

## Introduction to Christ in the Book of Isaiah

This morning I shall begin a series of messages entitled, "Christ in the Book of Isaiah" As you know we have just recently celebrated the birth of our Savior and I would remind you that in the weeks prior to the day the church has set aside to remember the birth of Christ I took time to present several passages from Isaiah regarding the promised birth of Jesus Christ. And now that I have completed our series of messages from the Book of Romans I desire to return to Isaiah and begin a series of sermons on "Christ in the Book of Isaiah". This will not be a verse by verse study of Isaiah; rather it will be a drawing from several passages throughout the Book of Isaiah that have to do with the person and the work of Jesus Christ. For certainly God revealed to Isaiah the prophet more about the coming Messiah than just His birth.

I say several passages for I would point out that Isaiah is the most quoted Old Testament prophet in the New Testament, and is generally regarded as the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. His writing is filled with unparalleled literary beauty and a variety of rich symbols. Isaiah has been called "the most sublime and elegant of the Prophets of the Old Testament." (Bishop Lathrop) The early church father Jerome wrote, "Isaiah seems to me not to have composed a prophecy, but a gospel".

Calvin in his introductory remarks of his commentary on Isaiah wrote, "Among all the prophets Isaiah justly holds the chief place, because he gives very clear testimonies concerning Christ, and places before our eyes the state and condition of his Church, that is, of his kingdom."

Since Isaiah pours out such deep and rich instruction concerning the Messiah, His life, sufferings, death and glorious reign, he has been called "The Evangelical Prophet."

The International Bible Encyclopedia calls him the (St.) Paul of the Old Testament". Herbert Wolf of Wheaton College notes, "Isaiah is to the Old Testament as the Book of Romans is to the New Testament, a book filled with rich theological truth." Indeed the book of Isaiah has been called the greatest of the prophetic books of the Old Testament".

This morning I will not have much more time than just to introduce the book and its author and I do pray that God may be pleased to bless this series as we embark upon it.

A. The Author - Isaiah introduces himself in the opening sentence.

*Isa 1:1 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.*

1. Isaiah son of Amoz of Jerusalem (1:1).
  - a. This introduction leaves us guessing as to his historic lineage, but it is the message not the man that is important in this prophetic book.
  - b. I would have you note that he wrote all 66 chapters, and I point this out because there are those critics who speak of 2 or 3 Isaiahs
  - c. These critics write thus because they reject the ability of God to reveal activities before they take place.
  - d. But God points out that this is evidence that He is God and there is no other.

*Isa 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'*

- e. And it is evident in this book that many things Isaiah prophesied before they took place, did take place exactly as predicted.
- f. There is nothing in history, or in the book itself that would even infer that there was more than one Isaiah who is the singular author.
- g. Jewish historians make no such mention of more than one Isaiah.
- h. When Jesus or the apostles quote from all sections of Isaiah, they refer to Isaiah as the author.

(1) (See Jn 12:37-38 / Isa. 53:1)

(2) (See Jn 12:39-40 / Isaiah 6:10)

2. His name Isaiah means "Yahweh is Salvation"
  - a. It is fitting that he would have the name "Yaweh Saves" in that his prophecies are filled with promises of the coming Messiah Savior.
  - b. Filled with promises of salvation to the Gentiles
3. Isaiah received his call in the year of Uzziah's death - (740-681 B.C. or slightly longer - approximately 40 to 60 years)

Isa 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

- a. It was in this vision that God asked, who will go for us?
- b. Isaiah answered, here am I send me
4. He prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah
  - a. He would see the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel - 722 BC
  - b. Yet he offers a certain hope proclaiming "a remnant shall return" (7:3)
5. State or Condition of the Church (Nation of Israel) in which he served God.
  - a. Unsound from top to bottom

Isa 1:6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it,

- b. Most religious in their activities.

*Isa 1:11 "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" Says the Lord.*

- c. Most rebellious in their attitude toward God

Isa 1:4 Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord.

B. He begins his prophetic word by calling upon the heavens and the earth to be a witness against the apostasy, ingratitude and deep depravity of the chosen people of God.

1. What a splendid, magnificent beginning of his prophecy.
  - a. A common call of the prophets of God to call upon the heavens and earth to be witnesses. (see Ezek. 6:3; 36:1; Jer. 2:12)

*Ezek 6:3 Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God!*

*Jer 2:12-13 Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be very desolate," says the Lord. 'For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns — broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

- b. Such highly poetic language can only symbolize the importance of the subject matter.
2. For he goes from grandeur to a deep degrading announcement.
  - a. The ox and donkey are wiser than God's people

Isa 1:3 The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider."

- b. For Israel has become a people that have forsaken her God.

Isa 1:4 Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward.

- c. A people of total depravity.

Isa 1:6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment.

CONCLUSION: Must close on this note but let it be a reminder

Speaks of the total depravity of mankind.

Yet he speaks of a comfort that God can and will provide for His elect.

Isa 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.