

The Book of Isaiah

Introduction of the Book

The writer and the time it was written:

- The book is written by Isaiah, and the meaning of the name 'Isaiah' is 'Jehovah is Salvation'. He was the son of Amos. According to the old Jewish tradition, Amos was the brother of King Amaziah. It is clear in the book that Isaiah was of royal heritage and had a relationship with the palace [7:3; 38:1; 39:3]. He was also married with two sons – Shear Jashub, the meaning of the name being 'the Remnant Returns', and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, meaning 'Hasten the Spoil'.
- Isaiah's service began in 767 BC until 697 BC – approximately 70 years. According to tradition, he was persecuted by King Manasseh, and was sawed with a sword – as it is inferred in Hebrews 11:37.
- Contemporary scholarship says that there were multiple authors of the book, but the Early Church always held that he was the only author. This kind of liberal criticism became more active around the Enlightenment era in the 18th-19th cts.
 - One main cause was because there is much conceptual variety or varied thinking in the book.
 - Another cause was because of the anachronistic prophecy about King Cyrus in the book, 200 years before it happened. Of course, the simple answer to this is that it is common for prophecy to be made many years before it occurs.

- Conceptual variety is also something that is common to the prophetic books. These are all answers to these criticisms.
 - Additionally, there is an expression repeated throughout the book, which is unique to the book, that shows that Isaiah is the only author: the ‘Holy one of Israel’.
- Another point: The book is quoted about 60 times in the New Testament. 28 of those 60 references are from the second half of the book, which is chapters of 40-66. Isaiah’s name itself is mentioned 11 times in the New Testament.
 - Another important point. There is a reference that is mentioned by John the Apostle [Jn 12:38-41]. He makes two quotations, one from ch.6 and one from ch.53. Because John the Apostle quoted from both halves of Isaiah, attributing both to Isaiah, it suggests that both halves are written by Isaiah.
 - Also, the full book of Isaiah was discovered in 1947 together with the Dead Sea Scrolls, and it was dated 2nd ct. BC
 - Another point: Isaiah was ministering in very difficult circumstances. The kings that reigned at the time of his ministry are mentioned in 1:1. The first was King Uzziah. Although he was initially pious, his heart became prideful and he rebelled against God. This delayed the ministry of the prophet. Jotham the second king feared God, but his son King Ahaz openly worshipped idols. The fourth king Hezekiah was pious, and he made a revival in the nation.
 - Another point. During Isaiah’s time, many were against the southern kingdom of Judah, such as Syria, Israel, Edom and the Philistines. The kingdoms of the North united with Syria to fight

against the southern kingdom of Judah. Unfortunately, the southern kingdom, instead of putting their trust in God, united with the Assyrians [2 Kgs 16:6-7]. However, Judah was not able to obtain any aid from the Assyrians [2 Chron 28:28, 32:1].

- Isaiah saw that the Northern Kingdom had made a covenant with Egypt. This unfortunately resulted in them being taken captive in Assyria. King Hezekiah wanted Judah to be released from oppression, and God aided him [2 Kgs 18:7]. After a while, Isaiah had to rebuke Hezekiah's relationship with Babylon. He prophesied about the captivity of Babylon [2 Kgs 20:12-9].

The purpose of writing the book:

- It is the first prophetic book in our modern books (our Bibles). But in the Jewish books, Isaiah is the first book of the late prophets.
- Another point. Isaiah wrote abundantly about the Messiah like no other prophetic book, except the Psalms. He was therefore called the 'evangelist among the prophets'.
- Also, the book is comprised of two main parts: chs.1-35 and 40-66. Chs.36-39 is a historical piece
 - The first part clarifies the state of Israel externally, and the second part clarifies their internal state.
 - From chs.1-35 are prophecies relating to the End Times
 - It also details the ways of God with Judah and Israel (in chs.1-12).
 - Chs.13-27 speak of the surrounding nations that have a relationship with Israel

- Chs.28-35 contain the six ‘woes’, followed by a description of the millennium (the Second Coming of Christ)
- The historical piece (chs.36-39) describes the attacks coming upon Israel from their enemies, as well as God’s great salvation for them. There is also a mention of Hezekiah’s illness and recovery
- Chs.40-66 prophesy of the relationship of the people of God with the Messiah. The book is ended with a description of the reign of the Messiah in the Second Coming
 - Chs.40-48 – States that Jehovah hears His people, and details the salvation from Babylon and the condemnation of the worship of idols
 - Chs.49-57 describes the passion and the glory of the Messiah
 - Chs. 58-66 are a summary of the thoughts and ways of God towards the children of Israel and the restoration of Israel’s glory

Peculiarities of the book:

a) The Holy One of Israel

This expression has a very special place because it is written 28 times. In the entire Old Testament, this expression is not used except 7 other times (written in 2 Kgs, the Psalms, Jeremiah and Ezekiel). This is notable because it is mentioned in both halves of the book, each 14 times, therefore it confirms the unity of the book. This expression refers to the absolute holiness of God. Also, it is the praises of the seraphim to God: ‘Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth’.

b) Salvation

This word is repeated many times in the book; it is therefore a key word [12:2 and 3 - 'wells of salvation'; 17:10 - 'God of thy salvation'; 25:9 - 'Joy in His salvation'; 26:1 - 'Salvation for walls and bulwarks'; 26:18, 45:8 and 17, 46:13 - 'Salvation' or 'eternal salvation'; 49:6-8 - 'the day of salvation'; 51:5,6 and 8, 52:7 - 'Evangelising of salvation'; 52:10 and 56:1, 59:11 and 17 - 'the helmet of salvation'; 60:18, 61:10 - 'salvation'].

c) The Messianic prophecies

There are many prophecies of the Messiah, as though Isaiah saw Him continuously before his eyes [47:4, 48:17 - the promised redeemer is Jehovah Himself; 7:14, 9:2 and 6, 11:1-2, 48:16 - incarnation of the Son of God; 4:2, 42:1, 50:4 and 5, 53:1 and 2 - the humiliation of the Messiah; 8:14, 49:4, 53:3 - the rejection of the Messiah; 50:6, 52:14, 53:3-7 and 10-12, 63:9 - the suffering of the Messiah; 9:7, 11:3-10, 25:8, 28:16, 32:1, 49:6, 52:15, 53:9-12, and chs.58-66 - the glory of the Messiah].

The contents of the book:

- Chs.1-12 speak of Judah and Jerusalem
- Chs.13-27 are on the surrounding nations
- Chs.28-35 are the six 'woes'
- Chs.36:39 remain to be the historical piece.
- Chs.40-66 have 3 parts: 40-48 = Jehovah listens to His people; 49-57 = the rejection and the suffering of the Messiah; 58-66 = the restoration of Israel's glory

Chapter 1-12

Introduction:

- Isaiah was primarily prophesying to the southern kingdom of Judah. And he gave himself mainly to its ministry, with the purpose of correcting and consoling it
- His burden with the surrounding nations was mainly towards the nations who were oppressing Judah
- Isaiah had an all-encompassing vision for God's purposes. God was aware that all the nations could be blessed through His people. Thus, also regarding judgment, God's goal was to bless all the earth.
- The prophecies containing the judgments is found in three places:
 - o Of Judah and Jerusalem, chapters 1-12
 - o Of the surrounding nations, chapters 13-27
 - o Of the faithful remnant, chapter 37

Chapter 1-12:

The Judgement of Judah and Jerusalem

- This judgement is in two halves: chapter 1-6 and chapter 7-12. What separates them is the death of King Uzziah. During this time, the prophet was given a specific vision.

Chapter 1

- In the first verses of 1-9, we see an unfortunate picture of Judah as a nation. There is a dialogue between Jehovah and His people. Within it is clarified the necessity of judgement.

- Jehovah is calling the heavens and the earth to listen to His complaint against His people. Despite His love for them, they do not know Him
- The prophet is drawing the people's attention to why they are being judged, and that the cause of their pain is their sins. He says that, despite this warning, they continue to rebel. Isaiah is alerting them that the mere pursuit of rituals and rites will not benefit them. God will despise such an offering if it is offered without repentance [1:10-15].
- 1:16-20: God is negotiating with His people, calling them for repentance.
- 1:21-31: Isaiah says that the city of Jerusalem has become completely corrupted. Therefore, judgement is unavoidable. He says that God's purpose is correction. Unless they obey, the city will be completely destroyed.

