

Hymns: 58 Rock of Ages 7 God Will Take Care of You Hallelujah, What a Savior!
Scripture: Isaiah 53

After rising more than **70% since just November**, the Japanese Nikkei stock index rose 2% higher Thursday. Then suddenly, the index reversed to close **down 7.3%** for the day. If those investors had only known ahead of time, they could have avoided a big single-day loss.

Wall Street is obsessed with knowing the future, and they have a myriad of ways people can take a stake in it. Likely none of you were impacted by this latest crash in Japan, but wouldn't it be nice if we could know the future?

The Bible has much to say about this subject. In fact, about 30% of the Bible is prophesy. Foretelling the future with perfect accuracy is a hallmark of God, for He alone knows the future (Isaiah 46:9-10).

Why Isaiah?

Lately, it seems like I've been bombarded from all sides with Isaiah and prophesy. Magazines, radio programs, my church, and even my son have been talking about this classic book of the Bible. When that happens to me, I've learned to pay attention and felt it appropriate then to devote today's message to this key section of scripture.

The book of Isaiah is found just after the poetic books and is arranged first among the major prophets in the Old Testament. Major prophets are so designated based on the relative size of their associated book. The other major prophets are: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Isaiah has 66 chapters. That makes it second in **chapter count** only to the Book of Psalms which has 150. Of course, Isaiah is shorter in **word count** than Psalms, but surprisingly it's also edged out by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and even Genesis.

Prophet of God

Being a prophet of God was serious business. Prophets were God's voice to the nation Israel, moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21) to warn them to repent and turn from their wicked ways (II Kings 17:13-14). You may recall John the Baptist, called by Jesus the greatest of the prophets, preached that same message. These men regularly gave kings the bad news about the future. Of course, kings don't like to hear bad news and often would retaliate against the messenger rather than face the truth of the message.

God applied a very high standard to His prophets. The Bible gives instructions to the Jews that if a man prophesies something in the name of the Lord that does not come to pass, he is to be put to death (Deuteronomy 18:20-22).

The Bible says that the **gospel** (Ephesians 6:19) and the **church** (3:9-10; 5:32) were **mysteries hidden** until they were revealed in the New Testament. The church is **not** in the view of the Old Testament prophets.

Context

So, with that background about prophets, let's start our **whirlwind tour** of Isaiah with a bit of history. The **glory days** of Israel were during the times of kings David and Solomon. David's reign started in 1011 B.C. and ended 971 B.C. when Solomon took over for another forty years. After that, the kingdom was divided into Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Roughly 200 years later, Isaiah the

first of the major prophets, came on the scene. These were dark days for the divided nation, and they became ever darker – as Israel drifted away from the Lord and lived in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian army.

Who was Isaiah? Isaiah himself answers that question:

“Isaiah the son of Amoz.”

Unfortunately, the Bible tells us nothing about Amoz. Literary experts assert that the book of Isaiah reveals a superior level of writing ability and style of its author. This indicates that Isaiah was highly educated. Experts also say that most of Isaiah is actually poetry, with just the three-chapter historical interlude concerning Hezekiah being standard prose.

The name Isaiah means “Yahweh is salvation.” As we shall see, Isaiah proclaims the good news of a coming Savior and Messiah.

Setting

The book of Isaiah spans a period of about 60 years – starting at the end of King Uzziah's reign and going to the end of Hezekiah's reign. Other kings were Jotham (good), Ahaz (wicked). During the time of Isaiah's prophesy, the Northern Kingdom (Israel) fell to Assyria as he predicted.

Interestingly, there are a number of parallels that we can draw between the book of Isaiah and the Bible itself. What are these parallels?

Bible	Isaiah
66 Books	66 Chapters
Two Testaments	Two Sections
Old Testament 39 books	First Section 39 chapters (pre-exhile)
New Testament 27 books	Second Section 27 chapters (post-exhile)
New Testament starts with John the Baptist	Second section starts with John's message
New Testament ends with final kingdom	Second section ends with final kingdom

Regarding the flow of Isaiah's message, we can summarize that Isaiah contains a lot of alternating judgment and blessing. We can see that pattern as we go through a few early chapters.

Chapter 1 states that

Judah strayed from God and had fallen into sin that brought **judgment** on them, but God said He was willing to forgive them and bless them if they would turn from their wicked ways.

[1] The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

[2] Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

*[16] Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; **cease to do evil;***

[17] Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

[18] Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

*[19] If ye be **willing and obedient**, ye shall **eat the good of the land:***

*[20] **But if ye refuse and rebel**, ye shall be **devoured with the sword:** for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*

Now we switch to a time of great blessing. In the last days, righteousness will be established in Jerusalem.

Chapter 2

*[3] **And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.***

*[4] And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: **and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.***

Then in Chapter 3 we switch back to the **judgment theme** that precedes this time of blessing.

*[25] Thy **men shall fall by the sword**, and thy mighty in the war.*

[26] And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.

Chapter 4

You've heard the song *Surf City* where it gleefully declares "Two girls for every boy." After this war, God depicts **seven women for every man**. That's not cheerful but tragic.

Chapter 5

answers the question why? (they do not know God) (Isaiah 5:13)

Chapter 6

contains a vision of the Lord in heaven and of the seraphims which we reviewed a few weeks ago. Today we want to see that it was in this setting where Isaiah accepted his call from the Lord.

