

LESSON 5
LIVING WITH THE PROPHETS
(Isaiah)

The light of Israel and Judah is about to go out, to be extinguished by the Lord Himself. Isaiah presents YHVH's case against them— "Sons I have reared and brought up, but they have revolted against Me. ... They have abandoned the Lord (cf. Isa. 1:2-4). Consequently, a warning goes out (1:16-20) of an impending judgment (1:24-25), yet containing a hope for the future (1:26-31). Judah will be refined and purified through judgments along with the Lord's adversaries (1:24, 26, 28). So, we read of the first prophecy of Isaiah concerning the "latter days" (2:2; cf. Gen. 49:1; Num. 24:14; Deut. 31:29). The mountain of the house of YHVH will be established on the mountains, and all the nations will stream to it (2:2).

Therefore, a call of repentance goes out to the house of Jacob to walk in the light of the Lord, for the Lord of hosts will have a day of reckoning against all the proud and lofty (2:5, 12; cf. vv. 13-22). Because 722 has not yet fallen on Israel, their exile to Assyria, both Israel and Judah are being told what will happen to them in the light of the terror of the Lord that is coming upon the earth (2:19, 21). Everything that is held in trust is going to be taken away. In that day, the Lord will take away even the beauty of the women (3:16-24). In that day, the Branch of YHVH will be beautiful and glorious, but only a remnant of Israel will be the pride and adornment of the fruit of the earth, i.e., of the survivors of the nation of Israel and of the earth (3:2-6). It will be then that the glory of YHVH will return, when He has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, rinsed away the bloodshed of Jerusalem by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning (3:4).

Currently, there was nothing more that God could do for His people. So, Isaiah puts forth a song of the Lord concerning His vineyard (5:1-7). He looked for justice, but found only bloodshed; for righteousness, but only a cry of distress (5:7). There is only "woe" left for them (5:8-30).

It is in the light of all this that Isaiah is called to be a prophet (6:1-13). It comes in a vision of YHVH sitting on His throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple (6:1). The cry of the Seraphim, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is YHVH of hosts," brings upon Isaiah the explanation of the woes just stated in chapter 5. It is uncleanness. Isaiah saw his own unclean lips, living amongst the unclean lips of his people (6:5). His eyes had seen the King, YHHV of hosts, and he knew he needed a cleansing, to which the Seraphim immediately respond (6:6-8). His iniquity is removed and his sin is atoned for, a picture of how Israel could have responded to the Lord's pleadings and be saved, but wouldn't.

The people now stand under the judgment of God. Isaiah is to preach, but the people will not hear. His job is to render the hearts of this people fat, their ears heavy and their eyes besmeared; to keep on listening, but not able to perceive; looking, but not understanding (6:8-10). He is to do this until cities are devastated, without inhabitant; houses without people; a land forsaken. Only a tenth will remain, again subject to burning, and left with only a stump—the holy seed is the stump (6:13).

- A. THE HOPE OF A VIRGIN-BORN SON**—a remnant shall return (7:13-15)
- A. This passage is grounded in the days of Ahaz (735 co-regent or 730-715 alone)
 - B. A nation prosperous, but sinful, Judah is threatened by Israel (the ten tribes) and Syria (7:1-2; cf., 2 Kgs. 16:1ff. where Aram = Syria)
 - C. Isaiah is sent with his son Shear-jashub, meaning a remnant shall return, to Ahaz, that these two will not succeed
 - D. Refusing a sign, God gives a sign of a virgin-born son through an almah (13-15)
 - 1. An almah is a young maiden of marriageable age
 - 2. A betullah is a word for virgin in Hebrew of any age
 - 3. Since almah is of a marriageable age, meaning “ripe,” i.e., able to conceive, she is a young maiden or virgin, cf., it uses below:
 - a. Gen. 24:43—is almah but in 24:14 she is naarah, girl, and in 24:16 is a betullah, virgin
 - b. Exod. 2:8—Miriam is an almah but is a young girl still in the home of her parents and therefore would infer her virginity
 - c. Psa. 46:1—is part of the superscription, a musical term
 - d. Psa. 68:25—refers to a musical worship procession in which almah play timbrels. It may call to mind Exod. 15 or Judg. 11:34-40, virgins
 - e. 1 Chron. 15:20—is a musical direction
 - f. Song of Songs 1:3—the king's harem were queens, concubines and alamot without number. If they were not virgins, they would be concubines
 - g. Prov. 30:19—the way of a man with an almah. Since there is no moral evil in the first three, it is likely there is none in the fourth and speaks of his desire
 - 4. Additionally, the clause uses an adjective harah, pregnant, with almah, meaning, the virgin is pregnant
 - 5. Recognizing the child's special nature, he will be called Immanuel—God with us, his throne name
 - 6. The LXX translation of these verses is parthenos—virgin
 - 7. The child of 16-17 would then refer to Shear-jashub, a child meant for signs and wonders concerning Isaiah's prophecies (8:18)
 - E. Since Isaiah's children are for signs and wonders (8:18), he took his son with him as the seal of the coming prophecies, three or four:
 - 1. One about the planned invasions of Israel and Syria (16)
 - 2. One about a virgin-born son (13-15)
 - 3. One about the future coming of Assyria? (17-25)
 - 4. One about the near coming of Assyria (8:5-10)
 - F. So, the Mosaic ruler, Gen 49 and Num. 24, is to be a virgin-born son
 - G. On account of this, Israel will stumble over Him (8:9-16; cf. Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:8)
 - H. Isaiah and the disciples will wait for the Lord and put their trust in the word and not in occult gibberish (8:16-20)
 - I. For the disobedient, there will be nothing but distress, gloom and darkness (8:21-22)