Chapter 2

- vv.1-4: The vision of the latter days. The purpose of judgement is to deliver us to these latter days. The prophet sees that the mountain of God is the headquarters of worship, to which all the nations will flow. There they will know the Lord and His statues
- vv.5-9: He is describing the unfortunate state of the people of God who have been immersed in idol-worship. The prophet is calling them to walk in the light of God. However, the people are more concerned with worldly matters; they became wealthy and powerful. Yet, still the judgement is coming and is unavoidable
- vv.10-22: This scene is an alarming one, but Isaiah says that it will result in the removal of idol-worship [v.18], and that all will submit. He proclaims that all the different classes of people, rich and poor, will submit to God

Chapter 3

- The prophet explains in detail the type of judgement. It is mainly directed to the rulers and the women.
 - Rulers [vv.1-15]: He is exposing the corruption of the government and all its organisations. The leaders are not mature and therefore rebellion and injustice prevail
 - Women [vv.16-end]: They are able to be in authority through the rulers. Therefore, he declares judgement on the women.

Chapter 4

- We see the importance of the role of women. It is evident that, as the woman stands in her rightful place, she is able to direct the men in authority who are either her husband or her son, towards the fear of God and obeying His statutes.
 - Throughout history, there has always been a correlation between corrupt leaders and women. When a woman is strayed from her calling and God's purpose in her life, she becomes more actively corrupt and so corrupts those around her
 - There is a very strict and serious judgement from God on this matter: [vv.3 and 4]. This condemnation is so serious that it is punishable by death. 'Survivors' [4:3] suggests that those left were women who survived the punishment of death
- Vv.5 and 6: The glory of God is declared through purification. God's will towards His purified people is apparent. Because God's people purify themselves, they gain God's protection

Chapter 5

- This chapter is continuation of the 4th chapter. The judgement is still declared. Here he explains more about this judgement. It has three divisions: vv.1-7, 8-23, and 24-30:
 - vv.1-7: A song in which God is justifying Himself in giving this inevitable judgement. Because He did everything He could for this vineyard, He is justified [v.5-6]. V.7 – His vineyard is the house of Judah and Israel is His pleasant plant
 - vv.8-23: 6 ‘woes’ for: 1. (v.8) Monopolising and oppressing the poor 2. (v.11) Rulers living in luxury 3. (v.18-9) Lack of faith that justifies sin and mocks divine intervention 4. (v.20) Apparent confusion and much chaos 5. (v.21) Wisdom without God, Who is the Lord of Wisdom 6. (v.22-3) Overturning the scales of righteousness
 - vv.24-30: Here Isaiah exposes the tool of judgement, which is the wrath of God, Who will call foreign nations to come. He describes the fierceness of these nations, and what they will do to Israel who is under judgement, for they rejected God and His law

Chapter 6

- The prophecy of Isaiah as mentioned in 1:1 was during the reign of four kings: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah. At this point, Uzziah passed away, ending the prophecies of his reign. The second phase begins which is during the days of Jotham and Ahaz (the 3rd phase is during the time of Hezekiah). In this second phase, the prophet begins this new, extended phase, which continues until ch.35. Therefore, he needs a specific vision with a particular purpose. With this, we learn that every

new spiritual phase needs a new specific vision and a new particular goal

- vv.1-4: Isaiah sees the Lord. He was upon a high and exalted throne, surrounded by the praises of the seraphim. There was also a shaking of the posts of the door.
- vv.5-7: Isaiah began to cry out. After he had given the 6 ‘woes’ to the people, he proclaims a ‘woe’ over himself. We notice that God Who is surrounded by angels, and Whom the heavens praise, does not ignore the cries of the prophet. It is as though He ignored the angels and the heavens to attend to the prophet’s cry. Even the seraphim who were praising him ceased because they were given a new task: they took the coal and touched the lips of Isaiah, proclaiming that his guilt is taken away
- vv.8-13: Now the prophet is prepared for a new mission, which is leading to a new commission (vv.8-9). The commission is declaring the extended judgement (vv.9-12). However, the final purpose of this judgement is purification and renewal (v.13)

Chapter 7

- vv.1-9: After the declaration of the new commission of the prophet in the previous chapter, we see the confrontation of the prophet with King Ahaz. For there were two kings who allied together against Judah: King Rezin (king of Syria) and King Pekah (king of Israel). Therefore, Ahaz king of Judah and his people were filled with fear. Thus, God sent the prophet to comfort them and assure them that He will not allow this, and that their conspiracy will fail
- vv.10-16: The prophet asks King Ahaz to ask for a sign, so that his faith could be encouraged. However, the king refused, because of his lack of faith. Isaiah rebukes this lack of faith (v.13). Immediately afterwards, Isaiah prophesies of Immanuel. What is the link here between this rebuke and the prophecy of

Immanuel? Isaiah is saying that, even though the king refuses to ask for a sign, a sign will be given. Here the prophet pauses, because it is a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah which will extend throughout the rest of the book

- vv.17-25: Because of the king's rejection to God and lack of faith, Assyria shall invade Judah as a judgement. This Assyrian invasion is recorded in the historical piece in chs.36-7.

Chapter 8

- The key for this chapter is in v.16. God asks the prophet that he would pause for a time his public service, so that he could isolate himself with a group of disciples, preparing them to be men of signs in their generation. Thus, the prophet began this isolation as directed by the Lord.
- Vv.1-4: He wrote on a large tablet these words, that they would be clear before all: 'Belonging to Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz', meaning that the spoil speeds and the prey hastens
- Vv.5-8: The prophet clarifies why this is happening, as God had explained it to him. The people had rejected God's calm ways that would lead to a secure salvation, which are symbolised by the 'waters that flow softly' [v.6]. Therefore, God will release upon them the fierce and strong judgement [v.7, 8].
- Vv.9-16: The prophet here clarifies that this is the small circle of disciples to whom the Lord will be a security and protection. However, to others He will be a stumbling and a judgement [v.14, 15].
- Vv.19-22: Isaiah is teaching the small circle about those who follow evil spirits and seek mediums and wizards. For them, the result will be darkness and anguish. Therefore, the prophet will give his disciples the message of hope in chapter 9.

Chapters 9-10

- Vv.1-7: Here we find the message of hope: the coming of the Saviour and its results. This is one of the greatest Messianic passages in the Old Testament. However, after this passage we find the judgement of Israel in four parts, from chs.9:8-10:4. Each section ends in the same phrase: ‘And for all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still.’ [9:12, 17, 21; 10:4]
 - 9:8-12
 - The first judgement, concerning pride. For this reason, He is releasing on them Syrians and Philistines
 - Vv.13-17
 - They have stubbornness and resistance of the heart, resulting in lack of response or apathy. Therefore, He is declaring judgement on the rulers who are responsible for guiding the people.
 - Vv.18-21
 - The judgement on the inner, civil struggle (inter-tribal conflicts). They are fighting between themselves, therefore they ‘eat the flesh of [their] own arm.’ [v.20]
 - 10:1-4
 - Directed towards the judges and rulers. Their judgement shall come from the people surrounding them.
 - Despite this, the resistance will continue, and they will persist in evil. Therefore, the anger of God is not turned away, and His hand is stretched out still in judgement.
 - 10:5-27

- Vv.5-11: Judgement is declared on Assyria. Isaiah says that God uses them as a tool to chastise His people. However, the Assyrians do not perceive this, therefore God will also judge them afterwards [v.12]. The prophet here highlights the contrast between God's purposes and the purposes of the Assyrians. The purpose of God is that the Assyrians would be a tool to chastise the people. Yet, the Assyrians' purpose is to destroy the people of God. For this reason, God will interfere and cease this destruction, bringing about Assyria's own judgement.
- Vv.12-15: God clarifies that He will bring to fruition His purpose. The Assyrians are ignoring God and thinking that they are the source of their own power, boasting in it.
- Vv.16-19: He describes the type of judgement that will be on the Assyrians
- Vv.20-27: Isaiah describes the attitude of the faithful remnant. He instructs them to lean on and trust in Jehovah alone, Who will take the burden of the Assyrians away from them [v.27]. He will declare to them His judgement on the Assyrians.
- Vv.28-32: He describes the judgement that is coming upon the people of Israel. The prophet sees with the prophetic eye that the Assyrians began to move towards Israel which will take a long time (because travelling then was a long, heavy-laden process). The faithful remnant who lean on Jehovah their God will be preserved [v.27]. He lists the countries which the Assyrian army will pass through: Aith, Migron and Michmash.
- Vv.33-34: This refers to God's action against Assyria or any boastful powers. He exemplifies this

by saying that even Lebanon, known for its strong trees, can be simply brought down by God (if it rebels against God).

