

## THE BOOK OF ISAIAH, Lesson 1

### *Introduction and Chapters 1 – 5*

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Wednesday Bible Class, December 2009

**AUTHOR:** ISAIAH, whose name means “salvation,” the son of Amoz; married with two sons (7:3; 8:1-3); contemporary of **HOSEA**, **MICAH**, and **NAHUM**.

**DATE:** 740 - 680 BC...In the days of

**UZZIAH**, 791-740 BC (10<sup>th</sup> King of Judah; godly; 2 Kings 15:1-7)

**JOTHAM**, 750-736 BC (11<sup>th</sup> King of Judah; godly; 2 Kings 15:32-38)

**AHAZ**, 736-716 BC (12<sup>th</sup> King of Judah; wicked and idolatrous; 2 Kings 16:1-8, 19-20)

**HEZEKIAH**, 716-687 BC (13<sup>th</sup> King of Judah; promoted religious reform; 1 Kings 18:1-8;

2 Kings 19; 2 Chronicles 32:27-31; and the book of Isaiah).

**MANASSEH**, 687-642 BC (14<sup>th</sup> King of Judah; idolatry reinstated and wickedness prevailed in Judah as never before! 2 Kings 21:1-6,9-18).

\*The contemporary *Northern Kings of Israel* were **JEHOASH**, **JEROBOAM ii**, **MANAHEM**, **PEKAH**, **HOSHEA**, then that kingdom goes into Assyrian captivity.

**TO WHOM WRITTEN:** the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem (1:1).

**THE MESSAGE:** the book is an indictment of Judah’s sin and rebellion against God, and the coming invasion and captivity of Babylon, which is God’s judgment against Judah. Also, there is much in the book concerning surrounding nations (chapters 13-23). Both the holiness and impartiality of God in judging evil are evident in the book.

### **THE HISTORICAL SETTING OF THE BOOK**

It is significant to know the time frame and setting of the book to properly understand its contents.

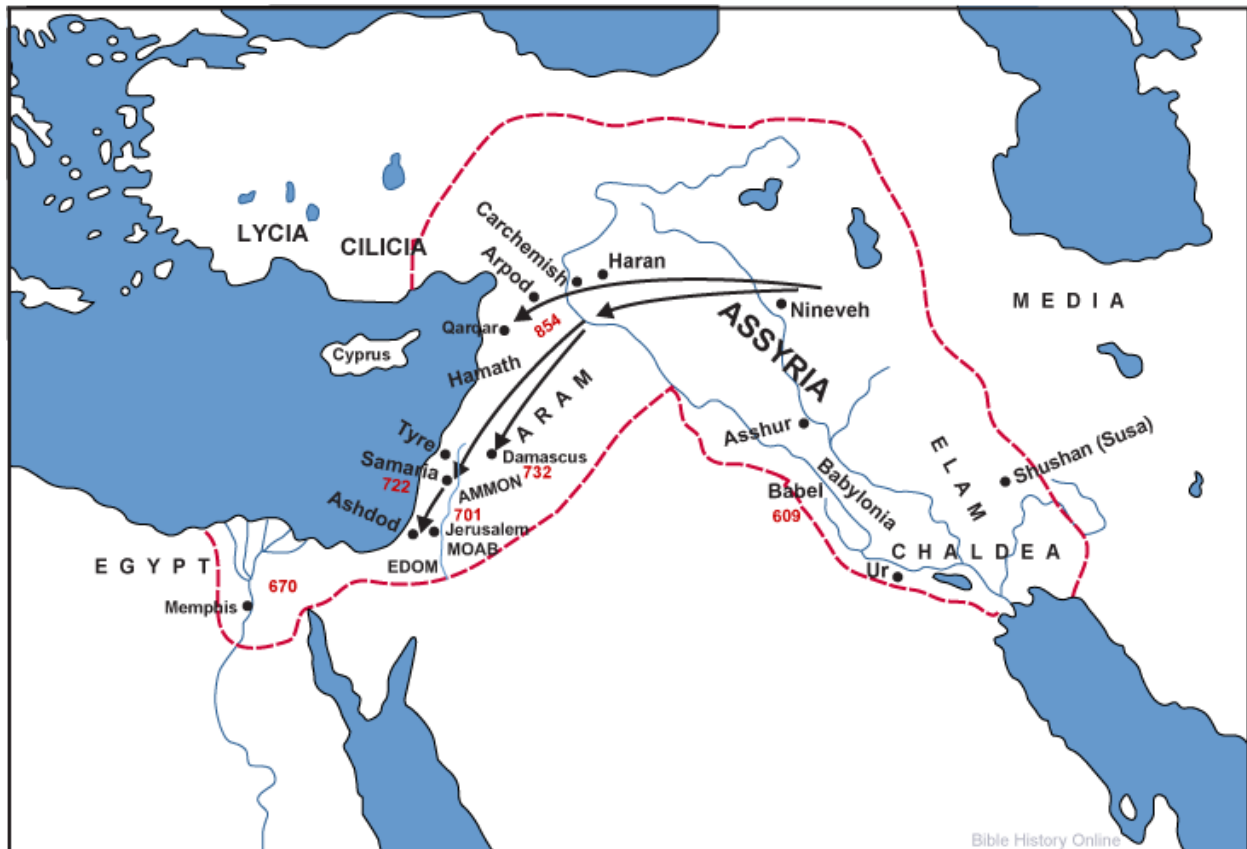
1. The reign of **Uzziah** was a time of prosperity unequalled since the days of Solomon. Uzziah also restored the borders of Judah. But troublesome times lay ahead (2 Kings and 2 Chronicles relates the history).
2. The people were guilty of idolatry, and foreign captivity was coming. In their prosperity they forget about God. **Isaiah** received his call as a prophet of God the year Uzziah died (740 BC; chapter 6), and he was to proclaim a message of repentance. The northern Kingdom was captured by **Assyria** in 722 BC (which Isaiah predicted in 8:3-4).
3. **King Hezekiah** was a reformer, but he would turn to Egypt which would prove potentially disastrous; when Egypt fell to Assyria, only Divine intervention spared Judah (37:36-37). During Manasseh’s reign, however, idolatry was reinstated and Isaiah was charged to warn the people of impending captivity.

