

Thursday Evening Bible Study

Series: the Book of Isaiah

Complete summary for orientation

Our orientation to the book of Isaiah

1. Why are we studying this book?

In my opinion, Isaiah is the greatest Old Testament prophet.

Isaiah has more to say about our Lord Jesus Christ the Jewish Messiah than any other Old Testament prophet.

The book of Isaiah is cited in the New Testament more times than any other book in the Old Testament besides the Psalms.

His prophetic vision is majestic in scope and specific in detail.

2. What kind of a book is Isaiah?

Isaiah is a book of prophecy.

3. What are some key things to know about the Old Testament prophets?

See “Interpreting Biblical Prophecy” below.

See also attached document “Halley’s Table of Prophets”.

4. Who was Isaiah?

Isaiah the prophet. Son of Amoz. His name means “Jehovah is salvation” in Hebrew. He was born into an influential upper class family.

He had access to the royal courts, and gave divinely-inspired advice concerning the foreign affairs of Judah. He warned against forming alliances with pagan nations. He was a trusted advisor of King Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:1-7, 20-36).

Commonly acknowledged as the "Prince of the Prophets" because of his exquisite literary style, Isaiah has also been called the "Paul of the Old Testament" because of his methodical presentation of humankind's problem of sin and God's answer of salvation. He is also known as the evangelical prophet because he says so much about the redemptive work of Messiah.

5. What was the time period of Isaiah's prophetic ministry?

Isaiah's ministry occurred between 740 – 687 BC

The history of this time period is recorded in 2 Kings chapters 15-21 as well as in 2 Chronicles chapters 28-33

6. Who was the audience for his prophetic message?

The general audience was the nation of Judah, the southern Kingdom. The specific audience was the leadership of Judah, particularly the kings. Much of Isaiah's prophecy is directed at Zion: the city of Jerusalem.

7. What was the situation with the Kingdom of Judah during his lifetime?

Faithlessness, idolatry, and disobedience.

The twelve tribes of Israel were divided into the Northern Kingdom of Israel (10 tribes), and the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

In the latter half of the 8th century BC, the Northern Kingdom suffered a catastrophic decline, ending in complete destruction by the Assyrian empire in 722 BC.

Judah was following in Israel's footsteps: apostasy, idolatry, immorality, and looking to pagan nations (Egypt and Assyria) for protection rather than to God.

Throughout Isaiah's ministry, Judah lived under the constant threat of attack by the Assyrian superpower.

ISAIAH		369
CONTEMPORARY KINGS OF JUDAH		
Uzziah	792 – 740 B.C.	A good king with a long and successful reign
Jotham	750 – 732	A good king; mostly coregent with Uzziah
Ahaz	735 – 716	Very wicked (see under 2 Chronicles 28)
Hezekiah	716 – 687	A good king (see under 2 Chronicles 29)
Manasseh	697 – 643	Very wicked (see under 2 Chronicles 33)
CONTEMPORARY KINGS OF ISRAEL		
Jeroboam II	793 – 753 B.C.	A long, prosperous, but idolatrous reign
Zechariah	753 – 752	Assassinated
Shallum	752	Assassinated
Menahem	752 – 742	Extremely brutal
Pekahiah	742 – 740	Assassinated by Pekah
Pekah	752 – 732	Under Pekah the northern part of Israel was taken into captivity (734 B.C.)
Hoshea	732 – 722	The last king of Israel; Samaria fell in 721 B.C.

8. Who were the key foreign nations mentioned in the book and what was Judah's relationship with them?

The Northern Kingdom (Israel, Ephraim)	ENEMY
Syria (Aram, Damascus)	ENEMY
Egypt	ALLIANCE (failed)
The Assyrian empire	ALLIANCE , then ENEMY
The Babylonian empire	ENEMY
The Persian empire	DELIVERER

Plus Israel's perennial enemies: Edom, Moab, Philistia.

See maps below.

9. What is the scope of Isaiah's prophetic vision?

His vision is telescopic.

