

SEPTEMBER 8

Isaiah 1-2

Isaiah is THE great prophet in the Old Testament. Not that he made himself anything, but God just said a lot of massively great stuff through him. He is the prophet most mentioned by name and quoted in the NT. You could almost say he was the Billy Graham of his day, serving 4 to 5 kings over a period of 60+ years. Tradition has it that the guy in Hebrews 11:37, who was *sawn in two*, was Isaiah, when King Manasseh decided he really didn't need to hear Isaiah's message any more.

Isaiah is a very long book. It would do you well to underline words and phrases from the beginning. It would be valuable to keep track of the names of God. Also, the alternation between judgment and threat and future/eternal blessing might show you some things about God. Another thing to search for is passages from Isaiah that are quoted in the NT. There are lots of references to the Messiah.

In terms of a road map, I'll direct you to the outline that John Martin provides, "Isaiah, Themes and Theology," The Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT, pp. 1031-1032. Basically, judgment is spelled out in chapters 1-39, and restoration is offered in chapters 40-66. Dr. Martin breaks this down in smaller chunks, but this will be all we'll need for our purposes. (This outline is at the end of this document.)

Another way of looking at Isaiah is that chapters 1-35 are meant to inspire godliness and faith to save Jerusalem from the challenge of chapters 36 and 37. Chapters 38 and 39 show that that deliverance didn't go deep enough into the hearts of the people. Chapters 40-66 then will show the final deliverance and redemption of Israel and all of mankind.

Also, it might be good to have a chart of the prophets and kings to put this into perspective, so I'll include it at the end of this document as well. "Kings of Judah and Israel and the Preexilic Prophets," The Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT, p. 513.

It should probably be a standard thought for any disciple who can, to memorize Isaiah 53 and Isaiah 55. There are some great verses and passages in Isaiah and many worth memorizing, but these two chapters are complete thoughts. Isaiah 40:31 is one of those individual verses.

Isaiah 1

V. 1 There are four kings listed. Manasseh isn't mentioned, but I suspect Isaiah had a very short ministry under Manasseh.

Vs. 2-9 There are four clear divisions in what the Lord is saying here. The ESV gives us some nice divisions. How would you title these sections?

Vs. 2-3 This is a call to creation to observe Israel's rebellion.

V. 4 God addresses the people and uses the title *the Holy One of Israel*.

Vs. 5-6 This is an image of the nation as a sick body. Verse 5 is a good question we could ask of anyone today.

Vs. 7-9 This was the present state of affairs in Judah. It is interesting to think that Isaiah was saying stuff like this during the reigns of some good kings and some bad kings. God was keeping a certain pressure on the people and leaders to warn them of what would lead Judah to exile.

V. 9 Here you have the title *the Lord of hosts*. Also, Paul quotes this verse in Romans 9:29.

Vs. 10-17 Notice that the people were still worshiping by the letter, but not the way God wanted, in spirit. This morning I read what Jesus said to the Pharisees in Matthew 15:7-8, "You

hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: ⁸'This people honors me with their lips but their heart is far from me....''

Vs. 18-20 Verse 18 is one of those famous verses. God calls all people to reason with Him. If you don't have this memorized, it would be short and worthwhile. The reason God refers to scarlet is because of v. 15. Their hands were full of blood.

Vs. 21-23 What a strong charge against the leaders of the people. God really cares about how people treat the poor and disadvantaged; in fact, He uses them as a test of the hearts of the leaders. This section now will become the contrast to the next section.

Vs. 24-26 Notice that judgment is for a purpose and it has a promise. God never lost sight of His redemptive purpose or His covenant with Abraham. This is God's promise to make Israel what it was meant to be.

V. 24 Notice the names of God. *Lord of hosts* literally means *Lord of armies*. Why is it being used here? What is the significance of the *Mighty One of Israel*? The poor and needy need a mighty one.

Vs. 27-31 God will redeem Zion and He will gather to Him all who repent, but for the others there will only be judgment. I was just reading about unquenchable fire this morning, but it was Jesus who was talking about it.

Isaiah 2

Vs. 1-4 This is the kind of promise that shows you something of God's heart, spoken as He is pronouncing judgment. The punishment will be strong, but the hope of redemption is given. This is obviously a prediction of the 1000-year reign of Christ in Jerusalem.

Vs. 5-11 This is a plea to Israel to follow the Lord.

Vs. 12-19 There would certainly be a day of judgment in Judah's near future when the Babylonians would come, but this is also suggesting the day when God judges the entire earth. Notice the theme here of the high being leveled. We'll definitely see this again in Isaiah and it was a part of the message of John the Baptist.

