassion , Matthew 12:15-21 (Don’t tell others) quotes Is 42:1-4)

Which is the real Jesus? To whom does Jesus present himself as a lamb? To whom does Jesus present himself as a lion?

Is 42:4 Q: How will he bring about justice if he is not breaking bruised reeds or snuffing out smoldering wicks?

Isaiah 42:5-9 Let’s also read Isaiah 61:1-3 (quoted in Luke 4:17-21)

42:6 He does not merely bring a covenant. He IS the new covenant.

Messiah will be a light to the Gentiles.

“The Spirit of the Lord is on *me*, because he has anointed *me* to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

His message, His good news: (quoting Isaiah 61:1-2)

1. Good news for the poor (in spirit?) 61:1

2. Freedom/release for (spiritual) prisoners 42:7, 61:1

3. Healing for the (spiritually) sick (specifically the blind in 42:7, Luke 4:18)

4. Release the (spiritually) oppressed (from dungeons 42:7) Luke 4:18

5. The favor of the Lord. 61:2, Luke 4:19

Note: If you go to Isaiah 61:1-2 Jesus skips part of the passage. “and the day of vengeance of our God.”

Why did Jesus not include this? Because Jesus came, “I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.” (John 12:46)

Notice Luke 4:21 “Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

This proves that Isaiah 4:1-7 is a messianic prophecy.

Isaiah 42:8-9 God: I am announcing all this long before it all happens.

Isaiah 42:10-17 (It is not clear this is about Jesus, but…) Is this a lion or a lamb? Here Jesus is a lion!

(note: Islands as a symbol of human insignificance before God. Isa 40:15-17 ...)

v. 15-17 God is going to act for us in powerful ways.

Skip to Isaiah 44.

Isaiah 44:6-20 The foolishness of idols Idols vs. YHWH

Is 44:6-8 I am the alpha and the omega—the first and the last. I am the only God!

v. 7 Let the “gods” foretell what will come.

v.8 I am the only rock!

v. 9-20 A diatribe about the foolishness of idols. Much sarcasm. Elijah: maybe Baal is sleeping. Wake him up!

v. 19 Think! Does any of this make sense? Half for a god, half for fuel.

v. 20 the idols are delusions. The world is delusional with its idols of wealth, fame, pleasure, military power, physical fitness,…

They think that they can make God!

Is 44:21-23

v. 21 They make idols. I made you! I will not forget you.

v. 22 I sweep away your sins. So return to me!

v. 23 Shout for joy oh heavens and earth, mountains and forests. I have redeemed Israel.

(also on the foolishness of idols and false gods: Isaiah 41:21-29 God to the idols, “tell us, you idols, what is going to happen.” v. 21 Declare to us the things to come v. 22 Do something. Do anything! v. 23 You are less than nothing v. 24 They are all false v. 29)

How great is YHWH?

44:26-28 He is the one who is able to call Cyrus 150 years before he is born!!!

He will call Cyrus.

Cyrus will say to Judah: Reinhabit Jerusalem. Rebuild Judah. Restore the cities.

v. 28 Cyrus told Judah: Let the foundation of the temple be laid.

This is confirmed in the Cyrus Cylinder and in Ezra 1:1-4.

Remember how in Is 44:7-8 God said he is the one who can foretell what will happen. Can any other god do this?

Isaiah 45:1-7 Who is Cyrus, symbolically/prophetically? He is a prefigure of the Messiah. He is God’s anointed (literally messiah) He is the one God uses to set his people free. Cyrus did not even believe in God, yet God used him.

Why would God do this? v. 3 “so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel who summons you by name. v. 6 so that “people may know that there is none besides me. I am the Lord and there is no other.”

v. 7 As for Cyrus and his career, “I do all these things.” Amazing.

Is 45:9-13

v. 9 Does the clay say to the potter, “What are you making?”

(Romans 9:14-24 shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, “Why did you make me like this?” Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?)