Chapter 11

- V.1: The prophet sees that the judgement of Assyria is on the brink, and that the empire of Assyria will come to an end. He lifts his prophetic eyes to see that another kingdom will prevail, which is the kingdom of the Messiah. This is always the fruit of judgement in the economy of God – that judgement leads to something new and blessed. He says that the kingdom of the Messiah will begin with a ‘Branch’ [v.1]. This kingdom shall begin with the appearance of this Branch, Who is the Messiah – the offspring of David, the offspring of Jesse. He describes this Branch:
 - 1-9: His appearance, anointing, His conduct and His way of ruling His kingdom. He also prophesies of the results of all of this: the curse will be lifted, and the nature of creation will return to its prelapsarian (pre-fallen) state
- vv.10-15: The sign for the appearance of the Messianic kingdom is this ‘banner’. All the nations will see Him and ask for Him. The Messiah will begin to gather the remnant of His people from every place, and there shall be no strife between the northern and southern kingdom [v.13]. The northern kingdom is prophetically called Ephraim, and the southern kingdom is Judah. If some assume that their unity will never be restored, the prophet is confirming that they will be reunited. Isaiah says that this scene resembles the other exodus as it was in Egypt, which had the victory over the enemies and the declaration of God’s glory.

Chapter 12

- This is an extension of the previous chapter. Isaiah portrays the image that will manifest with the appearance of the Messianic kingdom at the Second Coming. He conveys two parts:
 - Vv.1-3: The people of God and their praises and joy during that time.
 - Vv.4-6: The people of God that will speak to all the nations about God, so that all will come and know God

Chapter 13

- Introduction
 - Here begins the second subdivision of chs.1-35, which is chs.13-27 (on the nations)
 - A preliminary comment regarding the historical background: there is an overlapping between the Assyrian and Babylonian empires. Assyria existed from 2025-610 BC (ongoing for 1,415 years), while Babylon is dated 1900-1,600 BC (over 300 years).
 - Also keeping in mind that Babylon as an Empire started at 610 BC (time of the fall of Assyrian) till 539 BC when it fell, and Mede & Persia became the following Empire.
 - Therefore, when the prophet refers to Babylon, it is also referring to Assyria.
 - Here we read about the judgement of Babylon, which will be the point of focus again in ch.21. The Assyrian empire was greater and extended for a longer time and was able to subdue many of the nations in its victories. We read about it in Isaiah ch.10:12-14, about its power and pride. According to scholars, this chapter is an extension of what was already written. In reality, Babylon here is a part of the Assyrian empire. Therefore, all the judgement is to be

taken on Assyria; the judgement declared in ch.13 is for Assyria. There is an important reference in 14:25 that reinforces that the judgement is towards the Assyrians: *'That I will break the Assyrian in My land, And on My mountains tread him underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, And his burden removed from their shoulders.'*

- V.1-10:
 - The prophet is declaring the Day of the Lord, the day of judgement. He depicts God as gathering the army who will fight the Assyrians (Babylon) for judgement. He claims that the goal is to fend off evil in general [v.11]. He continues to describe the judgement until v.16.
- V. 17-22:
 - Isaiah also declares that the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians will be the ones to rule after Babylon. The Medes and the Persians will be the tools for punishment of Babylon and Assyria.

Chapter 14-15

- Vv.1-27: Isaiah continues the dialogue of the prior chapter
- Vv. 28-32: He speaks of Palestine
- Vv. 15:1-9: He speaks of Moab
- Vv.1-27
 - The chapter begins with an explanation of the judgement spoken of previously, which is the Assyrian oppression of God's people
 - Vv.1-2: He declares that God will have mercy on the people of God, that they will rest in their land, will be relieved of their oppression, and that those who oppressed them will submit to them and serve them

- Vv.3-23: The prophet puts in the mouth of Israel a song of taunting, which is comprised of five parts. In Hebrew, this is actually a poem in the form of a song
 - A) Vv.4-8: When Assyria was destroyed, all the land was relieved, because they had previously oppressed all the nations and were victorious over them
 - B) Vv.9-11: The reaction of Hell. All the kings of the prior kingdoms, who are now in Hell, are astonished to see the king of Assyria join them. No one had expected such a powerful nation as this to fall.
 - C) Vv.12-15: The reason for the fall is their rebellion against God and the deification of themselves (seeing themselves as another god) [v.14]. This was the same thought of the serpent in Eden
 - D) vv.16-19: The end of the king of Assyria (Babylon). All the kings lie in their tombs, but he is cast out away from his grave: ‘All the kings of the nations sleep in glory... but you are cast out of your grave like an abominable branch, like the garment of those who are slain’ [vv.18,19].
 - E) vv.20-23: The declaration of the final destruction of the empire, which will extend to its offspring [v.22].
- Vv.24 until the end of ch.15
 - It contains three consecutive prophecies, tied to what was mentioned before. They concern Assyria, Palestine and Moab
 - 14:24-27
 - Jehovah is declaring that He is insistent on the destruction of Assyria, showing this by swearing it
 - 14:25: Babylon and Assyria are named interchangeably
 - 14:28-32

- Concerning Philistia. Even though Philistia itself is the one who oppresses Israel, now it is being oppressed by Assyria. The prophet warns Philistia here not to rejoice because Assyria has been destroyed, for there are other tools that God can use against Philistia.
- Chapter 15
 - Speaking of Moab and its destruction. This destruction is all-encompassing and will be the cause of them being scattered in every place with sorrow, crying and mourning. The prophet himself is impacted by the suffering, as in v.5: ‘My heart will cry out for Moab.’
 - V.28: The important death of king Ahaz. This is important for it implies that all the prior kings have died, bringing in the reign of king Hezekiah
- Why was 15 tied into 14? For these are the three consecutive prophecies in regard to Assyria, Philistia and Moab.

Chapter 16

- This is an extension on the talk on Moab. The prophet is speaking in v.1 until the end. He suggests to Moab to find its refuge in Zion, and send forth lambs to be offered there from Sela, which is the capital of Edom, for the Moabites have been scattered, and now they are around Edom. Therefore, their only security will be in Israel and for them to offer these sacrifices. He is therefore calling them to believe in Jehovah. But in vv.6-11 it is evident that their pride will prevent them from following this advice.
- The destruction extends to all of Moab and its vineyards. The prophet himself was sharing in the suffering of this. This is the

prophetic spirit, which always partakes in the suffering prophesied of [Vv.9 & 11]

- V.12: Even if Moab comes to his sanctuary to pray, he will not prevail and his prayers will remain unanswered, for they are directed towards idols
- Vv.13-14: Isaiah says that what will happen over the coming three years will be the fulfilment of a previous prophecy.

Chapter 17

- Vv.1-5: The prophecy concerns Damascus and the declaration of its judgement [vv.1-2]. We read something important that Ephraim (Israel) is allied with Syria. Therefore, when Syria is destroyed, it will impact Israel as well [vv.3-4]. The prophet begins to describe the negative results that which come upon Israel because of this alliance. This continues until v.6.
- Vv.7-9: The people of God will have to look to their God rather than looking to idols. We read in the historic books that King Ahaz, in his last visit to Syria, asked for some of their gods to be brought back to Israel, for he was deceived into thinking that they were the cause for Syria's victory [2kgs 16:10-16]. Isaiah says that Israel will have to look again to their God, rather than these idols.
- Vv.10-11: Ephraim's harvest will be fruitless because he looked to these idols and forgot his God, Who is the God of his salvation
- Vv.12-14: The prophet is dialoguing with himself, because he began to see that many nations were surrounding Israel, and he was questioning what could be done. But he concludes that the God of Israel is sufficient and is able to protect them.

Chapter 18

- Vv.1-2: Isaiah speaks of a land of buzzing wings, which is Cush; Cush encompasses Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. The buzzing wings are a type of locust that are characteristic of that region. Here the prophet is talking to the messengers coming from Cush to Israel who are asking for a type of alliance against Assyria, for Assyria was extending their authority over all the nations at that time. The prophet saw these messengers coming quickly in these ships on the rivers. The prophet tells them to return to their land, for there will be no alliance made with them at this time.
- V.3: The prophet declares that God is waiting for the right time to declare the judgement on Assyria. He says that, at that time, all the people will know that Assyria's judgement will be completed (it is known to us from previous chapters that God is waiting because He is fulfilling His purposes by using Assyria to chastise His people)
- Vv.4-6: The prophet relays God's explanation that there is a time in which He will wait in order to fulfil His purposes of using Assyria to chastise Israel. After that, He will destroy Assyria [v.6]
- V.7: The prophet returns to addressing Cush. He tells them that, after the destruction of Assyria is known to all nations, the messengers of Cush will be welcome in Israel, not for alliance, but to worship the Lord.

