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A Biographical Study of Isaiah

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Isaiah

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- I. Israel, God's faithless servant (1-35)
 - A. Isaiah discussed the failures of Israel.
 - B. Isaiah discussed the future of Israel.
- II. Hezekiah, God's frightened servant (36-39)
 - A. Jerusalem was surrounded by her foes.
 - B. Jerusalem was saved from her foes.
- III. Christ, God's faithful servant (40-66)

TOPICAL SUMMARY

- I. Isaiah and King Ahaz
 - A. Isaiah's first prophecy
 - 1. Divinely sent reassurance—Isaiah and his son Shear-jashub were sent by God to reassure the frightened Judean King Ahaz (7:1-12).
 - 2. The need for this reassurance—The city of Jerusalem had been surrounded by two of its enemies.
 - 3. The contents of this reassurance
 - a. Ahaz was to keep calm and not be afraid.
 - b. God himself would soon put down the two invaders.
 - 4. The reaction to this reassurance
 - a. God's invitation—God invited Ahaz to test him by asking for a sign, either in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.
 - b. Ahaz's unbelief—He refused to even put God to the test.
 - B. Isaiah's second prophecy—God then delivered through Isaiah a special divine sign of his own (7:13-14).
 - 1. Its message—Someday a virgin would give birth to a son, whose name would be Immanuel.
 - 2. Its meaning—This sign would serve as proof of God's intention to someday deliver Jerusalem from all its enemies.
- II. Isaiah and King Hezekiah
 - A. The siege—Isaiah delivered three messages during the time when Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, and his armies had surrounded the city of Jerusalem.
 - 1. Isaiah's message to the frightened Judean King Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:5-7; Isa. 37:5-7)
 - a. The Assyrian king would receive bad news from home and would quickly return there.
 - b. When he arrived, he would be killed.
 - 2. Isaiah's message to the people of Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:32-34)

- a. The Assyrian king would not enter the city.
 - b. He would not build a ramp against its wall or even shoot an arrow into the city.
 - c. He would return by the road he came on.
 - d. God would personally save Jerusalem for his name's sake and that of David.
3. Isaiah's message to Sennacherib, the Assyrian king (2 Kings 19:20-28; Isa. 37:22-29)
- a. The only reason Sennacherib was able to defeat the various nations was because God allowed him to.
 - b. God knew his plans and the evil things Sennacherib said about him.
 - c. Because of Sennacherib's arrogance against God, God would do the following:
 - (1) Put a hook in his nose
 - (2) Place a bridle in his mouth
 - (3) Turn him back on the road by which he came
- B. The salvation—Isaiah and Hezekiah then called out to God, who sent an angel who destroyed 185,000 Assyrian troops (2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chron. 32:20-21).
- C. The sickness—Isaiah delivered some terrible and then tremendous news to the ailing Hezekiah.
1. The terrible news
 - a. The nature of the news—Hezekiah was to put his house in order, for God said he would not recover but die (Isa. 38:1).
 - b. The reason for the news—Hezekiah had invoked God's judgment for allowing his heart to become proud and ungrateful (2 Chron. 32:25).
 2. The tremendous news
 - a. The nature of this news (2 Kings 20:4-6)
 - (1) God had heard the king's prayer and had seen his tears.
 - (2) God would raise him up and add 15 years to his life.
 - b. The sign proof of this news—Isaiah offered Hezekiah one of two signs to prove the validity of the prophecy (2 Kings 20:8-11).
 - (1) Did the king want the sun's shadow to go forward ten steps on the stairway of Ahaz?
 - (2) Or did he want it to go back ten steps?
 - (3) Hezekiah chose the second, feeling this would be the greater sign. As the king watched, the miracle occurred.
 - c. The method employed to effect this news—Isaiah instructed Hezekiah to boil some dried figs, make a paste of them, and apply it to his body (2 Kings 20:7; Isa. 38:21).
- D. The stupidity—Isaiah severely rebuked Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:12-18; Isa. 39:1-7).
1. The foolishness of the king's action—Hezekiah showed a visiting envoy from Babylon all his vast riches, his treasure house of silver, gold, jewels, spices, and fine oils.