Q: Who is the potter? He is the one who will raise up Cyrus.

v. 13 I will raise up Cyrus in my righteousness. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free. Cyrus is the new Moses.

We are skipping Isaiah 45:14-48:22. The themes are somewhat repetitive compared to Ch 42-45.

Isaiah 49:1-7

v. 1 “Listen to me” (the only time in the OT) Rem: God on Mt of Transfiguration: This is my Son. Listen to him.” Mark 9:7 Luke 9:35, Matt 17:5. Messiainic.

v. 1 The “islands” are the nations.

v. 1 Before I was born the Lord called me… v. 5 He who formed me in the womb.

v. 3 Israel has failed as servant, so Messiah is the personification of Israel.

The Father had this plan in mind from the beginning. Jesus is the lamb slain from the foundation of the earth (Rev 13:8)

What will Messiah do?

v. 5 ….to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself. v. 6 to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept—the remnant.

v. Also a light to the Gentiles…. To the ends of the earth.

Q: What did Jesus do for you?

Q: Where did Jesus rescue you from?

v. 7 Jesus, the one despised and abhorred by the Jews.

Jesus, the servant of rulers

Isaiah 49:8-18 God is restoring a remnant of Israel.

v. 8 Jesus is restoring the remant to the land—to the kingdom.

v. 9a You were a captive to sin. But Jesus said to you, Come out! Be free!

What did Jesus call you out from?

What did Jesus free you from?

v. 9b-13

v. 9b pasture on every barren hill

v. 10 no more spiritual hunger or thirst.

v. 10 compassion on them.

v. 10 lead them to springs of water.

v. 11 prepare a smooth road to the kingdom.

v. 12 all nations, North, South, East, West.

v. 13 comfort.

So, you Christian, shout for joy!

v. 14 But, despite all that God did, Zion felt forsaken and forgotten.

v. 15-16 God’s loving compassion as a mother for her children.

“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast, and not have compassion on her infant?”

Response: Impossible!!!

Even if the mother would forget, I would not forget you, O Israel/church/Christian

v. 16 You are engraved in the palm of my hand. I never forget you!!!

Isaiah 49:18-26 v. 18-20 Look! Your children gather around. This is our spiritual children—our spiritual fruit. Though you were a spiritual ruin and desolate. The land will be too small to contain you.

This passage is about evangelism. Can you envision God using you to bring many to Him?

v. 21 We were bereaved, barren, exiled and rejected and alone!!!!

v. 22 But God will lift up a banner and we will come.

v. 22-23 your children will be saved. You will have kings and queens as spiritual offspring/parents. Your evangelism will be wildly successful.

v. 23 Are they literally going to be licking the dust at your feet? ☺.

v. 26 Then all will know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and Redeemer. When you bear bounteous fruit for God.

Skip to Isaiah 52-53

Is 52:1-6

v. 1-2 Wake up, O people of God! Zion is Mt. Zion is Jerusalem, but, figuratively in Isaiah, it is the kingdom of God or, in this case it is the people of God. Wake up!

v. 1 What are these “beautiful garments?” Gal 3:26 Those of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. These are the garments that get you into the wedding feast if Christ in Matthew 22:11-12 When the king came in to view the guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed for a wedding. So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’

v. 2 Remove the bonds of slavery.

v. 3-5 We were sold for nothing. Q: What did you sell your salvation for? What wages did Satan pay you?

v. 3 We sold ourselves for nothing and we cannot be bought back with silver. Something much more precious must be paid.

v. 4 We went down to Egypt. Egypt is where you become enslaved to sin. Is there anyone here who avoided going down to Egypt? I certainly did not!

v. 5 We were taken for nothing. In fact, we sold ourselves into captivity.

But… Isaiah 52:7-12

v. 7 How beautiful are the feet of those who shared their faith with you!!!

How beautiful are the feet of the one who told you that God reigns!!!!

How beautiful are your feet if you go out and share your faith!