*[1] In the year that king Uzziah died **I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up**, and his train filled the temple.*

*[2] **Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings;** with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.*

[3] And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

[4] And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

*[5] Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because **I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell***

in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

[6] Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

[7] And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

[8] Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

[9] And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

[10] Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

[11] Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

Chapter 7

moves to the time of wicked King Ahaz. In verse 3 we learn that Isaiah **had a son**. The Lord then interrupts the flow almost as if he could not contain this good news a moment longer and gave a sign for how the **Son** of God will come on the scene.

[14] Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Staying on that topic of a son, in Isaiah 8:3, we learn Isaiah had a wife who **bore him another son**. Interspersed with lengthy descriptions of judgment the story contains **rays of hope** – almost like **storm clouds giving way to clearing skies**. Those rays of sunshine often in Isaiah are descriptions of the coming Messiah and his kingdom.

Here's another very familiar one in

Chapter 9

[6] For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

[7] Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Then in

Chapter 11

we find another.

[1] And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

[2] And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

And then we have a glimpse into His kingdom where much of the groaning and travailing of this present cursed earth is removed (Isaiah 11:6-9).

[6] The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

After all of this good news, it's no wonder that Chapter 12 breaks forth in praise to God. Then comes the switch.

The in Chapters 13 through 23 we resume God's judgments – this time on the enemies of His people.

Babylon

Assyria

Palestine

Moab

Damascus

Ethiopia

Egypt

Edom

Desert of Media

Dumah

Arabia

Tyre

Chapter 24 continues with the judgment theme as it climaxes with the coming Great Tribulation:

[19] The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

[20] The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

[21] And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

[22] And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.

[23] Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

In Chapter 25, the record shifts back to praise as God turns from judgment to blessing:

[8] He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

[9] And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Chapter 28 predicts the destruction of Ephriam (Northern Kingdom).

Chapter 29-31 Judah warned of coming judgment because they fail to honor God:

*[13] Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed **their heart far from me**, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:*

In Chapter 31 they are warned specifically of trusting in an alliance with Egypt or military might rather than trusting in the Lord to fight their battles. Our country certainly trusts in its mighty military rather than in God. We too need to take care we trust in God and not in our own devices.

Chapter 34 moves back to the day of the Lord's great wrath:

*[4] **And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll:** and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.*

[5] For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.

[6] The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

[7] And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.

*[8] **For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance**, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.*

Chapter 35 is like the calm after the storm as it describes an earth at perfect peace.

Chapters 36-39

Contains the story King Hezekiah interacting with the Lord and Isaiah in a time of great trouble.

----- Section Two (post-exhile)-----

Chapter 40 contains the familiar message of John the Baptist (Isaiah 40:3-5):

[3] 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.

[4] 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:

Chapter 43

The Lord is the Saviour and redeemer of Israel.

Chapters 44-45 contain the remarkable prophesy of Gentile King Cyrus **naming him** 150 years before he aided Israel in rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple.

Chapter 45 goes on to proclaim God's greatness as demonstrated in His creation.

Chapter 47 we learn of God's judgment of Babylon.

In Chapter 48 the
Triune God is in view.

*[12] Harken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; **I am the first, I also am the last.***

[13] Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.

[14] All ye, assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared these things? The LORD hath loved him: he will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans.

[15] I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and he shall make his way prosperous.

*[16] Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the **Lord GOD**, and **his Spirit**, hath sent me.*

[17] Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.

Chapter 49

God is the ever-faithful, merciful father to His people.

Chapter 53

[1] Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

[2] For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

*[3] He is despised and rejected of men; a **man of sorrows**, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

[4] Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

*[5] **But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.***

*[6] **All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.***

*[7] He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: **he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter**, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

[8] He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

[9] And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

*[10] **Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him;** he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*

[11] He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

[12] Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the

transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Chapter 60

Zion is exalted.

*[19] The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but **the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.***

[20] Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

Isaiah 65

[17] For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Encouragement

While Isaiah warns of a coming judgment, it also gives great **consolation** and **encouragement**.

In Isaiah, the word *fear* appears 35 times, *salvation* 28 times, *afraid* 19 times, redeemer 19 times, and *comfort* 9 times. Here are five precious promises from the book of Isaiah:

Chapter 8

*[13] Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your **fear**, and let him be your **dread**.*

Here's another verse for the fearful:

Chapter 12

*[2] Behold, God is my **salvation**; I will trust, and not be **afraid**: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my **salvation**.*

Here's a great promise for those who have trouble sleeping at night:

Chapter 26

*[3] Thou wilt keep him in **perfect peace**, whose **mind is stayed on thee**: because he trusteth in thee.*

And here's one for the weary and beaten down:

Chapter 40

[31] But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

And finally, here's a verse for those needing comfort:

Chapter 66

*[13] As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I **comfort** you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.*

While these verses were written specifically to the Jews, we know that God's character does not change, and He will in a similar way be gracious to us as well.

Your Future

What about your future? Do you know where you are going? If you've placed your faith and trust in the

finished work **that** Jesus Christ did for you on the cross, you can rest assured that **the God of the future** has a place **reserved for you** with Him in glory, and until that time you have a Heavenly Father who wants to give you **peace** and **comfort**.

The songwriter says it this way:

*Because he lives
I can face tomorrow
Because he lives
All fear is gone
Because I know
He holds the future
And life is worth the living
Just because he lives*

Benediction

The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.