Chapters 19

- An extension of chapter 18, because Egypt is a part of Cush. After he has advised the messengers of Cush to return to their land, he specifies Egypt, as a part of Cush

- Vv.1-4: God is speedily approaching with judgement on Egypt (riding on a swift cloud). When God comes, all of the widespread idol-worship and sorcery will be exposed. Also, divisions will take place, and there will be much confusion, with the presence of an oppressive ruler. We recall that Egypt were very cruel with Israel when they were in Egypt
- Vv.5-10: There will be an inner, economic collapse. The Nile which is the main source of life for the nations will be dried up. The result of that will be the demise of agriculture. Also, there will be the collapse of the fish trade, on which they are dependent. All the handiwork of those who weave and sew will cease. There will be a complete economic downfall.
- Vv.11-15: The prophet points specifically to the exposing of the false wisdom of Egypt, because it is a fleshly and often satanic wisdom. Egyptians assume that they have obtained wisdom, but here we see them in complete confusion and evident stupidity. The Lord has mingled in her a spirit of confusion, and therefore neither the great nor the simple are able to think of any solutions to any problems.
- Vv.16-17: There is a trembling and fear that surrounds everyone, especially a fear of Israel, who previously was subdued under Egypt. Now Israel is the subject of trembling and fear [v.17].
- The prophet declares this because, at that time, some rulers of Israel planned to ally with Egypt against Assyria (as mentioned in Isaiah 30). The prophet is reminding them that Egypt will be an unfortunate state and will not be able to help them (the final fulfilment of this prophecy will be in the End Times, as with all the prophecies).
- Vv.18-22: The prophet brings the news that there is a hope for Egypt after this judgement, for there will be an altar and a pillar in Egypt. The altar probably represents personal worship in the houses, while the pillar symbolises public worship for all the

nation of Egypt. Therefore, Isaiah signifies that Egypt will seek the Lord. After a time of pain and chastisement, Egypt will be restored to the Lord, stricken yet healed [v.22]

- Vv.23-25: Isaiah gives a sign of future things. The circumstances will be changed completely. Assyria who was fighting against and oppressing Israel will have a fellowship with them, together with Egypt. This fellowship will be a blessing for all the earth.

Chapter 20

- The prophet reflects on the whole area of Cush. He says that, although Egypt has hope, the current time is for judgement for the whole area of Cush. He determines the times for the fulfilment of this judgement, which has two signs:
 - o The commander of the Assyrian army will come upon Ashdod and capture it
 - o The prophet will be guided by God to walk barefoot and take off the outer garment
- V.4: The prophet says that, when Assyria is victorious over Egypt and Cush, it will lead the youth and the old in the same manner of being barefoot and naked, as part of their humiliation
- Vv.5-6: Isaiah reminds the people of the pitiful state of Egypt, from whom the people of Israel are seeking security.

Chapter 21

- Here we find three prophecies: Babylon, Dumah (Edom) and Arabia. For this prophecy to be understood, it needs the historical background.
 - o The Wilderness of the Sea is surrounded by the Persian Gulf. Elam and Media comprise Persia, and this kingdom will take over Assyria and Babylon. This chapter is talking

about an attempt of Persia to enter Babylon and overtake Assyria (for Babylon is part of Assyria, therefore entering into Babylon is a gateway to overtaking Assyria).

Therefore, it can liberate the entire area of Persia from oppression. The king of the Persian Gulf is Merodach-Baladan. As mentioned, he attacked Babylon in order to overtake the entire Assyrian empire. He was indeed able to enter Babylon, and declared himself king over Babylon. After he conquered Babylon, his army relaxed, for they assumed that their mission was completed. In this relaxed state, the Assyrians were able to return, attack and cast them out. Therefore, the Persians' attempt failed.

- Another point. The people of Judah were watching these events very closely, for they knew that if Persia was able to overthrow Assyria, the Jews would also be free of the oppression of the Assyrian Empire. Yet, unfortunately, because Persia failed at this attempt and did not have their guards up and the correct defensive strategies, they were conquered. When Judah was watching this, they were deflated, for it meant that their oppression would continue.
- v.1: Over the Wilderness of the Sea (This part is surrounded by the Persian Gulf)
- v.2: This illustrates the close surveillance of Judah of the events, because they await their sighing to come to an end.
- vv.3-4: The prophet himself was also watching these events very closely and was very much pained by all that was happening.
- The prophet expresses his feelings about this situation. The prophet implies that he fainted
- v.5: The prophet describes what was occurring in Babylon after the Persian army was able to enter into Babylon. The Persians were continuing life normally, eating and drinking. They assumed that their defences which they had initially set up were enough. The prophet instructs them to 'Arise, you princes,

anoint the shield!’ [v.5b] (for in those days their shields which were made of dried animal skins would be anointed with oil to lubricate them and prevent arrows from penetrating, but would make them slide off. Yet, because they were relaxed and over-confident, they neglected to do this.)

- vv.6-10

- In Judah, because they were concerned about these events, they delegated a watchman to monitor what was happening. He said that he had given an attentive ear and had been watching all night, but that the battle was over, for Babylon had fallen to the Assyrians [vv.7-9].
- The words of verse 10 are unclear, but it is saying that all the grain they would reap and gather would be trampled because the Assyrians are returning.

- vv.11-12

- Dumah, which was under the oppression of Assyria, was a ‘burden’ on the heart of the prophet [v.11]. All were watching, for there were many rebellions against Assyria. Seir, the capitol of Edom, also delegated a watchman. They ask ‘What of the night?’, asking when the night of their oppression by the Assyrians will end.
 - ‘The morning comes...’: This is an indication that the rebellion against the Assyrians is beginning, therefore they feel that there is hope for overthrowing the Assyrians
 - ‘...and also the night.’: However, when all of these rebellions against Assyria failed, the night of oppression commenced
 - Edom was in the same position as Judah. They were watching over the whole situation in which the Persians were able to pierce through Assyria, for this seemed to be the end of their oppression. However,

Assyria regained Babylon, therefore Edom's night of oppression was again imminent.

- v.12: As if Isaiah tells Dumah to continue watching over all the events
- vv.13-17: A prophecy concerning Arabia. The prophet speaks to certain Arabian tribes, including the Dedanites and Tema. This passage is divided into two:
 - vv.13-14: The prophet describes their primitive way of life
 - vv.15-17: Isaiah speaks about the judgement coming to Dedan and Tema within a year

Chapter 22

- A prophecy concerning the Valley of Vision, the Valley of Kidron (referenced in the NT as the Brook Kidron [Jn 18:1])
- Although it was mentioned in the introduction that chs.13-27 are prophecies concerning nations, here in ch.22 Isaiah inserts a prophecy on Judah. Why? Here is the groaning of the prophet for his people among these nations. Although there are many events unfolding around them, Judah is in a state of apathy. Although the surrounded nations are crying out and in humiliation and war, Isaiah's people are living normally, concerned only with eating, drinking and everyday life.
- He calls them to change, to 'weeping and mourning' [v.12] instead of what they are currently in [v.13]
- v.14: This iniquity will have no atonement.
- We have spoken about the state of the people in vv.12-14. But we will return to the preceding verses.
- vv.3-4: The prophet says that he is suffering and will weep, for Judah do not understand what their actions will result in. They will be surrounded and their rulers taking captive [v.3]. Therefore, Isaiah calls them to weeping and mourning instead of living in apathy.

- vv.8-11: They lean on their personal way of conducting the warfare
 - They destroy houses in order to take their material and build a wall
 - They also redirect the canals so that the Assyrians cannot besiege them
 - They make storages for the water, so that any besiegement will not affect them.
 - They depend on their weapons, storage and defences; therefore, they assume they can conquer Assyria.
However, these things are worthless because they did not look to their God nor turn to Him (2 Chron 32:1-11) has the historical background connected with this part.
- In this part of the chapter till v.14, Isaiah hints at the war between Judah and Assyria, as recorded in Isa 36-7.
- vv.15-19: Shebna was a steward for king Hezekiah. He was speaking with Eliakim and Joah on behalf of the king to the Assyrian Rabshakeh and his messengers (as recorded in 2 Kings 18:17-19 and 26).
 - It seems that Shebna was the highest-ranking representative under the king. Yet, his heart was not concerned for the people, but for his own matters. During this time, when there was complete chaos, Shebna was preoccupied with the traditional issue of building a tomb in a high place which would be seen by all people.
 - The prophet challenges him: ‘What have you here?’ He questions him why he is even present there; he will not even be buried in his tomb, for the Lord will ‘toss you like a ball into a large country’ (probably Assyria)
 - v.19: Shebna will be driven out of his office
- vv.20-24: Isaiah speaks of Eliakim. He is hailed as the opposite of Shebna, because he is faithful.