4. According to tradition, Isaiah was martyred by Manasseh by being sawn in two (see Hebrews 11:37).

### **HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS DURING ISAIAH'S TIME**

1. Both Israel and Judah were important to neighboring enemies because of their strategic geographical position between northern powers and Egypt (to the south). During the reigns of David and Solomon, Israel was very powerful, her neighbors were not as powerful as they would become, and so potential threats were warded off. After the division of the nation, neighbors (including **Syria, Ammon, and Moab**) were continual threats to Israel and Judah.
2. After the deaths of Uzziah and Jotham, during the reign of **AHAZ**, Jerusalem was besieged by **REZIN**, king of Damascus, and **PEKAH**, king of Israel (2 Kings 16:5-9), which is the very situation about which Isaiah warned Ahaz in Isaiah 7. Prompted by the Assyrian threat, Syrian and the northern kingdom of Israel (also called Ephraim) formed an alliance, which Isaiah predicted would fail. In Isaiah 8 the rise of Assyria is likened to an overwhelming flood.
3. **ASSYRIA**, with its three great cities, Asshur, Calah, and Nineveh, rose to its most powerful position between 880 and 612 BC.
  - a. **TIGLATH-PILESAR HI**, king of Assyria, invaded the Samarian capital of Damascus in 743 BC, and though King Uzziah of Judah paid him tribute, he increasingly began to take captive peoples into exile.
  - b. Tiglath-pileser attacked Israel in 733 BC, destroying Megiddo and Razor, and turning the region from Galilee to the coast into an Assyrian province. King Ahaz of Judah had asked his help in fighting both Syria and Israel (Isaiah 7; 2 Kings 16), but in so doing lost his independence from Assyria.
  - c. **SHALMANEZAR V** captured Hoshea, king of Israel, in 724 BC, and laid siege to Samaria, capturing it in 722 BC (2 Kings 17:4).
  - d. **SARGON II** completed the siege in 722-21 BC, carrying the population into exile and thereby destroying the northern kingdom of Israel (2 King 17:5). During this time, Hezekiah reigned as king of the southern kingdom of Judah. The next Assyrian king was **SENNACHERIB**.
  - e. Prophets during the Assyrian period include *Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, and Nahum*.
4. **BABYLON** was the next nation to rise in power and in 612 BC the Babylonians, under their king **NABOPOLASSAR** and in league with the Medes, captured the Assyrian capital of Nineveh, and began what would be a conquest of the whole Assyrian Empire.

- a. In 605 BC, under new king **NEBUCHADNEZZAR**, Babylon defeated the Egyptians (Jeremiah 46:1-2) and Jehoiakim, king of Judah, was forced to pay tribute. Many young men of Jerusalem, including Daniel, were taken into exile into Babylon.
- b. Jerusalem and Judah fully submitted to Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BC; the King and other leaders were taken captive, the Temple was looted and treasures were taken back to Babylon.
- c. In 586 BC Nebuchadnezzar again attacked Jerusalem, following a rebellion lead by Zedekiah, and the city was destroyed; remaining citizens were taken into captivity.
- d. The prophets during the Babylonian period included *Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, Obadiah, and Daniel*.



**ISAIAH Chapters 1 – 5**  
**Denunciation of Judah and Jerusalem**

**I. THE CONDEMNATION OF JUDAH, 1:1-5:30**

A. Introduction and God's Indictment, 1:1-23

1. Introduction, 1:1
2. God's indictment: "Ah sinful nation," 1:2-15
3. The need for repentance, 1:16-23

B. Restoration promised if repentance is shown, 1:24-31

C. The glory of the future kingdom, 2:1-4

1. "last days" = Gospel Age (see Acts 2:17; Hebrews 1:1-2).
2. "mountain" = government (Daniel 2:35, 44; Joel 3:19) – It is God's government, God's Kingdom (compare Daniel 2:44-45; Matthew 16:13-19; Colossians 1:13).
3. "Lord's house" = the Lord's church (1 Timothy 3:15).
4. "out of Zion...from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:44-48; Acts 1:8; 2:1 ff.; Romans 15:27)
5. Verse 4: Not a reference to carnal warfare, but a prophetic picture of people of all nations inhabiting Messiah's kingdom (compare Ezekiel 34:20-26; John 10:16; Ephesians 2:11-19) – an "ideal picture" if people obey the gospel and live like Jesus Christ!

**FIVE FACTS ABOUT CHRIST'S KINGDOM, THE CHURCH**

1. Its establishment is sure: *"it shall come to pass"*
2. Its purpose is twofold: *"mountain...established...teach...walk"*
3. It will be universal: *"all nations shall flow unto it"*
4. It will be heaven-taught: *"teach us of his way...walk in his paths"*
5. Christ will be head: *"he shall judge among the nations... shall rebuke"*

D. Purging is required – idolatry, along with political and social confusion, is rampant, 2:5 - 4:1

E. Jerusalem redeemed, 4:2-6

1. "branch" – the righteous remnant after the purging!
2. Then God's presence would be known (as in former times).

F. The Vineyard and its fruits, 5:1-30

1. A parable, 5:1-7
2. God's judgment, 5:8-30