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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ISAIAH

This book is universally looked upon as the greatest Old Testament manuscript, as written by the greatest Old Testament prophet. In unsurpassed eloquence Isaiah describes the greatness, grace, and glory of God, the virgin birth, dual nature, earthly life, sufferings and resurrection of the promised Messiah. The author also writes extensively regarding the terrors of the coming tribulation and wonders of the millennium. The nation Israel is one of Isaiah's main themes as he denounces the sin of his people, pronounces future judgment and announces Israel's restoration.

BOTTOM LINE INTRODUCTION

FROM THE REVOLT OF SATAN TO THE RULE OF THE SAVIOR. HERE IT IS, AS TOLD BY SCRIPTURES MOST ELOQUENT PROPHET.

Isaiah is the Shakespeare of the prophets, and the St. Paul of the Old Testament. This marvelous manuscript has been regarded almost universally as by far the greatest and grandest treatise on the most important subject in the history of writing – Christ and his salvation. The book's significance and sheer eloquence simply cannot be overstated.

Isaiah has more to say about the greatness of God (ch. 40, 43), the horrors of the tribulation (24), the wonders of the millennium (35), and the ministry of Christ (53), than any other biblical book. Isaiah probably contains the most important and far-reaching chapter in the entire Old Testament – chapter 53. This amazing chapter alone is quoted from or alluded to some 85 times in the New Testament. Jesus said that Isaiah saw his glory and spoke of him (Jn. 12:41). This book is really an extended commentary on Jonah 2:9, when that prophet exclaimed from the fish's belly, *"Salvation is of the Lord."* The word salvation appears 33 times in the writing of the prophets, and of these, 26 instances occur in Isaiah.

Ronald Youngblood writes:

> "The measure of any book's greatness is not to be looked for in the quantity of its lines or paragraphs or pages but in the quality of its contents. The book of Isaiah is great because of the breadth of its teachings, because of the importance of its message, because of the sweep of its subject matter. The Colorado River has many gorges, but none is so magnificent as the Grand Canyon: 280 miles long, 4 to 18 miles wide and over a mile deep, it beckons to the visitor to marvel at its beauty and plumb its depths again and again. In much the same way the Old Testament has many prophetic books, but none is so magnificent as Isaiah: sixty-six chapters long and thus a miniature Bible in itself. It beckons to the reader to revel in its beauty and plumb its teachings again and again." (*Themes from Isaiah.* Royal Books. Ventura, CA, pp. 7, 8)

Because of the shift in mood and audience between 1-39 and 40-66, some have suggested separate authors for the two sections. Strong evidence points, however, to a single author:

- The common sense understanding of the statement of authorship (1:1) is that it applies to all 66 chapters.
- The same style, vocabulary, and figures of speech occur in both sections.
- New Testament writers attribute both sections to Isaiah (see Jn. 12:37-41; Mt. 3:3; 4:14-16; Rom. 9:27-29; 10:16).
- One of the Dead Sea Scrolls includes the entire text of Isaiah, with no break between chapters 39 and 40.

FACTS REGARDING THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK

1. Who? **Isaiah.** He is almost universally regarded as the greatest prophet in the Old Testament!
2. What? **The Book of Isaiah.**
3. When and where? 740 B.C., from Jerusalem.
4. Why? Isaiah discusses five main themes:
   a. The glory and greatness of God.
   b. The sin of both Israel and Gentile nations and subsequent judgment.
   c. The dispersement and regathering of Israel.
   d. The first and second Coming of Christ.
   e. The coming Great Tribulation and glorious Millennium.
5. To whom? The entire house of Israel (Isa. 7:14) and all saved Gentiles (Isa. 2:2-4).

KEY EVENTS

1. Isaiah's severe indictment of Israel
2. Isaiah's vision of God and subsequent call
3. Prophecy of the Messiah's virgin birth
4. Prophecy of the Messiah's dual nature and names
5. The fall of Satan
6. The coming Great Tribulation
7. The glorious millennium
8. The future battle of Armageddon
9. The salvation of Jerusalem by the death angel
10. The healing of King Hezekiah
11. The coming ministry of John the Baptist, the greatness and grace of God
12. The Messiah's terrible sufferings
13. God's wonderful invitation to the hungry and thirsty
14. The Messiah's earthly ministry
15. Predicting new heavens and earth

KEY INDIVIDUALS

1. **Isaiah:** usually regarded as Israel's greatest prophet and scripture's most eloquent writer
2. **Ahaz:** Judah's 12th ruler, an especially evil king, who became the first person to hear the prophecy regarding the future virgin birth of the Messiah

3. **Hezekiah:** Judah's 13th ruler, who saw God deliver Jerusalem from the death angel and who himself was later healed of a fatal illness by the Lord
4. **Cyrus:** Persian emperor, whose decree allowing the Jews in Persia and Babylon to return and rebuild Jerusalem, was predicted by Isaiah hundreds of years in advance
5. **Sennacherib:** Assyrian king whose armies surrounding Jerusalem were destroyed by the death angel on the eve of the attack