- v.21: He will take Shebna's place after Shebna has been thrown out, and will be the father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem (this is a prominent Old Testament reference to spiritual fatherhood).
- v.23: He will be fastened as a peg.
- v.24: Both the simple and poor and the rich and great will lean on him
- v.25: Yet, the time will come when even this secure peg will be removed, when the captivity of Judah into Babylon will happen

Chapter 23

- vv.1-9: This prophecy relates to a place in Lebanon. Two of the most important cities in this area were Tyre and Sidon. These cities used the sea to trade goods on ships from city to city.
 - v.1, 2 : The prophet talks to a ship coming from Tarshish (currently a part of Spain) to Tyre. This ship had heard on its voyage news that Tyre was being destroyed (probably by Assyria) and thus it stopped in Cyprus on the way. LSEP
 - v.3: Egypt also traded grain with Tyre, therefore it also was sad to hear the news of Tyre's defeat
 - v.4: The prophet delivers a message on behalf of the sea. This is a prophetic characteristic, in which natural elements are personified and given a voice. The sea accuses Tyre and Sidon of not labouring to become wealthy. It tells them that they did not go through birth pains, as any other nation would have had, but that their wealth came easily to them. In trading, they used deception and evil to gain wealth quickly. This will be the cause for their judgement
 - v.6 The people in Tyre wail because of the economic collapse of Tyre and Sidon

- v.8: Tyre produced crowns for kings, thus it is called the crowning city. There is a question: why are these things taking place? Why does this happen? God is judging all pride and the wealth resulting from trade, because of the evils and deceptions within
- vv.10-12: The prophet calls for the whole area. Tarshish is from the Northwest, Egypt is Southeast and Cyprus is Northeast. All are mourning because they have all collapsed due to the destruction of Tyre.
 - v.12: He tells these nations that even Tyre, who assumed they could trade in Cyprus as a solution to their own economic collapse, will not have rest if they attempt to cross over to Cyprus
- v.13: Now they have no protection. Just as Babylon was conquered (as we mentioned in v.21), Isaiah exhorts these nations not to be deceived that they are secure in their world of trading, for it also will be conquered.
- vv.15-18: Tyre will be forgotten about seventy years. Then they will return to trading, for all the measures taken probably by Assyria to cease the trade of Tyre will come to an end. Tyre will return to trading and have the same evil and deceptive way of conducting their trade. Therefore, it is called a ‘song of the harlot’ [v.15].
 - v.18: Yet, for a reason unknown, the profit will be used for those who are servants of the Lord

Chapters 24-27

General introduction

- These chapters are called the ‘Vision of Isaiah’
- All the attacks of Assyria to these named places are examples of the Assyrian destruction that extended to all the nations.

- This destruction that is over the whole earth will lead to glory and blessing, after the judgement and purification

Chapter 24

- vv.1-13: Here the prophet is proclaiming the general judgement over all the earth because of the curse, which has been brought about because of the neglect of the law and the breaking of the everlasting covenant. The prophet describes all the consequences of this transgression, like the absence of blessing in the harvest, the absence of joy, and sorrow and destruction in all places.
- vv.14-20: Among this painful picture, the prophet hears the song of those proclaiming the glory of God. Yet, quickly these praises vanish, so that the destructive image over all the earth appears again. The chapter is distinguished by destruction, apart from these few words on praise. This excerpt conveys the nature of mankind as they live superficially in spiritual matters. It is as though the prophet is prophetically watching this all-encompassing destruction, while these marginal praises appear and subside because they hold no weight.
- vv.21-23: Many commentaries agree that there is something strange in these verses. Isaiah speaks of a specific day in which the host of exalted ones (evil demonic powers) and the kings of the earth who oppose the matters of God will be imprisoned for a time and their attempts will pause. The Lord will then come and reign and proclaim His glory.

Chapter 25

- v.1-5:
 - This is a song of victory. The previous scene ended with the reign of the Lord. This praise is now proclaimed [v.1]

- The Lord is said to have subdued the opposing city. This entails not just one city, but all the nations that were opposing Him. The Lord made it a fortified city of ruin.
- v.3 He foresees all the nations submitting to Him, for the Lord is reigning. Therefore, the Lord will be a strength to the poor, needy and distressed.
- v.4 Those who were puffed up and prideful will be ‘as a storm against the wall’, meaning that they will have no impact
- v.5 all the noises of the proud nations will be subdued.
- vv.6-8
 - v.6: The celebrations of the Lord and His people will begin. It will be a great banquet, filled with ‘fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines.’
 - vv.7-8: Death will end. Here is a hint of what will be after His reign, when He casts death itself into the Lake of Fire [Rev 20:14]. It conveys the beginning of the eternal state, which will come about after His reign
- vv.9-12
 - v.9: How the people of God will proclaim their confidence and joy in the Lord and His salvation
 - v.10: Moab here represents all the nations and powers resisting God and His reign. They will be subdued and humiliated.
 - v.11: Moab will spread out his hands in attempt to worship idols, but will not succeed, as a swimmer who tries to swim against the current but cannot. The Lord will humiliate his pride, despite the skilful movement of his hands.
 - v.12: The Lord will subdue all the opposing efforts of the nations to His reign, as He did with Moab.

Chapter 26

- It is following the previous scenario of an extended song of praise.
- Its centre is in v.3: 'You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You.' Therefore, we must keep watch over our thoughts and mind [v.1-4]
- v.5-6: All the arrogant shall be hurled to the dust and will be trampled by the suffering and helpless
- vv.7-9: Here the prophet hints that that people of God always walk with righteousness and uprightness, always directing their hearts to God night and day.
- vv.10-11: There are those who will not learn the ways of God, although God deals with them with mercy and grace. But when the judgement of the Lord begins, it will awaken them. Even the righteous atmosphere and the majesty of the Lord did not change them, for the change must happen from the heart. There will still be people who will not be sensitive to the righteous atmosphere and the song of praise, but will continue in their evil. Isaiah warns them that they will be eaten up by the fire of the enemies of the Lord [v.11].
- vv.12-15: Here the words are addressed to the faithful remnant who were under the impact of some of the opposing authorities. Yet, Isaiah proclaims that these authorities will be put to death [vv.13-14]. The faithful remnant will begin to see what God has promised to their fathers
- vv.16-18: Here is the image of Israel during the Great Tribulation [Jer 30]. Isaiah portrays them seeking God as a woman who cries out during her labour, until its time is fulfilled.
- v.19: The prophet hints at the resurrection of the saints of the Old Testament at the time of the reigning of Christ. Those

resurrected will be as the morning dew that refreshes God's people.

- vv.20-21: All the sins of the evil one will be exposed at that time. The prophet talks to the faithful remnant to hide until the judgement of the evil one is completed, when they will be able to sing the song recorded in ch.26.

Chapter 27

- It is a small chapter of 13 verses.
- It is comprised of three parts. Every section begins with 'in that day', as in vv.1, 2 and 12.
 - v.1: Here is the final image of the restoration of all things. Restoration does not happen until judgement is completed. Here the prophet gives a prophetic sign in the depiction of Leviathan [who is also mentioned in Job 41:34]. Isaiah gives a sign of this fearsome power through Leviathan, which is an evil power teaching mankind pride and exaltation. This is related to everything prior, so that all judgement of every evil is completed. Therefore, God also deals with the invisible evil powers who work behind the curtain. For this reason, at the end of chapter 26, Isaiah says that the earth will reveal her bloodshed and will no longer cover her slain.
 - vv.2-11: This is the second section beginning with the recurring words: 'in that day'
 - vv.2-6: Isaiah gives a sign for the faithful remnant of Israel. In the End Times, there will be restoration of all things.
 - The first thing to be restored will be Israel, referred to as the 'vineyard'.
 - As mentioned in ch.5, the vineyard was in rebellion and under judgement. Now, the

vineyard is in an image of blessing and protection from the Lord.

- Isaiah says that it is important for this faithful remnant to be in a constant state of peace and reconciliation with its God [v.5].
- In this state, fruit will multiply and extend to all the world [v.6].
- Vv.7-9: The Lord will bless His people, but only after He has purified them and has completed the judgement of the nations. He will not do with them as He has done with the rest of the nations, for He will purify them with wars rather than exile. The ‘east wind’ [v.8] here represents the Babylonian exile, for Babylon is east of Israel.
- vv.9-11: Purification will practically include the removal of all that belongs to the idol worship, whether it is the stone of the altar or the ashore and incense altars. This is a worship that Israel was immersed in at a certain time, which they had learned from the surrounding nations. Isaiah says that all this must inevitably end, which will be seen in upcoming chapters. Therefore, the fortified city in v.11 is Jerusalem who will be left empty during the exile.
- vv.12-13: God must finally now gather His people of old and restore them to the land, which He promised to their father Abraham.