How will this work? v. 8 The Lord, Jesus will return to Zion—to Jerusalem.

v. 9 Therefore those of you whose lives were a total and complete ruin, be comforted!

Why? Because he has redeemed you. He has bought you back! But not with silver. No…. With something infinitely more precious than silver.

v. 11 God says Leave! Leave Egypt!!! Stay away from unclean things. Repent of your sins!!! v. 12 A bit different from Egypt. You will not go in haste, as Jesus is at your lead. There will no longer be an Egyptian army chasing you.

Next starts the 4th Servant Song (42:1-9, 49:1-13, 50:4-9 and 52:13-53:12)

The Triumph of the Servant!

Isaiah 52:13-15 How will all this work? How will the servant bring about justice?

v. 13 My servant/Messiah will act wisely. How?

v. 13 The Messiah will be lifted up. Sounds great, right??? No! Jesus in John 12:32 I, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto myself.

What is the means by which Messiah will bring justice to the nations? By being lifted up. By submitting to the powers of the world, and by triumphing over them on a cross. By submitting to a dehumanizing and humiliating torture and execution.

God’s enemies—the same ones who enslaved us in Egypt, will “lift up” Jesus.

Jesus will conquer by submitting to his enemies.

Of course, this is not the only way Jesus was lifted up.

1. On the cross.

2. In his resurrection.

3. In his ascenscion.

4. When we lift him up as we share our faith.

So, what did this look like?

v. 14 He was brutally beaten to the point that he barely looked like a man. That is my Savior Jesus!

v. 15 His blood will sprinkle many nations. This is the same blood we came into contact with when we were baptized into Christ.

Isa 53:1-3 The Messiah/Suffering Servant:

Who would believe it? This is amazing. Stupendous. No one ever would have imagined it. Messiah is the arm of the Lord. “Arm” represents agency or power. Isaiah 40:10 “The Sovereign Lord comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.

So, what is this powerful arm of the Lord like?

v. 2 Like a tender shoot. A child. He begins as a baby. A helpless little one. Not a very auspicious beginning!

v. 2 “no beauty or majesty.” Not what the world expects. The ultimate anti-hero. An average Joe/Jose Like Samuel and Jesse…

v. 3 Despised and rejected. Held in low esteem. This is Jesus! This is the arm of the Lord. Who would have believed it?

Isa 53:4-6 v. 4a He took on our pain and suffering.

Q: How did that work?

Hebrews 2:14-18 He shared our humanity. “Fully human in every way.” (v. 17) He suffered when he was tempted (v. 18) Heb 4:15 tempted in every way just as we are.

v. 4 He took it up. He took the suffering on himself. It was not thrust in him.

v. 4b But we got it all wrong. We did not see it that way at all. We thought it was a sign of weakness. How foolish we thought! Submit to humiliation at the hands of your enemy? How weak?

Who would have believed it!?

v. 5 cause: Our transgressions effect: led to his piercing

 cause: Our iniquities effect: led to his being crushed.

But…

Cause: His being punished (instead of us), effect: led to our peace

Cause: His wounds effect: led to our healing.

v. 6 We left God, but he did not leave us. We were the Prodigal Son.

Here is the reason that Jesus sweat blood in Gethsemane. ALL of our sins were put on him.

Look at this !!! the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. What was that like? Imagine the pressure!!!

Like 53:1 Could anyone have believed this? Do you have any concept what Jesus did for you?

How can his suffering, pain, piercing, and wounds bring us peace and healing? See 1 Peter 2:23-25

Isa 53:7-9

Oppressed, afflicted, led like a lamb to the slaughter. Sounds helpless, but was he helpless? No! Yet he went like a lamb. He did not resist at all. He did it willingly. See John 10:17-18 “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.”

He was not the typical sacrificial lamb at all.

Jesus was silent: See Matt 26:59-63 for example.