KEY PLACES

1. **Galilee:** northern territory of Israel which land Isaiah predicted the Messiah would minister to during His first coming
2. **Babylon, Media, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Syria, Ethiopia, and Egypt:** eight Gentile nations upon which Isaiah pronounces the judgment of God

UNIQUE FEATURES

1. The book of Isaiah may be compared to the Bible.
    - The Bible has 66 books. Isaiah has 66 chapters.
    - The Old Testament has 39 books. The first section of Isaiah has 39 chapters.
    - The New Testament has 27 books. The last section of Isaiah has 27 chapters.
    - The Old Testament covers the history and sin of Israel, as do chapters 1-39 of Isaiah.
    - The New Testament describes the person and ministry of Christ, as do chapters 40-66 of Isaiah.
    - The New Testament begins with the ministry of John the Baptist (Mt. 3:1-3).
    - The second section in Isaiah begins by predicting this ministry (40:3-5).
    - The New Testament ends by referring to the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:1-3).
    - Isaiah ends his book by describing the same things (66:22).
2. Isaiah employs the most extensive vocabulary of any other biblical writer. Even though his is but the fifth longest book, he uses 2,186 different words, as compared to the Psalms (longest biblical book) which employs 2,170 words and Jeremiah (second longest book), which has 1,653!
3. There were three significant occasions in the New Testament where Isaiah was quoted. The first occurred in a synagogue, the second in a desert, and the third in a prison.
    - In a synagogue, as quoted by Jesus (61:1-3; Lk. 4:16-21)
    - In a desert, as read by a eunuch (53:7, 8; Acts 8:27-35)
    - In a prison, as quoted by Paul (6:9, 10; Acts 28:24-27)
4. Three of scripture's greatest salvation invitations are found in its pages:
    - *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"* (1:18).
    - *"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else"* (45:22).

- *"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness"* (55:1, 2).

5. Isaiah is the only biblical book to mention and describe a company of angels known as the seraphim (6:1-8). This remarkable section not only provides us with a glimpse into heaven, but also illustrates an aspect of the ministry angels perform for believers (compare Isa. 6:6-7 with Heb. 1:14).
6. It is the only Old Testament book to predict both the virgin birth of Christ (7:14), and His dual nature (9:6).
7. It is the first of two Old Testament books describing the early days of Lucifer before he fell and became the devil (14:12-15; Ezek. 28:11-18).
8. It provides the most beautiful description of the Highway of God's Holiness in all the Bible (35).
9. It is the first of two Old Testament books predicting the ministry of John the Baptist (40:3-5; compare with Malachi 3:1a).
10. It records one of the Old Testament's most remarkable and precise prophecies about an individual. The Persian king, Cyrus, and his decree are both mentioned by Isaiah 150 years before Cyrus was even born (see 44:28; 45:1).
11. It contains one of the Old Testament's clearest statements on the trinity (48:16).
12. It gives the most extended overview of the Messiah's mission to both Jews and Gentiles (42:1-4; 49).
13. In essence, the book of Isaiah summarizes for us as no other Bible writer, scripture's five greatest prophetical themes:
    - Israel's grievous and glorious future
      a. Her rebellion (1:2-6, 14, 15, 23; 2:8; 30:9; 65:2)
      b. Her ruin (3:8; 5:13; 29:10; 30:17)
      c. Her repentance (31:7; 64:8, 9)
      d. Her regathering (27:12; 43:5, 6)
      e. Her rebirth (26:19; 66:7-9)
    - The attributes of God. He speaks of His –
      a. Eternality (40:28; 63:16)
      b. Faithfulness (25:1; 49:7)
      c. Gentleness (40:11)
      d. Glory (40:3-5; 42:8; 59:19)
      e. Goodness (58:8-14)
      f. Grace (43:22-28; 48:17-22; 49:14-18; 55:1-9; 57:16-21; 63:7-8)
      g. Holiness (6:3; 57:15)
      h. Justice (56:1-8)
      i. Long-suffering (42:14; 65:2)
      j. Mercy (40:1-2)
      k. Omnipotence (31:4-5, 8-9; 40:9-10, 12; 42:5; 64:1-4)
      l. Omniscience (28:23-29; 40:13-14; 41:21-24; 42:9)
      m. Sovereignty (40:15-17, 21-27; 41:1-4; 44:6-20, 24-27; 45:7-12, 14-15; 46:1-4, 6-8; 66:1-2)

n. Triunity (48:16; 63:9-10)
o. Uniqueness (40:18-20; 46:5, 9-12; 48:12-13)
p. Word (40:6-8; 55:10-13)
q. Wrath (1:28-31; 30:27-28; 33:14-16; 63:11-15, 17-19)

- The coming Messiah: Isaiah pictures Him in terms of both a lamb and a lion!