Chapters 28

- Introduction

- This chapter begins the third subdivision of the first half of Isaiah (chs.28-35)

- This section includes a chain of prophecies pertaining to the people of God and the nations
- We find in this sections six consecutive ‘woes’
 - 28:1; 29:1; 29:15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1
- Chapter 28
 - Isaiah refers to the northern kingdom of Ephraim (although Ephraim is one of the tribes, it is also a prophetic name for the northern kingdom of Israel).
 - Isaiah begins the first ‘woe’. It has 2 subdivisions:
 - vv.1-6
 - v.1: Ephraim is said to have a geographical beauty, but that an intense wind will come upon it. This wind is the attack of Assyria. It has trampled on what seems to be the crown of Ephraim, meaning that Ephraim will be destroyed and its beauty gone. Ephraim is as likened to a fig that is still growing but is eaten prematurely.
 - vv.5-6: Isaiah declares that the Lord will honour the pious who are the faithful remnant. He will be for them a crown of adornment and honour. We see the contrasting images. While the crown of Ephraim’s geographical beauty is being trampled, the crown of the faithful remnant, which comprises the grace that is bestowed upon them by God, is being exalted. The faithful remnant will be protected under God’s just judgement. He will give aid to those who ‘turn back the battle at the gate’ [v.6]. (Israel continue three years in this war, attempting to block the attackers from entering. God was helping His pious people block the enemies. However, in the end, the northern kingdom was conquered and exiled; the remnant, however, was preserved).
 - vv.7-13:

- v.7: Isaiah declares the state of the leaders who are the prophets and priests. Unfortunately, they are in a state of intense, actual drunkenness. The prophets are therefore not able to see visions, and the priests cannot make any sound decisions.
- vv.9-10: These leaders, when they heard the teaching Isaiah had offered them, mocked him. They refused his advice, as though saying: ‘Do you think that we are children who need to know precept upon precept, line upon line?’ They thought that they knew the law and all that Isaiah was saying to them, and thus felt patronised.
- vv.11-13: Isaiah answers them in the same way with a retort. He alerts them that, although they may reject his advice to bit-by-bit learn line upon line, the Assyrians will come to them and talk to them in a language they will not understand. Therefore, they will need to learn precept upon precept, line upon line. At that point, they will become aware that it was God speaking to them through the prophet, not the prophet speaking alone. Although Isaiah was attempting to aid them with entering into their rest, they would not listen. By the time these drunken rulers could have learned all things, they would be overtaken by the Assyrians.
- vv.14-22
 - v.14: Now Isaiah addresses the southern kingdom of Judah, for he addresses Jerusalem
 - v.15: Like the northern kingdom, Judah mocked the prophet. They asserted that they are secure, for they were deceived into thinking that their idols would protect them from Assyria and from death, asserting that they had a covenant with Sheol.

- v.16: Yet, the prophet asserts that there is only one protection: . He makes a prophetic reference to the Messiah, saying that He is the precious cornerstone for a secure foundation.
- v.18: Isaiah reminds Judah that their deception will be exposed and that their covenant with Sheol will not benefit them.
- v.20: Judah are analogised as lying on a bed that is too short. They are unable to stretch out their feet and have a blanket that is too narrow to be wrapped around them. Therefore, Judah will inevitably be exposed to their enemies who will be able to attack them.
- v.21: Judgement will continue, and this distressing news will continue from day to day until judgement is completed.
- v.22: Isaiah tells Judah to cease from mocking, for the judgement is inevitable
- vv.23-29
 - Isaiah gives them agricultural metaphors to convey that judgement has a purpose, which is purification and cleansing. Therefore, judgement will not continue purposelessly. As soon as the purpose is fulfilled, the judgement will cease, for the Lord is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance.

Chapter 29

- Here is a dialogue about Jerusalem and the southern kingdom. Jerusalem is the beloved city, described as a lion. ‘Ariel’ is a prophetic name for Jerusalem and means the ‘lion of the Lord’ or ‘the altar hears’, for it has a temple within it (Hebrew words often have multiple meanings). As we saw in the last chapter that the judgement has a purpose, we see the same idea here.

- vv.1-8: The second ‘woe’. Isaiah says that God allows Jerusalem to be surrounded by the armies of the Assyrians. Here there is a reference to chapter 37. The scene seems to have no hope, as Judah’s destruction and despair is said to be inevitable. In response, they are brought low and contrite. This contrasts to the northern kingdom who rejected and mocked God. At the time that the northern kingdom was exiled, Judah was able to remain for a time, for they made themselves low and contrite.
 - v.4: When God saw them brought low, He began to scatter Judah’s enemies
 - vv.5-8: Isaiah references when God commanded His angel to kill 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians (as recorded in Isa 37:36).
- vv.9-12
 - The prophet is beginning to expose the spiritual state of the people. He laments the scene he is prophetically seeing, which is that they have become spiritually blind. Their spiritual blindness is part of their judgement.
- vv.13-14
 - These verses are important, for Christ Himself references them in the New Testament. This is Judah’s spiritual state. They are worshipping God in an external, legalistic, way with their lips, not from the heart.
- vv.15-16
 - The third ‘woe’, addressed to those who assume that they are wise and plan out things as if God will not discover them, because of the blindness of their hearts and spiritual stupidity.
- vv.17-21
 - Here the prophet proclaims that the Lord will interfere suddenly and that there will be a divine visitation, because of His mercy and love. He shall open their blind eyes and their deaf ears. God will cease oppression and put a limit

to those who are intent on doing evil, creating strife by alluring the righteous into sin. They are said to do this because injustice is prevailing.

- vv.22-24
 - Due to this divine visitation, the tribes will have the blessing of their father Abraham restored to them and will not return to their shame and reproach. They will return to the Lord as worshippers who are sanctified. Their knowledge and spiritual insight will increase [vv.23-24].

Chapter 30

- Introduction
 - Chapters 30-31 are talking about Judah's attempt at making a war-alliance with Egypt
 - In actuality, Egypt was in a weak state, but some from Judah were persistent in obtaining this alliance
 - Chapter 30 begins with the fourth 'woe' on Judah
 - This chapter has two primary parts: vv.1-26 (on the war-alliance) and vv.27-33 (the proclamation of the destruction of Assyria as the Lord's judgement is coming upon it)
- vv.1-5
 - Isaiah proclaims 'woe' because of Judah's persistence in making a war-alliance with Egypt against Assyria. He says it will not help them, but will be for their shame, because Egypt is in a weak state, while Assyria is very powerful
- vv.6-7
 - In order to reach the northern part of Egypt, where the rulers are in Zoan and Hanes, Judah had to enter a southern part of the country on their way to the north. This was a dangerous place, because it was full of lions and poisonous serpents. Despite this, Judah was persistent, and carried many gifts to northern Egypt. God declares to them

that Egypt will not help them. Therefore, God calls them 'Rahab-Hem-Shebeth', meaning 'do nothing'.

- vv.8-11
 - Because of Judah's rebellion against God's words through the prophet, God instructs the prophet to write the message on tablets so that it might be preserved and can witness against Judah and their rebellion.
- vv.12-17
 - Because of Judah's rejection of the counsels of God which the prophet declared to them, their judgement shall come hastily. They will be as walls that are destroyed in an instant, or as a potter's vessel that is broken and irreparable.
 - v.15: God asks Judah to calm down and think, that they may return to Him. However, all their thoughts were geared towards war. Therefore, Isaiah says that they will discover their fate of the great conquering that will take place.
- vv.18-22
 - Despite this, because of God's faithfulness and covenant with Abraham, Moses and David, He will visit them and restore them to Himself. During the times of adversity and affliction, He will secure for them bread and water. Their teachers who were hiding will return to appear again and will guide them. The teachers were hiding because the Jews were chasing their teachers away.
- vv.23-26
 - When Judah returns to God, He will bless their land and all that is theirs. Even their animals will find abundance.
 - Yet, there is still a reference to a great war in v.25. Scholars think that it is referring to the war of Armageddon. (Rev.16:16)

- After it, the light will increase, whether natural or spiritual. All the wounds of God's people will be healed, and all their various pains will subside
- vv.27-33:
 - God will destroy Assyria. There is a reference here to Isa 37:36. The Jews will rejoice as in a night of a feast, walking to the mountain of the Lord with musical instruments. Therefore, every attack against Assyria will have a consonant note played simultaneously. God will observe the Jew's attacks on their enemies and will rejoice.
 - v.33: Isaiah refers to Tophet, which is a place where the children to be sacrificed to idols would be kept, during the time when Israel and Judah were astray. Now the prophet sees that this has become a place for receiving their slain enemies.