Assigned a grave with the wicked (plural) and the rich (singular: Joseph of Arimathea, an interesting prophetic note): See Luke 23:32-33 (crucified with criminals—the wicked). See Luke 23:50-56 (with the rich. Joseph of Arimathea)

Read Isa 53:10-12

Verse 10, the King James Version says “it pleased the Lord to bruise him”, why would God be pleased by Jesus being crushed?

53:1 Who would have believed it?

God was not “pleased” (ie happy) by Jesus suffering directly but by the reconciliation it produced.

53:11 But that is not the end of the story, is it? After all this suffering, “He will see the light of life.” He will be resurrected after his suffering and death.

Verse 12, what is Jesus’s portion among the great?

God raised him from death.

He raised him to his side in the throne room of God. See Philippians 2:5-11

Isaiah 54:1-5 The result of the work of the Suffering Servant: This “barren woman” is the Gentile nations. We are this barren woman.

The one with a husband (v. 1) is unfaithful Israel.

The motif of barren women is quite common in the Bible. Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, Elizabeth. God makes the barren fruitful.

You are that barren woman, as is the church.

v. 2 lengthening our cords and strengthening our stakes = the kingdom, the number of saved growing greatly.

v. 3 Where? To the right, to the left to all nations. To their cities with all their desolate people, living their desolate lives.

v. 4-5 Our humiliation will be removed. Our reproach will end. And God will be our husband.

This is what the Suffering Servant did for you and for me.

Who would have believed our message???!!!

Like a tender shoot.

No beauty or majesty to attract us to him.

Yet Jesus was beaten—marred beyond human likeness.

Jesus was lifted up.

He poured out his life unto death.

He bore the sin of many and made intercession for our sins.

So let us sing like a barren woman who gives birth to many children.

Aside: There is debate in scholarly circles today. Many theologians, even conservative ones, want to downplay Penal Substitutionary Atonement (Jesus taking God’s wrath/punishment in our place), which was the principle theology of the 19th and early 20th century.

They want to emphasize more the cross as demonstrating God’s love.

They want to emphasize more the cross as the means of putting the worldly powers in their place—the Cross as triumph. (which is part of why they want to make the servant here Israel, not Jesus)

This is all well and good, and a good pendulum-shift, but let us not move the pendulum too far.

Isaiah 54:4-6 The shame “of your youth” (of your days before Christ) will be taken away. You will be guilt-free (Hebrews 9:14 The blood of Jesus cleanses our consciences. Heb 10:2 not feel guilty.)

(note that widows in ancient times were virtually cut off from family and potential remarriage—they were without hope in the world).

What was our shame replaced by?

v. 5 God is now our husband. Our kinsman/redeemer (Ruth and Boaz).

We are a wife called back into an intimate relationship (Hosea and Gomer)

Isaiah 54:7-15

v. 7 God abandoned us because of our sins, but only for a short time.

v. 8 But now I am taking you back forever.

v. 9 It is like Noah. I promised I would never again flood the earth. Now I promise you that you will never again be out of a relationship with me—never to rebuke again. (just read the rest)

 16-17 Is it true that God created the destroyer to “wreak havoc.”?

I thought that God did not create evil. What is this about? This is what God allows to bring us to repentance. He gives us over (Romans 1) to the things we love.

Isaiah 55:1-5 [John 10:10 The thief kills and destroys. I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full.]

v. 1 “Come to the waters.” and “come buy and eat.” Has to do with the things in life which really satisfy. Only in Christ do we have real life that fully satisfies.

v. 2 Have you spent yourself on things that do not satisfy? Note: Among the things that are not real bread is bread!

v. 1 Are these things really without cost? Could it mean that these are things that we cannot buy with our money?

v. 2 What did you formerly (or do you still) spend your money on and give your labor to?

v. 2 What is this “richest of fare” we can delight in? (the things that truly satisfy)

v. 3-5 This is about the New Covenant—an everlasting one.

 -promised

 -eternal

 -Messiah as ruler

 -many nations will come running!

 -splendor.

Isaiah 55:8-9 As the heavens are above the earth….

