

The Prophecies of Isaiah ¹

Lesson 1

Isaiah's Introduction

Isaiah 1:1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, concerning Judah and Jerusalem which he saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Isaiah, the man whose name means the salvation of Jehovah, served as a spokesman for the Lord during portions of the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, the 10th through 13th kings of the Southern Kingdom.²

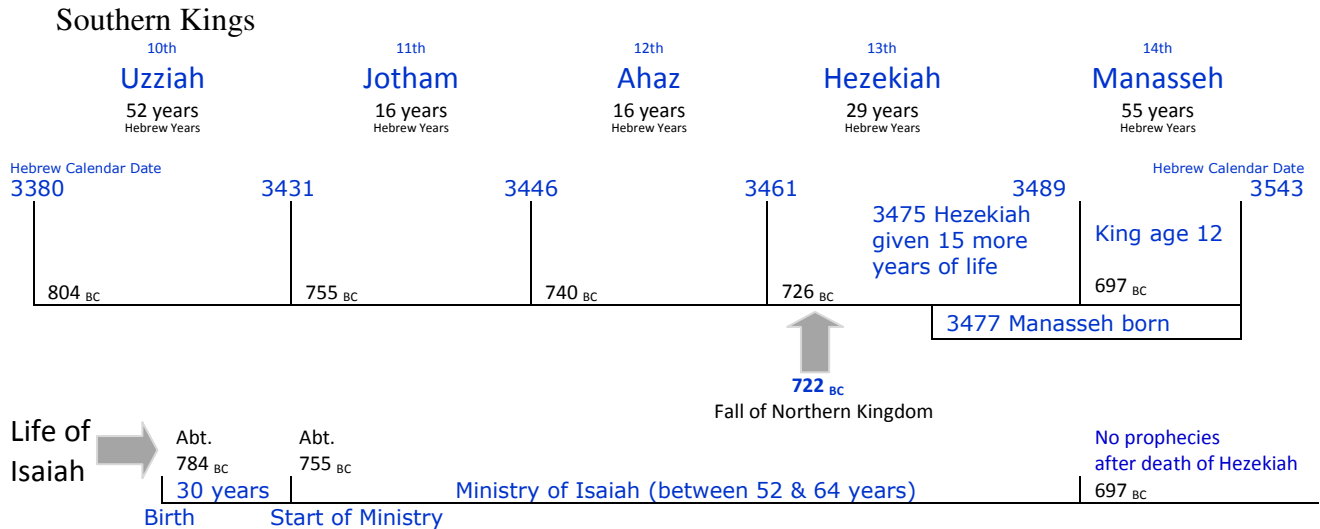
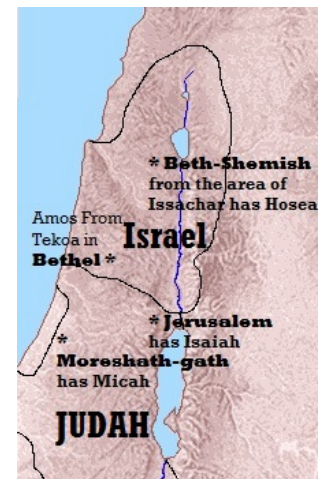


Figure 1: Southern Kings justified with Isaiah's Life and Ministry

Born during the reign of Uzziah, he began his work shortly before the death of Uzziah and continued until after the death of Hezekiah. His ministry extends from as few as 52 years to as many as 64 years. Isaiah is not alone in this service. Sometime during the reign of Jotham and continuing through the days of Hezekiah, Micah becomes a contemporary of Isaiah, prophesying from a little town in the Southern Kingdom near Gath while Isaiah is prophesying just a few miles away in Jerusalem.³ They both live in the Southern Kingdom but their prophecies include information about Israel and Judah, the North and South. Other prophets joining them during their long ministries include both Amos and Hosea who served in the Northern Kingdom. The two kingdoms are not without the Word of the Lord during this time. The ministries of these four prophets provide sufficient warnings for the two ungodly nations birthed in the wilderness as one and divided at the death of Solomon. For the time being, the North reeks with sin while the South is just beginning to dabble in the same disobedience. At the end of the ministries of both Isaiah



Map 1: Locations of the Ministries of Isaiah, Micah, Amos & Hosea

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² Combined reigns span 113 Hebrew Years Or 101.7 Gregorian Years.

³ Moresath-Gath

and Micah, the North loses its kingdom and its land, and is sent into exile in Assyria. Over the next one hundred Hebrew years, the South commits abominations far worse than the North. Because of her great sin, she too will go into exile but under the thumb of the Babylonian Empire. Isaiah's book prophesies these events but it also reaches far into the future to give hope to the descendants of Jacob.

Nothing is known about Isaiah's first call to be a prophet, but his second call occurs in the year King Uzziah dies.⁴ Early in his life, Isaiah sees the attack of the Northern Kingdom by Pul, or Tiglath-pileser, the Assyrian King.⁵ When attacked by the Kings of Aram and the Northern Kingdom, Ahaz, the Southern King seeks the help of Tiglath-pileser and he agrees. Tiglath subdues Aram and the Northern Kingdom and takes many people into Assyrian exile.⁶ Finally, in 722 BC, Isaiah sees Shalmaneser, the next Assyrian king, destroys the entire Northern Kingdom, killing 90% of the people and carrying off many of the remaining 10% into Assyrian exile. In the prophecy, Isaiah calmly assures Ahaz concerning Assyria. When Hezekiah takes the throne, he makes several mistakes that Isaiah must address.⁷ Hezekiah's early years are fraught with threats from Assyria, especially by its next two kings, Sargon II and Sennacherib. However, after Sennacherib unsuccessfully attempts to take Jerusalem, Hezekiah's last years as king are peaceful.⁸ It is likely that Isaiah lives to see the death of Hezekiah and the beginning years of Manasseh's reign.