2. The fallout from the king's action—Isaiah predicted the following:
 - a. Someday Babylonian soldiers would come to Jerusalem and carry off all the riches Hezekiah had made known.
 - b. His own sons would become their slaves.
- III. Isaiah and the Seraphims—Isaiah was called into full-time service the year that King Uzziah died (6:1-13).
 - A. Isaiah and the heaven of God
 1. His vision
 - a. He saw the Lord seated on a throne, with his glory filling the temple.
 - b. He saw the mighty six-winged angels knowns as the Seraphs.
 - c. He heard them calling to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (6:3).
 2. His vexation—The prophet was made to realize he was an unclean man living among an unclean people.
 3. His visitation—One of the Seraphs touched Isaiah's mouth with a live coal taken from the heavenly altar, assuring him his guilt was removed and his sin atoned for.
 - B. Isaiah and the God of heaven
 1. Hearing God's voice—the prophet heard God say: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (6:8)
 2. Heeding God's voice—Isaiah responded, "Here am I; send me" (6:8).
- IV. Isaiah and the fall of Lucifer (14:12-15)—The prophet records the five deadly "I wills" which caused Lucifer to become the devil. This arrogant angel coveted the following:
 - A. God's place—"I will ascend into heaven."
 - B. God preeminence—"I will exalt my throne above the stars of God."
 - C. God's program—"I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north."
 - D. God's position—"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds."
 - E. God's power—"I will be like the most High."
- V. Isaiah and the Gentile nations
 - A. Babylon (13-14, 21)
 - B. Assyria (14:24-27)
 - C. Philistia (14:28-32)
 - D. Moab (15-16)
 - E. Syria (17)
 - F. Ethiopia (18)

- G. Egypt (19-20)—Isaiah was commanded by God to remove his outer clothing and walk barefoot for three years to predict how Assyria would strip Egypt and Ethiopia of their riches and possessions (Isa. 20:1-6).
- H. Edom (21:11-12)
- I. Arabia (21:13-17)
- J. Tyre (23)
- K. The whole world (24-25)
- VI. Isaiah and the nation of Israel
 - A. He described Israel's sin.
 1. Willful ignorance (1:3; 5:13)
 2. Hypocrisy (1:14-15)
 3. Corrupt leadership (1:23; 9:16)
 4. Idolatry (2:8)
 5. Gross materialism (2:7)
 6. Godless women (3:16-26)
 7. Fruitlessness (5:1-7)
 8. Drunkenness (5:11; 28:7)
 9. Amoralism (5:20)
 10. Humanism (5:21)
 11. Unscriptural alliances (31:1)
 12. Rebellion (30:9; 65:2)
 13. Infant sacrificing (57:5)
 14. Overall condition (1:6; 59:1-3, 7-8; 64:6)
 - B. He described Israel's punishment.
 1. Defeat (30:17)
 2. Dullness of eyes (29:10-12)
 3. Destruction (3:8; 10:6)
 - C. He described Israel's repentance.
 1. They will turn from their misdoings (31:7).
 2. They will turn to their Messiah (64:8-9).
 - D. He described Israel's rebirth.
 1. The travail involved (66:7-9)
 2. The time involved (66:8)
 3. The transformation involved (26:19)
 - E. He described Israel's restoration.
 1. The gathering by the Lord (27:12; 43:5-6)
 2. The glorifying of the Lord (27:13)
- VII. Isaiah and the greatness of God

A. He wrote of God's intrinsic attributes.

1. His glory (42:8; 59:19)
2. His holiness (6:1-3; 57:15)
3. His omniscience (40:13-14)
4. His omnipotence (40:12, 15-17)
5. His eternalness (57:15)
6. His trinity (48:16)
7. His uniqueness (45:5-6; 46:9)

B. He writes of God's imparted attributes.

1. His righteousness (59:17)
2. His grace (30:19)
3. His mercy (14:1)
4. His compassion (63:7-9)
5. His wrath (30:27)
6. His longsuffering (1:18)
7. His faithfulness (25:1)
8. His love (49:14-16)
9. His salvation (12:2-5; 25:8-9; 45:22)
10. His Word (40:6-8; 55:10-11)

VIII. Isaiah and the Son of God

A. He described the Lamb.

1. His incarnation (7:14-15; 9:6)
2. His lowliness and youth (7:15; 11:1-2; 53:2)
3. His relationship to the Father (42:1; 50:4-5)
4. His specific ministry to the Gentiles (9:1-2)
5. His gracious ministry to all (42:2-3)
6. His miracles (35:5-6)
7. His message (61:1-2)
8. His suffering and death (50:6; 52:14; 53:1-10)

B. He described the Lion.

1. His resurrection (53:10-12)
2. His millennial reign (9:7; 32:1; 33:22)

IX. Isaiah and the great tribulation

A. He described the final woes.

1. Divine plagues upon the soil (2:21; 13:13; 24:1, 6, 20)
2. Divine plagues upon the sky (13:10; 34:4)
3. Divine plagues upon sinners (2:19; 13:7-8; 34:1-2; 63:3)