Chapter 31

- Introduction
 - This is an extension to the previous chapter. Isaiah continues to speak about the alliance with Egypt.
 - This chapter comprises the fifth 'woe', towards those who persist in allying with Egypt.
- vv.1-3: The God of Wisdom will not relent from His judgement, because of their rebellion. God will reveal to them the failure of such an alliance.
- vv.4-5: This is an amazing picture, because God asserts that He does not fear Assyria. He will protect His people as a lion guards his prey and as birds flying about.
- vv.6-9: The prophet assumes that, because of God's merciful actions, Judah will return to Him and leave their idol-worship. They will see that Assyria will be defeated, but not by any

power of war or human means: ‘a sword not of man, sword not of mankind’. Isaiah here is referring to the angel that God sends in 37:36 to kill the Assyrians.

Chapter 32

- vv.1-8
 - This is a picture of God coming in His reign. It says that a king will reign with princes who accompany Him. Who are these princes? The answer is in Matt 19:28: *So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”* Both passages are referencing the Second Coming; according to this verse, the princes with Christ will be His disciples.
 - v.2: After this, we see the results of this reign. A person will be a cover and hiding place, and as rivers of water in a dry place. Instead of sensitivities and comparisons between individuals, brotherly love will prevail
 - vv.3-8: There will be healthy spiritual sight and hearing. Also, all understanding of everything will be correct. All foolishness shall be exposed, as well as nobility.
 - vv.9-15: The prophet sees two scenes at the same time. One scene he sees is Christ’s Second Coming and His reign. The second scene is the current situation of Judah.
 - Isaiah hastens to address the women, warning them that they have a primary role, for they are mothers and wives and therefore have a bigger impact on how things are run.
 - Women also always have a larger contribution to intercession. Therefore, Isaiah calls them to mourning and wearing of sackcloth.

- Isaiah says that the time has come for something different. Most likely, he is speaking about Judah's captivity into Babylon. In v.10 he says that it could happen within a year and some days. This state will continue, which is the sign of judgement, until repentance is completed, and the time of divine visitation.
- v.15: Christ will then come and pour out His Spirit, and circumstances will change. The wilderness will become a fruitful field for the faithful remnant. Yet, those who are unresponsive will have the opposite, which is here said to be a forest.
- vv.16-20: This is the general picture of the pouring out of God's Spirit during the time of visitation. It will have all blessing, freedom and honour; yet, those who will be in judgement will be unresponsive.

Chapter 33

- The sixth and final 'woe'
- This chapter has two parts: vv.1-12 and vv.13-24
- vv.1-12
 - v.1: The 'woe' to the enemies of God's people, who are Assyria. As Assyria fulfils its position of being a tool in God's hand for the chastening of His people, it will be plundered.
 - vv.2-4: The cry of the faithful remnant and their request for God's aid [v.2]. When God raises His arm, the enemies flee [v.3] and His plunder shall be gathered [v.4]. How? God Himself will encircle them as a caterpillar weaves its way around and will restore all that was plundered.
 - vv.5-6: These verses are addressed to the faithful remnant.

- vv.7-9: Isaiah speaks of those who determined to ally with Egypt. He describes what will be their current state. The places named are distinguished places in Israel, therefore Isaiah names them as examples to represent the whole kingdom.
- vv.10- : As though Isaiah says that all nations are in a difficult position, therefore God's time has come and He will arise to fulfil His purposes. Isaiah alerts those people who desired to ally with Egypt that all their attempts will fail. They shall conceive chaff, meaning there will be no results. Now the times will come when the fire of the Lord will burn their enemies.
- vv.13-16: Here, God calls everyone, near and far. This is an example of what occurs when God arises: He calls all. While the sinners will tremble because their judgement has come, the righteous will be blessed, but must have the features mentioned in vv.15-16.
- vv.17-24: This part describes to the kingdom the time of the coming of the king.
 - v.17: Isaiah describes what the people will see when He comes.
 - vv.18-19: These verses seem to be out of place. When Israel see the coming of the king, they will remember how they trembled at the time of war and oppression with the Assyrians, and will question how they have progressed since then
 - vv.20-24: Isaiah describes Israel at the time of Christ's reign.
 - v.23: Assyria is depicted as a ship that is broken, with its plunder being divided up. Therefore, the warships of the enemies will be broken, with their plunder divided up.

Chapter 34

- Introduction
 - Chapters 34 and 35 comprise the final part of the prophetic chain that began at chapter 28. We notice that chs.28-33 address Israel, while chs.34-35 are about the whole world. Its purpose is to show two things: that God's judgement always has the purpose of purification, and that after judgement, blessing comes.
- Chapter 34 is an image for the judgement of the world
- vv.1-4: God is calling all people to come and hear that the judgement of the Lord will be upon everyone. The earth will be filled with their corpses, and the mountains shall flow with their blood.
 - v.4
 - This verse is eye-catching, because this judgement includes the heavens. The judgement of heaven includes the fallen angelic powers and the hosts of heaven (the celestial powers, such as the sun and moon). This idea is repeated frequently in the prophetic books [Joel 2:10, 30, 31; 3:15; Zech. 14:6 and 7; Matt 24:29].
 - These words also refer to the scene in the End Times, as is seen in Rev 6:12-13.
 - It can also be in reference to the eternal scene [Rev 21:1]
- vv.5-8: The judgement is now focused on Edom. Why Edom? It represents all the nations of the world. Yet, Edom also was the offspring of Jacob. The people of Edom had always been in opposition with Israel [Eze 35, 36:5]. This means that God is always on His people's side. In the end, He will cast judgement on all those who were opposing His people, because He specified these people to Himself, in order to complete certain

purposes through them, which is the coming of the Messiah. It is clear in v.8 that Zion will get revenge for all her enemies.

- vv.9-17: Here is the image of the coming judgement on Edom. There is a whole book about this matter. What book is it? Obadiah.
 - vv.9-10: Edom (today Saudi Arabia) contains all the flammable petroleum, therefore Isaiah says that its streams in the time of judgement will be full of pitch (tar) and that it will burn. In the end, the state of these lands will be a burning night and day.
 - v.10: All the birds will be living there, because it is a desolate place with no people
 - vv.16-17: As though God is addressing these animals, telling them that He is giving this land to them as an inheritance

Chapter 35

- Here is the counterimage. Chapter 34 describes the all-encompassing destruction of the world, while chapter 35 portrays the restoration.
- vv.1-2: The restoration begins with the state of the land. The wilderness that is dry will blossom.
- vv.3-4: This is important to the faithful remnant who endured the judgement. For the faithful remnant, this will become salvation.
- In the previous chapter, Isaiah spoke about vengeance for the sake of Zion (Isaiah 34:8). Here, he speaks of the vengeance that will complete for the faithful remnant their salvation.
- vv.5-7: Isaiah had groaned for his people who had lost their spiritual sense, for they did not have the spiritual sight or hearing, but here he rejoices in its restoration and blessing. He clarifies that all the spiritual senses will be restored, even

physically. It is a healing for the people in flesh and spirit. This is in reference to the coming of Christ. Even paralysis will be reversed to leaping. Those who were mute will praise. The dry and desolate places will be full of streams and rivers. Even the dry place of the jackals (referenced also in 34:13) will be full of water, so that they may drink and glorify God [Isa 43:20]. God will even provide reeds and rushes for the jackals, so that they can rest in a shady place after they refresh themselves.

- vv.8-10: Rather than the defences they put up previously, there will be a holy path for the redeemed, faithful remnant. They travel a path towards Jerusalem that is secure from beasts, because they proceed to Jerusalem for worship and are filled with joy and gladness.

Chapter 36

- Introduction:
 - This begins the historical interlude between the two main parts of the book.
 - The first main part of Isaiah is from chs.1-35
 - The second is from chs.40-66
 - This interlude is from chs.36-39
 - These chapters have two main characters as their point of focus: King Hezekiah and Isaiah.
 - We will begin with chapters 36 and 37, which are tied to one another and discuss the attack of Assyria. This is the actual historical event that Isaiah prophesied about.
- vv.1-3:
 - Isaiah speaks of when Assyria attacked some of the strong, fortified cities of Judah and conquered them. Now Assyria is seen to proceed to Jerusalem.
 - Isaiah references the ‘Fuller’s Field’, meaning the place in which fabric is washed and folded. We encountered this

term ‘Fuller’s Field’ also in Isa 7:1-12, where Israel had received a threat from Assyria, and King Ahaz and his people were afraid. Isaiah had come to the very place and delivered a message to the king. However, the king rejected it. Here the same scene unfolds, but king Hezekiah accepts the message from Isaiah. Instances like these of multiple notable events occurring in the same place mean that the events hold a specific significance. King Hezekiah’s acceptance of the prophet’s words healed the people, in contrast to king Ahaz’s rejection of Isaiah’s words.

