

1. We began the second half of the Book of Isaiah today (Chapters 40-66).

2. Overarching theme of the Book of Isaiah: The Lord, the Holy One of Israel, is the only valid object of our faith and trust.

3. Chapters 1-39 put a great deal of emphasis on not trusting in earthly kings. The people of Judah are warned of the impending judgment of God, coming in about 100 years, when they will be taken captive by the Babylonians.

5. Chapters 40-66 are also written to the people of Judah in Isaiah's day, but focus on events 200 years in the future and into the end times. Even though they will be judged for their faithlessness, he will remain faithful to His part of the covenant and bring them back to Zion.

6. The prophecies get very specific: King Cyrus will be the king who sends the Jews home. Prophecy is a supernatural phenomenon.

7. Chapter 40 - one of the great chapters of the Bible:
 - A. Handel's Messiah is full of references from this chapter.
 - B. Peter quotes from this chapter in his first epistle.
 - C. Favorite memory verse: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength..."

8. God invites comparison of His power with any other idol or god that may be worshiped.
 - A. He is big enough and sovereign enough to keep His promises.
 - B. He is omnipotent. There are powerful statements of monotheism.
 1. After the Babylonian captivity, the Jews never again lapse into idolatry.
 2. They could not even tolerate the image of the Roman eagle.

9. Israel is called "the servant of God." "Servant" will be an important theme in the rest of Isaiah.

1. Isaiah 42 and 43 introduce us to the first of a series of Messianic passages in this portion of the book.

2. God is talking, in this first Servant Song in Isaiah 42, about a specific individual, and that individual becomes crystal clear in the fourth Servant Song in Isaiah 53. The “servant” being talked about is the Messiah.

A. Jesus found the blueprint for His mission in the Servant Songs of Isaiah.

B. Four times in the first 2 chapters of Acts, Jesus is referred to as ‘the servant’.

3. The content of this first Servant Song:

A. The relationship of the servant to God’s will

B. The object of God’s choice

C. The One whom God ‘holds fast’

D. The Chosen, or elect One

E. God delights in Him.

F. God’s Spirit is upon Him.

1. He is the bearer of God’s Presence.

2. He is the bearer of God’s Power.

3. He is the bearer of God’s wisdom.

G. He is singled out to play the decisive role in salvation.

4. Chapter 43 focuses our attention on what God will do for His people after the judgment comes.

A. God re-gathered His people after the Babylonian captivity.

B. God re-gathered His people in 1948 when the nation of Israel was reestablished.

C. God will re-gather His people in a greater fulfillment of this prophecy at the end of time.

5. Isaiah 43:1ff: “But now, this is what the Lord says - He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel; ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name and you are mine. When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior...”

1. Chapters 44 and 45 of Isaiah are important for 3 reasons:

A. They sum up rather succinctly the message of the Old Testament to this point.

1. There is only One God.

The Bible can be viewed as a 3-act play:

a. Act 1 - There is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4) - *God above us.*

b. Act 2 - The revelation of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, God's Son, 'Emmanuel' - God not only above us, but *God beside us.*

c. Act 3 - The day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to indwell God's Church - not only God above and God beside us, but *God within us!*

2. There is a powerful testimony in these 2 chapters to the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

a. The Lord says, "...I am the first and I am the last..." (Isaiah 44:6)

b. Jesus says, "...I am Alpha (the first) and Omega (the last), who is, and who was and who is to come..." (Revelation 1:8)

3. Isaiah 45:23 - "Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear..."

Philippians 2: 10, 11 - "that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow...and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

2. Bottom line: Jesus is Jehovah - Jesus is God.

3. The name "Cyrus" mentioned in chapters 44 and 45:

A. Isaiah prophecies that this pagan king will be God's "shepherd", anointed of the Lord, to accomplish God's will in the rebuilding of Jerusalem after Judah's captivity in Babylonian. He will be the king who lets the people return to Israel.

1. This is 200 years in the future.

2. God is using a pagan to accomplish His will.

B. God uses Cyrus as His instrument so that "from the rising of the sun to the place of its going down men may know that there is none beside Me. I am the Lord and there is no other. (Isaiah 45:6)

1. Chapters 46 through 48 of Isaiah continue the monologue in which God compares His reality, power and strength to the “nothingness” of idols.

2. If you bear the name of God, be careful how you walk, because He is jealous to protect His glory.

3. “I will not yield my glory to another.” (Isaiah 48:11)

A. God’s “if only” lament to His people: “This is what the Lord says - your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: ‘I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea. Your descendants would have been like the sand, your children like numberless grains; your name would never be cut off nor destroyed from before Me.”

B. God Has chosen us...we bear His name. We are reflections of His truth, righteousness and glory...His precepts are before us. If we walk in His ways, the benediction of God will be evident upon us. If we dishonor His name, then God will move to protect His glory...”

4. Question: Are we as God’s church as asleep and stubborn as God’s people in Israel were? What are we expecting God to share his glory with in our lives? What do we do to rob God of the glory He deserves?

5. Reasons for the phenomenon of prophecy:

A. When what God has said comes true in the realm of human history, we have to admit that God has done these things.

B. Prophecy is a way in which God protects His glory. by making sure His is perceived as the true and sovereign God.

6. The specific Prophecies in these 3 chapters:

A. The fall of Babylon, a society addicted to the occult. She will rise to power, and she will fall.

B. The return of Israel to Judah: “...I will grant salvation to Zion - my splendor to Israel.”

C. God’s plan has not changed. Israel is still His chosen nation. He will bless them because of His faithfulness, not theirs.

7. “There is no peace for the wicked”, but Jesus’ message is this: “Come into me all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest...you will find rest for your soul.”

1. Chapters 49 through 51 of Isaiah contain this song: “Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads...” It is God’s promise to a fearful people that the exile will end and they will return to Jerusalem.

2. They also contain the second and third of the Servant Songs.

A. The second song: Isaiah 49

1. The servant of the Lord is called before his birth.
2. The mouth of the servant is like a sharpened sword because the Word of God proceeds from that mouth.
3. The servant is made into a polished arrow by the Lord that is then concealed in God’s quiver.
4. The first attempt of the servant to fulfill His commission will be perceived as a failure.
5. The mission relates to bringing Israel back to God, but it is also wider - it includes bringing the Gentiles into a relationship with God. The salvation of God has always been meant for ALL mankind.
6. The servant will be rejected, despised and abhorred by the nation to whom God has sent Him.
7. He will ultimately be vindicated.

B. The third servant song: Isaiah 50

1. The servant of the Lord is really the suffering servant of the Lord.
2. Jesus’ obedience to His mission as the suffering servant was the result of regular, disciplined, consistent time spent with God - preparation time.

3. We too are servants. Where will our strength come from, if not from regular, disciplined, consistent time spent with God in His Word and in prayer. “It is out of this kind of relationship that even in the darkest hour, when you walk in the dark and there is no light, the servant of God can proceed, and trust in the name of the Lord, and rely upon His God.”