B. He described the final war.

1. The vengeance of the Lord (26:20, 21; 34:1-4; 66:15-16, 24)
 2. The victory of the Lord (63:1-6)
- X. Isaiah and the glorious Millennium
- A. The nations in the Millennium
 1. The Jews
 - a. Their citizens will be purified (4:4).
 - b. Their capital will be magnified (26:1-2; 52:1).
 2. The Gentiles
 - a. Wars will cease (2:4).
 - b. Worship will commence (2:2-3; 66:23).
 - B. The needy in the Millennium
 1. The blind will see (29:18; 35:5).
 2. The deaf will hear (29:18; 35:5).
 3. The lame will walk (35:6).
 - C. Nature itself in the Millennium
 1. The countryside
 - a. Valleys will rise (40:4).
 - b. Mountains will sink (40:4).
 - c. Deserts will bloom (35:1, 6).
 2. The creatures
 - a. Perfect harmony between the lion and the lamb (11:6-7; 65:25)
 - b. Perfect harmony between the child and the cockatrice (11:18)

THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- I. Isaiah and the Gospel writers
 - A. Matthew and Luke identified John the Baptist as the New Testament messenger predicted by Isaiah in the Old Testament (compare Mt. 3:1-3; Lk. 3:2-6 with Isa. 40:3-5).
 1. The foretelling as described by Isaiah—“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (Isa. 40:3-5).
 2. The fulfillment as described by Matthew—“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Matt. 3:1-3).

B. Matthew identified Christ as the New Testament chosen servant foretold by Isaiah in the Old Testament.

1. The foretelling as described by Isaiah—“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law” (Isa. 42:1-4).
2. The fulfillment as described by Matthew—“Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust” (Matt. 12:18-21).

C. John wrote the following:

1. That the Jewish leaders had fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecies about the unbelieving Christ would face (Isa. 53:1; John 12:37-38).
2. That Isaiah had seen the glory of Christ and spoken of him (John 12:41).

II. Isaiah and Jesus

A. Jesus read from Isaiah’s scroll during his sermon in Nazareth and claimed he was the fulfillment of the prophet’s words concerning the Messiah.

1. The foretelling—“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn” (Isa. 61:1-2).
2. The fulfillment (Luke 4:16-21)—“He began to say unto them, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:21).

B. Jesus moved to Capernaum, a Galilean city in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali so that he might fulfill a prophecy given by Isaiah.

1. The foretelling—“Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined” (Isa. 9:1-2).
2. The fulfillment—“And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles” (Matt. 4:3-15).

- C. Jesus healed many people to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy concerning the Messiah (Isa. 53:4; Matt. 8:16-17).
 - D. Jesus denounced the Pharisees on two occasions, saying they had fulfilled Isaiah's prophecies concerning them.
 - 1. The first occasion (Isa. 6:9-10; Matt. 13:14-15).
 - 2. The second occasion (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:7-9; Mark. 7:6-7).
- III. Isaiah and Philip
- A. The passage—the Ethiopian eunuch was reading from Isaiah 53 when Philip caught up with him in the desert (Isa. 53:7-8; Acts 8:26-35). “The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth” (Acts 8:32-33).
 - B. The puzzle—“The eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?” (Acts 8:34).
 - C. The proclaiming—“Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus” (Acts 8:35).
- IV. Isaiah and Paul—Paul often quoted from Isaiah, pointing out:
- A. That unbelieving Israel had fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy about them (Isa. 6:9-10; 44:18; Acts 28:25-27)
 - B. That God had extended a long and intense invitation to Israel (Isa. 65:2; Rom. 10:21). “I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts” (Isa. 65:2).
 - C. That Israel would stumble over Christ when he appeared (Isa. 8:14; 28:16; Rom. 9:33)
 - D. That God would, nevertheless, reserve for himself a remnant in Israel (Isa. 10:22-23; Rom. 9:27-28): “Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved” (Rom. 9:27).
 - E. That this remnant would be preserved due to the grace of God alone (Isa. 1:9; Rom. 9:29): “As Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha” (Rom. 9:29).
 - F. That the Gentiles would find Christ (Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1, 10; 52:15; 65:1; Rom. 10:20; 15:12, 21): “But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me” (Rom. 10:20). “Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust” (Rom. 15:12).

STATISTICS

Father: Amoz (Isa. 38:1)

Spouse: A prophetess (Isa. 8:3)

Sons: Shear-jashub and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Isa. 7:3; 8:1, 3)

First mention: 2 Kings 19:2

Final mention: Romans 15:12

Meaning of his name: "God's salvation"

Frequency of his name: Referred to 53 times

Biblical books mentioning him: Nine books (2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Isaiah, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans)

Occupation: Prophet (2 Kings 19:2)

Important fact about his life: He was the Old Testament's greatest prophet.