

Isaiah: from Fire to Freedom

Harvest Community Church
Fall 2023



Where is God when the world is descending into chaos? This question is on the minds of many people these days, but it's not a new question. 2,600 years ago the ancient Israelites saw their entire society, built on God's law, literally burn down around them. They questioned God's promises, despaired of his love for them, and gave in to hopelessness. God spoke into this bleak situation through the prophet Isaiah.

What is Isaiah About?

Isaiah's prophecies were written shortly before and after the downfall of Israel as an independent nation. The few who survived the invasion were exiled to Babylon where they worked as slaves. They had no hope for their future.

God's message through Isaiah corrects their view of the present and reaffirms their hope for the future. God will judge the sin of his chosen people, as well as the sin of all peoples. But judgment is not God's final word, either for the Israelites or for the nations: he promises eternal life in a perfect future world for all who will come to him. This message is presented in 5 sections:

Section	Chapters	Focus
1	1-12	God and his chosen people: judgment and hope
2	13-27	God and <i>all</i> peoples: judgment and hope
3	28-39	God and his sovereign, saving grace
4	40-55	God and his Servant
5	56-66	God and his eternal kingdom

The Theological Jewel of the Old Testament

The book of Isaiah roughly parallels the message of the entire Bible. Its first 39 chapters (much like the 39 books of the Old Testament) emphasize the sin of mankind, God's judgment on that sin, and his promise of future salvation. Its last 27 chapters (much like the 27 books of the New Testament) emphasize the role of God's Servant as our savior, and envision a future new heavens and new earth where God's people will joyfully live with him forever.

The New Testament draws heavily from the book of Isaiah, and several its passages serve as key foundations for the Gospel of Jesus. From Isaiah's vision of God's holiness (chapter 6), to the Christmas prophecy of a savior-child (chapter 9), to the Easter prophecy of a suffering Servant (chapters 52-53), to the future joy of heaven (chapter 60-62), Isaiah contains some of the best-known and most-loved passages in the Old Testament. Together, the book of Isaiah shows that **God, the judge of all people, also provides salvation for all people.**

Help for a Modern World

This book is helpful for Harvest as we seek to make disciples in our day. It confronts modern people with a God who is the judge of us, not the other way around. It also showcases the grace-filled plan of our loving God to save sinners through the sacrificial work of his long-promised Servant, Jesus. May the view of life presented by the book of Isaiah be Harvest's as we seek to help all people find and follow Jesus!