<u>The Lamb</u>

a. His incarnation
Born of a virgin (7:14)
Both God and man (9:6)
Descended from David (9:7; 11:1)

b. His relationship with the Father
Prepared by the Father (49:1-2)
Named by the Father (9:6)
Loved by the Father (42:1)
Empowered by the Father (50:4; 61:10-11)
Commissioned by the Father (42:6-7; 49:3-7)
Reassured by the Father (49:8-9; 50:7-9)
Obedient to the Father (50:5)

c. His relationship with the Holy Spirit
The power (11:2)
The preaching (61:1-3)

d. His relationship with Israel
Its illumination (9:1-2)
Its foundation (28:16)

e. His relationship with the Gentiles
Revealing salvation (42:6-7)
Receiving adoration (11:10)

f. His gracious ministry
Not a fanatic (42:2)
Not a faultfinder (42:3)
Not a failure (43:4)

g. His crucifixion
Its origin (Who caused his death?)
His foes (all sinners) (53:3-6)
His Father! (53:6, 10)
Its ordeal (50:6; 52:14)
Its outcome (53:5-9, 11-12)

<u>The Lion</u>

a. His exaltation (52:13)

b. His millennial reign
Its nature (11:3-5)
Its extent and duration (9:7)
Its meaning to Israel (59:20-21)
Its meaning to Gentiles (52:15)
Its meaning to sinners (59:16-18)

- The Great Tribulation
  a. Its reasons
  Pride (2:10-17; 13:11)
  Idolatry (2:18)
  Lawlessness (24:5)
  b. Its results
  Divine plagues on the skies (13:10, 13)
  Divine plagues on the soil (13:9; 24:1, 19-20)
  Divine plagues on sinners
  The fear of sinners during the Tribulation (2:19-22; 13:6-8; 24:17-18)
  The "fewness" of sinners following the Tribulation (13:12; 24:2-4, 6-13)
- The Glorious Millennium
  The millennial king
  Jesus the glorious and beautiful (28:5-6; 33:17)
  Jesus the righteous (32:1-4)
  Jesus the light-giver (24:23; 60:19-20)
  The millennial kingdom
  Israel in the Millennium
  Its citizens purified (4:4; 66:19-21)
  Its country glorified (60:1-18)
  Its capital magnified (2:1-3; 4:2-6; 33:5-6, 20-23; 52:1-10; 62; 65:18-19; 66:10-14)
  Gentile nations
  Wars will cease (2:4; 9:5)
  Worship will begin (11:10)
  The needy in the Millennium
  Deaf and blind will hear and see (29:18; 35:5)
  Lame and mute will walk and talk (35:6)
  Humble and poor will rejoice (29:19)
  Sick will be healed (33:24)
  Captives will go free (52:11-12)
  Ignorant will learn (29:24)
  Sorrowful will sing (30:29-33; 35:10; 42:10-17; 65:19)
  Godless will vanish (29:20-21; 32:5-8)
  Fearful will be unafraid (29:22-23; 35:3-4)
  Petitioners will be heard (65:24)
  Dying will live (25:8; 65:20)
  Nature in the Millennium
  Plant life (29:17; 30:23-25; 32:15-20; 35:1-2, 7; 65:21-23)
  Animal life (11:6-9; 65:25)

COMPARISON WITH OTHER BOOKS

Deuteronomy:

- The two Old Testament books which provide the greatest amount of information on the very Person of God are those of Deuteronomy and Isaiah.

Psalms:

- Isaiah is the Old Testament book most often quoted in the New Testament. (Psalms is the second most quoted. Both are quoted twice as often as Genesis and Exodus, their closest competitors.) Isaiah and Psalms provide most of the Old Testament prophecies of details of Christ's crucifixion.

Revelation:

- Both Isaiah and Revelation record for us –
  a. The greatest angelic chorus of praise to God (Isa. 6:1-3; Rev. 4:6-8)
  b. The promise of a future new heaven and earth (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; Rev. 21:1)

TITLES FOR AND TYPES OF JESUS

1. Holy One of Israel (1:4)
2. Lord of Hosts (1:9)
3. The Mighty One of Israel (1:24)
4. The God of Jacob (2:3)
5. The Branch of the Lord (4:2; 11:1)
6. The King (6:5)
7. Immanuel (7:14)
8. The Great Light to the Gentiles (9:2)
9. Wonderful Counselor (9:6)
10. The Mighty God (9:6)
11. The Everlasting Father (9:6)
12. The Prince of Peace (9:6)
13. The Holy One (10:17)
14. The God of the Middle East (19:23-25)
15. The All Comforting God (25:8)
16. The Righteous King (32:1)
17. The Living God (37:17)
18. The Angel of the Lord (37:36)
19. The Glory of the Lord (40:5)
20. The Omnipotent and Omniscient God (40:12-31)
21. The Friend of Abraham (41:8)
22. The Servant of the Lord (42:1-7)
23. The Forgiver of Sins (43:25)
24. The First and the Last (44:6)

25. The Suffering Savior (50:6; 52:14; 53:1-10a, 12)
26. The Resurrected Redeemer (53:10b-11)
27. The God of the Whole Earth (54:5)
28. The Anointed of the Lord (61:1-3)
29. The Avenging and Victorious Warrior (63:1-6)

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