It begins with the period of his lifetime,
extends next to the fall of Jerusalem
and the captivity of the Jews in Babylon,
then to their deliverance by Cyrus the king of Persia,
to the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ the Messiah,
all the way to the Tribulation period,
the Second Coming of Christ,
the Millennial kingdom,
and finally arriving at the eternal state.

Readings: Isaiah 1:1; 2:1-4;

13:9-13; chapter 24 (Tribulation period)

Chapter 34:1-10; 63:1-6; 66:7-21 (Second Coming/Armageddon)

11:1-13; 25:4-9; chapter 35 (Millennial Kingdom)

65:17-25; 66:22-24 (new heavens and a new earth)

10. What is a good outline to follow?

PART ONE: JUDGMENT	Chapters 1-39
Of Judah	Chapters 1-12
Of Gentile nations	Chapters 13-23
Future Tribulation and Kingdom	Chapters 24-27
Of Israel and Judah (woes and blessings)	Chapters 28-35
Deliverance of Hezekiah	Chapters 36-39
PART TWO: COMFORT	Chapters 40-66
The Greatness of God	Chapters 40-48
The Salvation of the Servant-Messiah	Chapters 49-57
The Program of God for Peace	Chapters 58-66

11. What does this book have to say about our Lord Jesus Christ?

“Christ” (Christos) is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew “Messiah” (Mashiyach). The book of Isaiah presents a series of “Messianic prophecies” concerning Christ’s person (God-man, King), birth, ministry, death on the cross, resurrection, return as conquering King, and eternal Kingdom.

We will study this in some detail. For now, here are a few readings to get started:

Readings: Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-7; 11:1-9; 42:1-7; 52:13-15; chapter 53

The best evidence that an Old Testament passage is Messianic is when it is quoted in the New Testament in relation to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:1-25
Isaiah 9:1-7	Matthew 4:12-16; Luke 1:32-33
Isaiah 52:13-15	Philippians 2:9-11; Romans 15:21
Isaiah 53:1-3	Romans 10:16

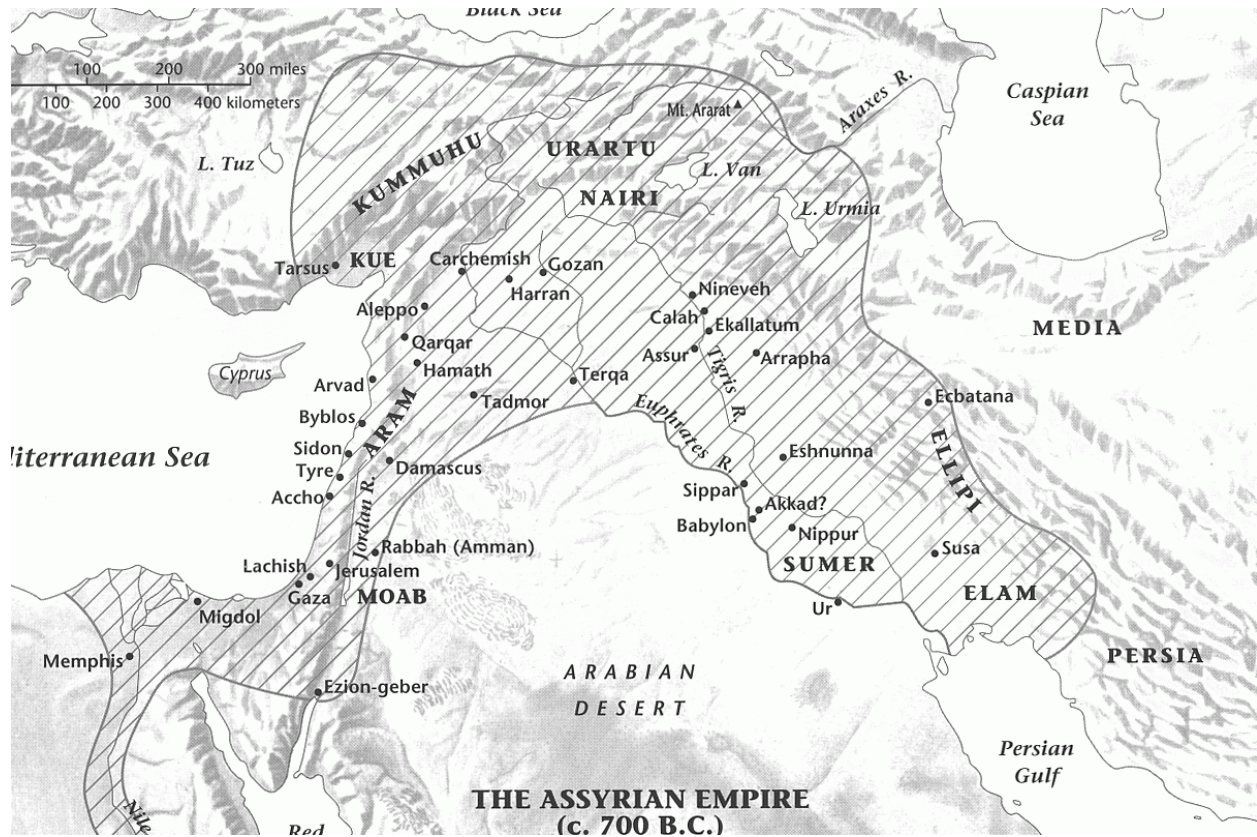
Isaiah 53:4-6	Matthew 8:17; 1 Peter 2:24-25
Isaiah 53:7-9	Acts 8:30-35; 1 Peter 2:22
Isaiah 53:10-12	Luke 22:37