How are God’s thoughts above ours? We think we are pretty smart, and compared to a cow we are!

It is like us compared to a cow.

Q: Have you ever played golf with a real pro? Talked to a bona fide genius?

Isaiah 55:10-13 God’s word always accomplish its purpose.

What about those who hear it but reject it? (John 12:47-48).

Yes! Even when people reject God’s words, it still accomplishes its purpose to save or to judge. (Heb 4:12-13 it judges our thoughts and attitudes)

What have God’s words accomplished in your life? What are the juniper and myrtle to you?

Let us be in category #1. Let us be of those who are lifted up and saved by God’s words.

Isa 56:1-8 Our part in this wonderful plan.

v. 1. Maintain justice

v. 2. Do the right things in all circumstances. (obedience to commands, but also those things we know are right.)

v. 3-4 No-one will be excluded. The foreigner and the eunuch (who was unclean according to the Jews)

v. 5 Yes, even the eunuch and foreigner will be given a name better than sons and daughters. What might that name be? Revelation 3:12 “The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God… I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name.

v 6-8 All who are obedient and who love the Lord and who serve him will be brought to his holy mountain—to the Kingdom of God.

They (the Church) will be a house of prayer for all nations. (quoted in Mark 11:17, Matthew 21:13)

God is calling us to be that house of prayer.

[Isa 56:9-12 Q: Who are Israel’s watchmen? What’s wrong with these guys?]

Isaiah 57:1-2 This is a great passage to use with those who are grieving the loss of a Christian loved one. We ask why??? They enter into peace and are spared from evil. (See 2 Kings 22:19-20)

[Read Isa 57:3-13 Q: Who are these people, why is God upset with them, what are their sins? Verse 11, how did they lose their fear of God?]

Read Isa 57:14-19 A wonderfully encouraging passage, but also a challenging passage.

Remove the obstacles! (Is 40:3-4) God says, “I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite. I will not accuse them forever, not will I always be angry, for then they would faint away because of me—the very people I created.

Isaiah 58:1-14 Godly fasting. We covered this passage earlier in a section of God’s justice. Nevertheless…

Isa 58:1-2 They act religious. They seem eager to know God but the prophet rebukes them. Why? v. 3 Because it is insincere. They are concerned about themselves, not about God. This reminds of Malachi Ch 1, Ch 3. They are bringing the second best and wondering why God is not blessing them.

Isaiah 58:5-7 Godly fasting: Not to act humble but to be humble.

Loose the chains of injustice, untie the cords of the yoke, share your food, shelter the poor and clothe the naked. This is real religion (James 1:27)

Isa 58:8-14 Blessings God confers on those who do it right.

-your light will break forth.

-the Lord will answer.

-he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land.

-you will be a well-watered garden.

-you will rebuild the ancient ruins.

v. 9 Stop the pointing finger…

Isaiah 59:1-2 Q: Can God hear the prayers of sinners? Of course he does.

So why does he not hear?

Aside: John 9:31 is not true! Acts 10:1-6 God tells Cornelius that “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God.”

OK, so now I am confused. How am I to understand all of these scriptures?

Conclusion: Because of our sins, God chooses not to hear and to, in some sense, hide his “face” from us. Our relationship with God is dramatically hindered by our sin.

Isaiah 59:3-15 Is God exaggerating here? Romans 3:9-18 Is God exaggerating here? Does it feel like he is exaggerating to you? (note: some of this is quoted from Isaiah 59) Haven’t you done at least some good? Besides, remember Acts 10:1-6. Cornelius is remembered because of his good deeds. So, how are we to understand both Romans 3:9-8 and Isaiah 59:1-16?

Ephesians 2:1-3 We were “objects of wrath.” It would be like a dog who attacked and killed your child. That dog would be an “object of wrath.”

Isaiah 60:1-7 This is about the future kingdom, but primarily about now in the church.

v. 1 His glory appears over you. What does this make you think of?

v. 2 Darkness covers the earth. Thick darkness!!!