Vs. 20-22 This day of judgment looks like what will be happening during and at the end of the Tribulation.

In these two chapters God's coming judgment and coming kingdom have both been referred to. That sounds like something that still needs to be mentioned today in the harvest. The coming of the Kingdom of God means that all men must be ready. They need to turn to God or there will be only judgment waiting for them. On the other hand, those who turn to God will be faced with amazing grace and blessing. Add to this that they turn to God by believing in and welcoming Jesus as their Savior, and you have the gospel that John the Baptist, Jesus, and His disciples preached.

2 Corinthians 10

Up until now, Paul has spoken to the main body of the church and leaders in a very gentle and self-deprecating way. He has shown that in all of what has happened, God has worked and led. Now, Paul needs to address the false apostles and the Corinthians' infatuation (spiritual immaturity) with them. O Weh!

V. 1 Paul is entreating the people and then quotes the super-apostles (SAs), who said that Paul was a wimp in person and was only bold if he hid behind a letter. Having proven, to this point, by his soft spoken writing that he loves these people, Paul now takes the role of an elder by facing the troublemakers.

V. 2 Notice again how Paul is talking to two groups, the people and leaders, and the SAs.

Vs. 3-6 This is something more than wisdom and apologetics. Paul worked on a spiritual level, understanding his warfare as spiritual and using the gospel as the power of God. This is what he mentioned back in 1 Corinthians 1-4. The power that Paul and his companions had was in the spirit and in the simple truth of the gospel.

V. 5 Paul mentions this in Romans as his commission from Christ, to win obedience from the Gentiles, the obedience of faith. How do you know if a person has this? They follow Christ in faith in the harvest.

Vs. 7-12 I keep thinking about Jesus' constant words to His disciples, *you will recognize them by their fruits*.

Vs. 13-18 Notice that Paul is showing the Corinthians that God commended Paul & Co. as His servants by allowing them to lead these people to Christ. The SAs had no fruit. They were parasites. How often have I met "self important" and "head" leaders in a church who have no fruit from Christ using them in the harvest, but have "taken over" another person's fruit. These SAs and the people I have seen in churches do not get people to follow Christ. They get people to follow them, to recognize them as authorities. Following Christ becomes defined as following them. Paul was not like this at all. Later, Jude will call such leaders waterless clouds.

The Lord commends us as we follow Him in the harvest by letting His love flow through us to produce fruit. We are always to be reaching out to the lost and strengthening believers to help them become stronger disciples in the harvest who make disciples, who make disciples. *By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.* (John 15:8)

Psalm 52

Living life by one's own craftiness, rather than trusting the Lord, is an ongoing problem for all of us. The bad guy here seems like a totally evil man and a real rat, but actually, he might look like some of us. We might like him and buy his book. The Corinthians apparently supported some men like this who said they were apostles.

It is interesting that David wrote this after Doeg had killed the priests and David was living in caves. David would live like this for 6-8 years and then 16 months in Ziklag. What happened to Doeg? Who knows? But David trusted in the Lord, and for him vs. 8-9 were all that mattered. God was enough, although he was living a very desperate, insecure, and Spartan existence, following and waiting on the Lord. It is also interesting to think that this psalm was sung in worship.

Vs. 1-4 King Saul had surrounded himself with wicked men like Doeg. This man was an evil opportunist who acted religious to fit into the culture of Israel; but when the opportunity came to win favor with Saul, he did what no one else would. He destroyed an entire village of priests and their wives and children.

Vs. 5-7 Not only was David confident that God would judge Doeg, but that He would use him as an example to all those who followed the Lord. We have seen over and over again that the Lord will judge the wicked.

Vs. 8-9 David had been the real goal of all that hatred of Saul that allowed this Doeg to have his day. Yet David was held in God's *steadfast love*, embraced in God's presence and cared for. David's normal response was to praise God and let the godly know that they could hope in the Lord.

Notice how the *steadfast love of God* opens and closes the psalm. It is a source of strength and hope for us, as we follow and work in the harvest, to know that His love is always with us and it is always enough.

Proverbs 22:26-27

These verses could be applied to pledging to pay the loans of another person, but it looks to me that it could also be going out on credit. This is not Larry Burkett or Dave Ramsey; this is God. Basically, I think it says that if you don't have cash on hand, don't buy it on a pledge to pay. I don't think this is referring to huge stuff like houses or cars, or to things that are really, really important. Rather this endorses a mindset of not living in debt and on credit. As Paul said to Timothy, both of whom were following in the harvest, *But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.* (1 Tim. 6:8) In the world at present we are watching the debt bubbles burst in almost every western nation. It was all foolishness, just as it says here.