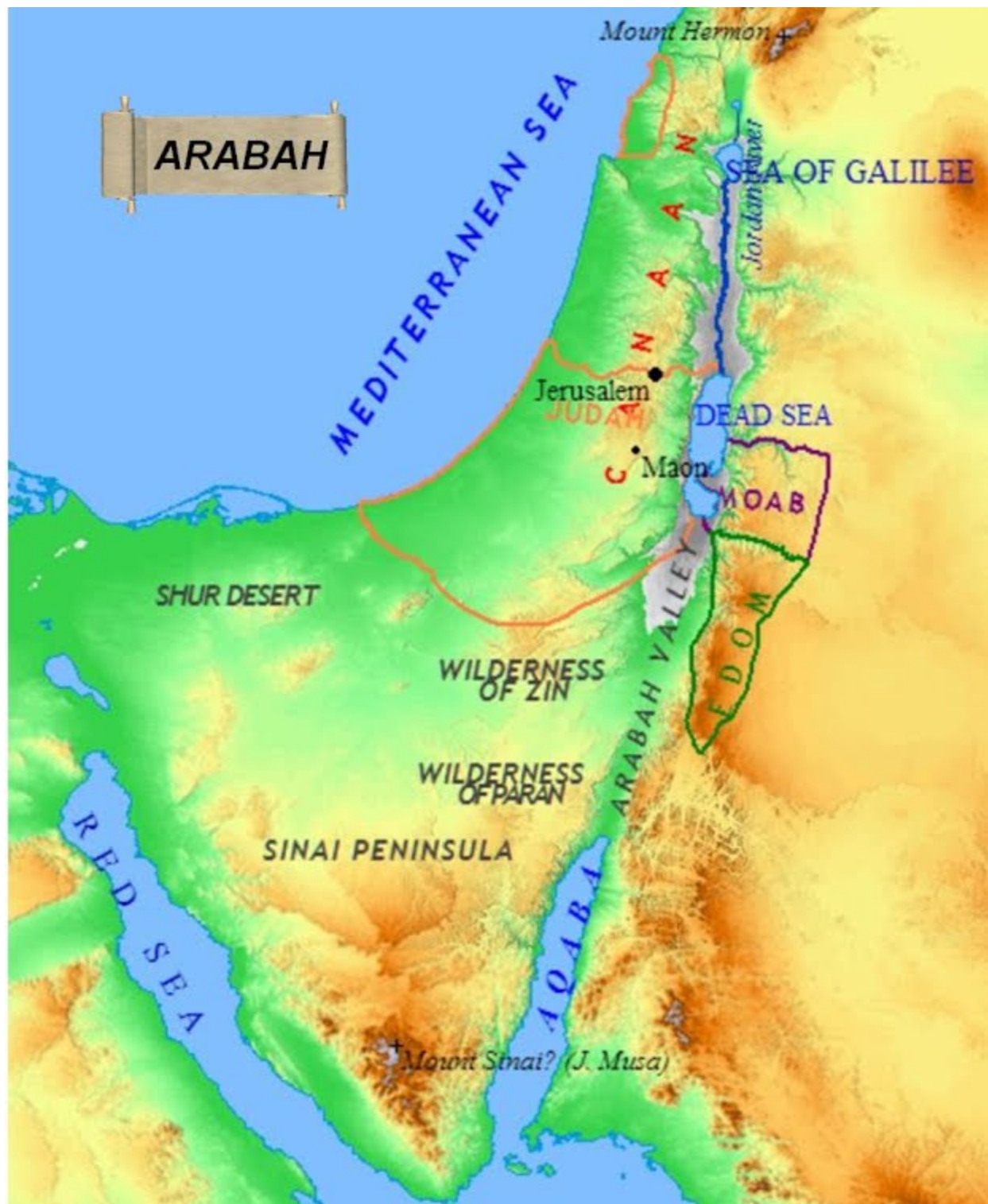
12. Who are a few other major figures in the book?