But the Lord rises on you and his glory appears over you.

Q: What does this mean to you? “His glory appears over you.”

What will this look like?

v. 3 Nations will come to you.

v. 4 Sons and daughters come from afar.

v. 5 heart will throb and swell with joy

 wealth on the seas will be brought to you.

v. 6 herds of camels, gold and incense.

Q: What will that look like in your life?

60:10-22. Is he talking about the Church or is he talking about our final state in heaven with him? Both, of course, but this is more about the New Heaven and New earth than our current state.

1. v. 11 Foreigners will rebuild your walls.

2. v. 11 your gates will always stand open.

3. v. 13 juniper, fir, cypress

4. v. 15 forsaken and hated becomes joy

5. v. 16 drink the milk of nations.

6. v. 18 no more violence, ruin or destruction.

7. v. 19 the Lord will be your light, not the sun. The sun will never set.

8. v. 21 only the righteous

Q: What do you think our final state with God will be like?

Isaiah 61:1-4

“The Spirit of the Lord is on *me*, because he has anointed *me* to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

His message, His good news: (quoting Isaiah 61:1-2)

1. Good news for the poor (in spirit?) 61:1

2. Freedom/release for (spiritual) prisoners 61:1

3. Healing for the (spiritually) sick (specifically the blind in Luke 4:18)

4. Release the (spiritually) oppressed Luke 4:18

5. The favor of the Lord. 61:2, Luke 4:19

Note: If you go to Isaiah 61:1-2 Jesus skips part of the passage. “and the day of vengeance of our God.” Why did Jesus not include this? Because Jesus came, “I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.” (John 12:46)

Notice Luke 4:21 “Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Q: Which of these qualities of the Messiah catches your attention?

-good news for the poor in spirit

-freedom for spiritual prisoners

-healing for the spiritually sick

-release for the spiritually oppressed

-the favor of the Lord.

v. 2b-4 The result:

-comfort for those who mourn

-joy instead of mourning

-oaks of righteousness. Strong, righteous

-destroyed lives will be rebuilt.

Read Isa 62:1-5 This is just about the most beautiful promise in the entire Bible.

-a new name Q: What do you think that your new name will be?

-a crown of splendor

-a royal diadem in the hand of your God

-Hephzibah (my delight is in her), Beulah (married)

-your builder will marry you.

Isaiah 62:6-7 A great memory verse. You who call on the Lord give yourselves no rest, and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth.

Q: Have you been giving yourself rest? Give yourself no rest until the final kingdom of God is established on earth.

Isaiah 63 – Summary: God will take vengeance on His enemies and redeem His people.

Read Isa 64:3-7 Tells us about God (he is awesome, does things we don’t expect, does things we don’t see, helps those who remember him)

Tells us about ourselves (all our righteous acts are filthy rags, no one calls on God or strives to be near him)

Q: Do you believe that all your righteous acts are like filthy rags (as they relate to your salvation, anyway)?

Isaiah 65:1-2 God is holding his hand out for obstinate people.

But for those to whom God reveals himself, here is what God will do:

Isaiah 65:17-25 This is what it is like in the Kingdom of God. This describes the church already but not yet, and it describes heaven.

Q: What is heaven (and to a lesser extent us even now) like according to this passage?

-the former things will be remembered no more.

-Jerusalem will be a delight.

-weeping will be heard no more.

-no more infant death—living to great age.

-before they call I will answer

-the wolf and the lamb will lie down together. “They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain.”

What is your personal picture of heaven?

To what extent is this true “already but not yet?”

Isaiah 66:9-24 This is a kind of summary of Isaiah. What are some of the things you have learned from the Book of Isaiah that you see in this passage?

v. 17 is a stark reminder of reality.

v. 19 What is the sign that God will set among them? (Jesus). Those who survive (the remnant) will go out to distant islands to proclaim God’s glory.

v. 20 And you will bring many visitors from all nations to my mountain/kingdom.