- vv.4-10
 - The representative of the king of Assyria, who was also the commander of the army, is the Rabshakeh. Here, he is sent to the wall to talk with the representatives of king Hezekiah, who are Shebna, Eliakim and Joah. At that time, all knew that Israel had attempted an alliance with Egypt.
 - The Rabshakeh had heard through the spread of political news. He warns them that Egypt is a reed that will be broken.
 - The Rabshakeh had also heard through the spread of political news the efforts Hezekiah had made to revive Israel by destroying the idols [2 Kgs 18; 2 Chron 31]. The Rabshakeh, in response, had assumed that the God Hezekiah worshipped was just one idol that he had not destroyed. The nations always boast of having multiple gods, because they help them in wars. The Rabshakeh wanted to give the impression that God was against Israel. Therefore, he tells them that he was instructed by God Himself to destroy Israel
- vv.11-20:

- The representative of king Hezekiah asks the Rabshakeh to speak to them in Aramaic rather than Hebrew. As Aramaic was the official language, and most of the people knew only Hebrew, they intended to prevent the majority of the people from understanding their conversation and fearing. However, the Rabshakeh desired to threaten the people. Therefore, he proclaimed his message in a loud voice in Hebrew so that all would hear [v.13].
- He began to list to them all of the Assyrian victories in which their gods had aided them. He claims that even Samaria, refers to the northern kingdom, had been taken by them. Therefore, Judah would also would be defeated.
- He also attempts to allure them by listing privileges they would have if they submitted to the Assyrians. He says that they would make peace and that he would take them to a rich land like their own land [vv.16-17].
- Yet, the people did not respond to his allurement nor his threats, but remained silent as the king commanded them.
- The representative of Hezekiah returned with their clothes torn to inform him of the current state and the threats of the enemy [vv.21-22].

Chapter 37

- vv.1-4: When king Hezekiah heard the words of his representative, he put on sackcloth and went to the house of God for prayer. He sent his representative to Isaiah to ask him to pray for them. Isaiah likens these circumstances to a woman in labour, whose child is about to die. As the enemy is upon the walls, Judah needs rescuing quickly [v.3].
- vv.5-7: The prophet initially answers with a short response. He reassures the king by prophesying of the destruction of the enemies and the saving of Jerusalem

- vv.8-13: The Rabshakeh, who was ready to enter into Jerusalem, discovered that the king of Egypt, who was from another part of Cush, was approaching Jerusalem to aid Judah. The Rabshakeh, before turning to fight off this approaching army, delivers a message to Judah, threatening them and telling them that they will surely be defeated.
- vv.14-15: Hezekiah brought the letter to the house of the Lord and prayed the prayer of faith. Part of the king of Assyria's message to Hezekiah was that he would be defeated.
- vv.16-20: The gods that the king of Assyria boasts of are not real gods. Hezekiah is telling God to reveal Himself, that the nations would know that He is the one true God
- vv.21-25: The response of God to the prayers of faith from king Hezekiah comes in three points:
 - a) vv.21-29: The prophet sends a new message after sending the original, concise message. Yet, now he sends a long message because of the prayer of Hezekiah. The prophet begins to explain in detail the message that God has sent to the king in response to his prayer.
 - God declares that Zion is not like the other nations who were conquered, but is His dwelling-place.
 - vv.22-23: Therefore, Zion, who is personified, will despise the mocking king.
 - vv.26-27: God Himself tells the mocking king of Assyria that he is only a tool in His hands to chastise the nations. He states that these nations that he has conquered are all weak nations.
 - vv.28-29: The time has come for King Sennacherib's judgement. They will take him as an animal and put a hook in his nose to direct him, and will return him to his land
 - b) vv.30-32: God tells them what their solution is for their land. At the end of the Assyrian attacks, things will

continue for two years with difficulty and dryness in the land. In the third year, there will be prosperity and blessing. This is the promises for the faithful remnant.

- c) vv.33-35: God declares that the Assyrians will not enter into Jerusalem, for God will protect it. God will protect them as it was said in previous prophecies, and He will return king Sennacherib back to his native land of Assyria.
- vv.36-38: The last part of the chapter clarifies the direct intervention of God, by sending an angel to strike 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. As the king of Assyria was bowing in worship to his idols, he was killed by his sons.

Chapter 38

- The chapter talks about Hezekiah's illness. It is an illness that almost ended his life.
- v.6
 - We understand that this illness happened at the time that Jerusalem was besieged by Assyria. Some scholars speculate that it happened as a result of Hezekiah's errors; namely, that he was inconsistent in his faith. We read in the book of Kings that at times Hezekiah clings to the Lord alone, but that other times he leans on other, political means [2 Kgs 18:7, 13-16]. Some scholars think that this illness came about to shake Hezekiah awake from this unstable faith in God.
 - The prophet sent to tell Hezekiah that he will die, therefore he must prepare for his death by putting his house in order. In response, Hezekiah cries out to God in contrition, reminding Him of the good deeds that he had done during his reign.
 - We know from the book of Kings that Hezekiah was 25 years old and reigned for 29 years. Hezekiah died at the

age of 54. However, God heard his prayer and extended his life by fifteen years. Therefore, his illness came to him when he was just 39 years old. For this reason, Hezekiah laments in v.10 that he will go to the gates of Sheol in the ‘prime of [his] life’.

- Hezekiah asked for a sign from God that he would be healed, that he might be able to go to the temple and pray. Reading the same story in 2 Kgs 20:7-11, we can conclude that illness occurred before Hezekiah presented the letter from King Sennacherib before the Lord in the temple. Initially, when Hezekiah received the news of the Rabshakeh’s threats, he wore sackcloth and went to pray. Yet, his faith was fluctuating and he put his confidence in seeing that King Sennacherib had gone away to fight with the king of Cush. Because of this unstable faith, Hezekiah became ill. When Hezekiah received the Rabshakeh’s second attempts to threaten him in the form of a letter, he prayed to God to heal him, that he might be able to present the letter and the matter before the Lord in the temple. It is this that is recorded here in Isa 38. From 2 Kgs 20:7-11 and Isa 38:21-22, we also deduce that when Isaiah instructed Hezekiah to apply a poultice of figs to his wound, Hezekiah asked for this sign. It is apparent that this sign was relating to the shadow on the sundial, which had been invented in the days of King Ahaz.
- Isaiah’s advice to Hezekiah to take a poultice of figs and apply it to his wound also means that Hezekiah’s healing happened by two ways, the first dependent on Hezekiah’s faith, and the second by medical means. This is the only time in the entire Bible when an instance of healing occurs not only by faith but also by medical means. This suggests that Hezekiah had an issue of faith, and that God

conducted this two-fold healing as a way to strengthen his faith.

- vv.10-18: Hezekiah then went to the temple to offer his well-known praise.
 - In the first part, he describes his illness, psychological state, and sadness.
 - Then he offers praise to the Lord and declares his salvation, consecrating his entire life to the Lord.
 - One comment. The king that succeeded Hezekiah was his son Manasseh. As Manasseh was just 12 when he was enthroned, he was therefore born in the 15-year extension of Hezekiah's life. As Manasseh was one of the most impious kings of Israel [2 Chron 33], we could say that it might have been better that Hezekiah's life was not extended!

Chapter 39

- Here is an unfortunate scene from Hezekiah. It exposes a hidden pride within him [2 Chron 32:24-26].
 - The king was healed, and Merodach-Baladan, the king of Babylon, sent messengers to Hezekiah to congratulate him on his healing. However, this was superficial, for he had other motives. (This king of Babylon was the former king of Persia, as seen in ch.21. After conquering Babylon and then being conquered by Assyria, Merodach-Baladan returned to again attempt to seize Babylon. Between these two attempts, he was preparing himself with alliances with other kings. He intended to find out if Hezekiah could support him financially or in any other way).
 - Hezekiah, with pride in his heart and with excitement from his healing, showed him everything in his house. Therefore, the prophet came and rebuked him, telling him

that two things would result from this mistake: all Hezekiah's wealth would be given to Babylon, and his offspring would be eunuchs in Babylon, as it happened in the days of Daniel.

- Hezekiah's response is also unfortunate in v.8. He expresses relief that at least there would be peace in his own days. Therefore, he appears to be only concerned with the state of his own days.
- The Church Fathers have an important observation from this chapter, that it is advisable in spiritual guidance or in sharing one's own experiences to be careful and wise not to expose all of your spiritual wealth.

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