II. IN THE LATTER TIME, NO GLOOM FOR THOSE IN GALILEE—Zebulun and Naphtali, Galilee of the Gentiles (9:1-7; cf., Matt. 4:12-16)

- A. Israel would be exiled in 722 BC, but in the latter time they would see a great light in the area of Galilee
- B. This light will break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulder (4)
- C. For a child will be born to them, a son, and the government will be on His shoulder
- D. His name will be: (6)
 - 1. Wonderful Counselor
 - 2. Mighty God
 - 3. Prince of Peace
- E. There will be no end to the increase of His government or peace (7)
- F. On the throne of David and over his kingdom He will be, to establish it and uphold it with righteousness from then on and forevermore (7)
- G. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this

III. WOE TO ASSYRIA—the rod of YHVH's anger (10:5-34)

- A. Assyria is arrogant (5-11)
- B. When YHVH has completed all His work on Mt. Zion and on Jerusalem, He will punish the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria (12)
- C. The "light of Israel" (cf. 9:2) will become a fire and his Holy One a flame
- D. It, "the light of Israel," will devour his thorns and thistle in a single day (17-19)
- E. "In that day" the remnant of Israel who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, i.e., Assyria, but will truly rely on YHVH, the Holy One of Israel (20)
- F. But only a remnant of Israel will return (21-22)
- G. A destruction overflowing with righteousness, a complete destruction, is decreed
- H. YHVH of Hosts will execute it in the midst of the whole land (22-23)
- I. Therefore, those living in Zion, do not fear "the Assyrian" who strikes you with his rod the way Egypt did (24)
- J. In that day his burden will be removed (27)

IV. THE SHOOT FROM THE STEM OF JESSE—the branch from his root (11:1-12:6)

- A. The kings of Israel and Judah will be cut off, with only a stump left in parched earth (6:13)
- B. But a greater David will arise
- C. The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon Him (2)
- D. He will delight in the fear of the Lord, judging with righteousness (4)
- E. With the breath of His lips, He will slay the wicked (4)
- F. The fall will be reversed (6-9)
- G. In that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse (10)

H. In that day Adonai will recover a second time with His hand the remnant of His people who remain from: (11-12)

1. Assyria
2. Egypt—Mizraim, probably lower Egypt
3. Pathros—Southern or upper Egypt
4. Cush--Ethiopia
5. Elam--Persia
6. Shinar--Babylon
7. Hamath--Syria
8. The islands of the Sea

I. The nations will gather up God's people and bring them back to the land of Israel

J. The jealousy of Ephraim will depart (13)

K. Israel will swoop down in the west upon the Philistines (14)

L. Together, Israel and Judah will plunder the sons of the east—Edom, Moab and Ammon (14)

M. YHVH will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt (15)

N. And there will be a highway from Assyria to Egypt (16)

O. And so, Israel will give thanks to YHVH (12:1-6)

1. God is my salvation
2. They will draw water from the wells of salvation (3-4)
3. Let this be known throughout the earth (5)
4. For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel

V. THE ORACLES CONCERNING THE NATIONS—YHVH reigns over all the nations, even in the present (13-23)¹

A. Babylon (13:1-14:27)—

1. The Lord will have compassion on Judah again and settle them in their own land (14:1)
2. Peoples will bring them into the land
3. Then you will take up a taunt over Babylon (14:3-21)
4. Along with this, YHVH will break “the Assyrian” in His land (he is identified with Babylon (14:24-27))