Hezekiah (king of Judah)

Sennacherib (Assyrian ruler)

Cyrus (Persian king)





Interpreting Biblical Prophecy

Written by Michael Vlach.

I. Introduction to Biblical Prophecy

A. Definition of prophecy. The term “prophecy” literally means “to speak before.”

B. Two types of prophecy

1. Predicting the future Some biblical prophecy involves the actual prediction of future events.

2. Relating the Word of God to people The primary responsibility of the prophets was to *forthtell* not *foretell*. They spoke God’s message and warnings, often calling on the people to respond in obedience. The prophets often acted as *covenant enforcers* reminding the people of what God already said about blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. Most biblical prophecy falls into this category.

C. Extent of Bible prophecy It has been estimated that about one-fourth of the Bible was prophecy at the time the specific prophecies were written.

D. Prophecy topics

1. Gentile nations
2. Israel
3. Individuals
4. Messiah
5. Earth
6. The Tribulation Period
7. The Kingdom of God

E. Prophecy in the Bible

1. Four major Old Testament prophets

- a. Isaiah
- b. Jeremiah
- c. Ezekiel
- d. Daniel

2. Twelve minor Old Testament prophets

- a. Hosea
- b. Joel
- c. Amos
- d. Obadiah
- e. Jonah
- f. Micah
- g. Nahum
- h. Habakkuk
- i. Zephaniah
- j. Haggai
- k. Zechariah
- l. Malachi

3. The Book of Revelation

4. The Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24–25 and Mark 13)

5. Second Thessalonians 1–2.

F. Prophecy ranges Some Bible prophecies have already been fulfilled while others still await a future fulfillment.

1. Examples of prophecies already fulfilled.

- a. Jeremiah's prophecy of the seventy-year captivity (Jer. 25:11).
- b. Daniel's prophecy that Belshazzar's kingdom would be taken over by the Medes and the Persians (Dan. 5:25-30).
- c. Jesus' prediction that He would be killed and rise again (Matt.16:21)

2. Examples of prophecies awaiting a future fulfillment.

- a. The prediction of the angels that Jesus would return in the same way as He departed (Acts 1:11).
- b. The day of the Lord and the coming of the man of lawlessness (2 Thessalonians 2)
- c. The rapture of the saints (1 Thess. 4:13–18)
- d. The restoration of Israel (Ezek. 36–37)
- e. The binding of Satan and the millennial reign of Christ (Rev. 20)
- f. The destruction of the earth by fire (2 Peter 3)
- g. The new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21–22)