| Kings of Assyria | | |
|---|------------|----------------------------|
| During the Ministry of Isaiah | | |
| Adad-nirari III | 811–783 BC | son of Shamshi-Adad V |
| Shalmaneser IV | 783–773 BC | son of Adad-nirari III |
| Ashur-Dan III | 773–755 BC | son of Shalmaneser IV |
| Ashur-nirari V | 755–745 BC | son of Adad-nirari III |
| Tiglath-Pileser III also known by the abbreviation "Pul" | 745–727 BC | son of Ashur-nirari V |
| Shalmaneser V | 727–722 BC | son of Tiglath-Pileser III |
| Sargon II | 722–705 BC | unknown father |
| Sennacherib | 705–681 BC | son of Sargon II |

Figure 2: Kings of Assyria during the Ministry of Isaiah

Isaiah's message includes both history and prophecy. Amazingly, in the midst of reporting the events of the time, Isaiah includes a prophetic message for the near future and then makes the transition into a Messianic or Kingdom prophecy for the far distant future in order to give hope to his listeners. He then returns to complete the prophecy for the near future.

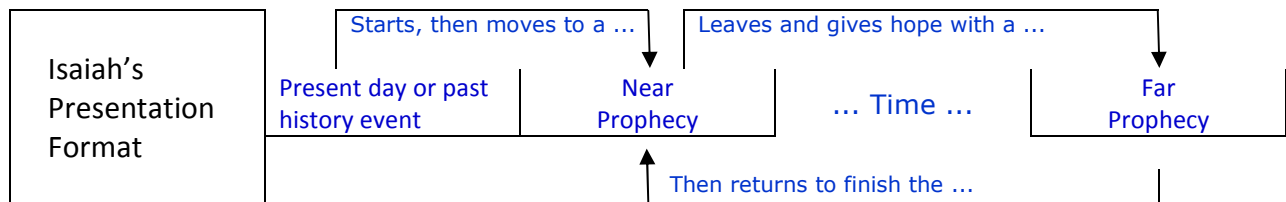


Figure 3: Isaiah's Presentation Format

Isaiah uses this pattern throughout the entire book and interestingly, most of the far-reaching prophecies are some of the most memorable passages known such as, "His name

⁴ Isaiah 6:1

⁵ 2 Kings 15:19

⁶ 2Ki 15:29; 2Ki 16:9; 1Ch 5:26

⁷ 2Ki 18:7; Isa 10:24; Isa 37:6

⁸ 2Ki 18:14-16; Isa 36:2-22; Isa 37:1-8; 2 Chronicles 32:23, 27-29

shall be Wonderful, Counselor, Prince of Peace ... For unto us a Child is born ... Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory ... Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel ... Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone," and many more.

When studying the different messages in the book of Isaiah, we must handle the Scripture with great care, purposefully looking past the chapter breaks for the complete context of each passage. Additionally, the book is full of Hebrew names. Each name has a meaning which renders further insight into the purpose of the passage. The Hebrew-speaking Jews of Isaiah's day understood the meanings of each name and incorporated them into the global understanding of the passage. Therefore, in this study, we must take the time to discover the meanings of those names. Furthermore, not all the history recorded in the book should be confused as prophecy yet to be fulfilled. It is a record of the events of the day which Isaiah uses as a springboard to present the warnings and prophecies concerning the future both near and far. Moreover, the prophecies that have been fulfilled in history since the completion of the book should not be viewed as prophecies yet to be fulfilled. More important still, all of Isaiah's prophecies address the Lord's relationship with Judah and Jerusalem even though He uses the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the surrounding nations as an example to the inhabitants of the Southern Kingdom. Nevertheless, in the end, the Southern Kingdom does not heed the warnings of Isaiah and she will go into exile, just as the prophet prophesies. The unknown author of the book begins by introducing Isaiah and his ministry. He inserts a sentence at the beginning of the manuscript to introduce Isaiah and the time of his ministry.

| Hebrew Names | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Examples of Meanings | |
| Isaiah | <i>Salvation of Jehovah</i> |
| Moresbeth-gath | <i>Possession of the wine-press</i> |
| Bethel | <i>House of God</i> |
| Tekoa | <i>Pitching of tents</i> |
| Beth-Shemesh | <i>House of the sun</i> |
| Sodom | <i>Burning</i> |
| Gomorrah | <i>Submersion</i> |

Figure 4: Examples of the Meanings of Hebrew Names in Isaiah



Map 2: Countries and Cities mentioned in the Book of Isaiah

Isaiah's messages come from the Lord in two forms, visions and oracles. In the visions, Isaiah sees the future in a type of daydream and then he puts the message in his own words. In the oracles, the Lord tells Isaiah the exact words to say. Even though the messages may be about the Northern Kingdom, Babylon, Tyre, Sidon, the Negev, the birth of the Savior or His future reign on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords, they are all directed at Judah and Jerusalem to urge them to turn from their wicked ways and return to the Lord. Each message comes to Isaiah some time during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Uzziah reigns

for 52 Hebrew years followed by Jotham, 16 years, Ahaz, 16 years, and Hezekiah, 29 years. During part of his last years, Hezekiah allows his son Manasseh to co-reign with him. Manasseh then ascends to the throne at the age of 12 when his father dies.⁹

The Lord's opening vision in Chapter 1 explains to Judah, the Southern Kingdom, the Lord's disgust with her and with the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

⁹ Manasseh is born to Hezekiah after the Lord grants Hezekiah 15 more years of life.