B. Philistines (14:28-32)

C. Moab (15:1-13)

D. Damascus/Israel (17:1-14)

E. Cush (18:1-7)

F. Egypt (19:1-24)

1. A Highway from Assyria to Egypt (19:23)
2. Israel will be a third party to this (19:24)

¹ For a chart of the nations and the books that speak of them, see the back of your syllabus

VI. ASSYRIA, A SIGN AGAINST EGYPT AND CUSH—(20:1-6)**VII. A SECOND SERIES OF ORACLES—their inner character (21-23)**

- A. The wilderness of the sea (Babylon; 21:1-10)
- B. Dumah—meaning silence, stillness or underworld (Edom; 21:11-12)
- C. Arabia (21:13-17)
- D. The valley of vision (Jerusalem; 22:1-25)
- E. Tyre (23:1-18)

I. THE ISAIANIC APOCALYPSE—the end of the world (24-27)

- A. The whole world is at a crisis at the end of history (24:3-6)
- B. God is going to punish the host of heaven on high and the kings upon the earth (24:21)
- C. Note the wasted city (24:10; see 12; 25:2, 3-plrl.—Babylon/Jerusalem?)
- D. Only the godly will be preserved
- E. The great feast (25:6-12)
- F. The song of the end (26:1-21; like the song of Moses in Deut. 32)
- G. The redemption of Israel after YHVH punishes Leviathan the twisted serpent (27:1)
- H. The Lord is the keeper of the pleasant vineyard (27:1-5)
- I. In days to come, Jacob will take root (27:6-11)
- J. In that day, from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt, the Lord will begin His threshing and Israel will be gathered up, one by one (27:12)

II. ISAIAH 40-66—the suffering servant

- A. Following the woes of chapters 28-33, primarily dealing with Israel and Judah, the nations are called to draw near (34:1)
- B. His indignation is against all the nations (34:2)
- C. The curse upon the earth will be removed (35:10)
- D. Chapters 36-39 form a bridge between 1-35 and 40-66
 - 1. Chapters 36 and 37 look back
 - 2. Chapters 38 and 39 prepare the reader for 40-66
- B. Notice that 40:1 opens with a call to comfort the people of God
- C. A way is to be cleared in the wilderness for the coming of YHVH (40:3-8)
- D. Zion, the bearer of good news (the gospel) is called to get itself up on a mountain, and shout it out (40:9-10)
- E. The coastlands are to listen in silence (41:1)
- F. And then comes the announcement about YHVH's servant—in four servant songs
 - 1. 42:1-9
 - 2. 49:1-13
 - 3. 50:4-11
 - 4. 52:13-53:12
- G. Victory will be gained through a suffering servant

- H. Through Him, sin and guilt will be removed
- I. Babylon will be defeated (47:1ff.)
- J. The barren one, the remnant, is to shout with joy (54)
- K. Everyone who thirsts are to come to the waters and drink (55)
- L. Come and humble yourselves oh Israel (58)
- M. Arise and shine in the midst of the darkness of the earth, for his glory will shine on you (60)
- N. Heaven is His throne, and earth is his footstool, but God will look to the humble and contrite of heart (66)
- O. A land will be born in one day, and a new heavens and earth will come
- P. All mankind will bow before Him

III. IN SUMMARY ISAIAH TEACHES—Isaiah's description of a future kingdom:²

- A. The Lord will restore the faithful remnant of Israel to the land to inhabit the kingdom at its beginning
- B. As the Lord defeats Israel's enemies, He will provide protection for His people
- C. In her kingdom, Israel will enjoy great prosperity of many kinds
- D. The city of Jerusalem will rise to world preeminence in the kingdom
- E. Israel will be the center of world attention in the kingdom
- F. Israel's mission in the kingdom will be to glorify the Lord
- G. Gentiles in the kingdom will receive blessing through the channel of faithful Israel
- H. Worldwide peace will prevail in the kingdom under the rule of the Prince of Peace
- I. Moral and spiritual conditions in the kingdom will reach their highest plane since the fall of Adam
- J. Governmental leadership in the kingdom will be superlative with the Messiah heading it up
- K. Humans will enjoy long life in the kingdom
- L. Knowledge of the Lord will be universal in the kingdom
- M. The world of nature will enjoy a great renewal in the kingdom
- N. "Wild" animals will be tame in the kingdom
- O. Sorrow and mourning will not exist in the kingdom
- P. An eternal kingdom, as a part of God's new creation, will follow the millennial kingdom
- Q. The King will judge overt sin in the kingdom
- R. I would add, through a suffering servant, sin and guilt will be removed for all who come in faith

² The MacArthur Study Bible, ESV, Crossway, 2010, p. 1032.