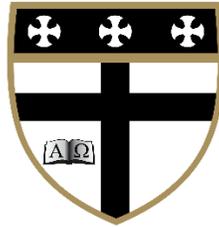


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A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“Isaiah’s Prophecy: A Prologue to the New Testament”¹

by

Roderick O. Ford, Litt.D., LL.D.

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Roderick O. Ford, D.Litt. (Law & Religion)



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² Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022). www.roderickford.org.

Introduction

The Prophet Isaiah, who lived during 8th and 7th centuries, BC, was called to preach at the First Temple in Jerusalem. He preached against the southern kingdom of Judah. Like the Prophets Hosea and Amos, who were his contemporaries, Isaiah preached against the northern kingdom of Israel as well.

Isaiah was one of the most popular works among Jews in the Second Temple period (c. 515 BCE – 70 CE). In Christian circles, it was held in such high regard as to be called "the Fifth Gospel", and its influence extends beyond Christianity to English literature and to Western culture in general, from the libretto of Handel's *Messiah* to a host of such everyday phrases as "swords into ploughshares" and "voice in the wilderness."³

But there is controversy over who is the designated “Messiah” within the several Jewish-Islamic-Christian interpretations of the Book of Isaiah.

“The Deutero-Isaian part of the book describes how God will make Jerusalem the centre of his worldwide rule through a royal saviour (a messiah) who will destroy the oppressor (Babylon); this **messiah is the Persian king Cyrus the Great**, who is merely the agent who brings about Yahweh's kingship.”⁴

This author believes that the interpretation of Cyrus the Great as the “messiah” is a historical misinterpretation, made perhaps by members of the Jewish prophetic community who lived during or shortly after Cyrus the Great’s decree allowing the Babylonian Jews to return to Jerusalem in 538 B.C., because even though “Cyrus” is mentioned three times in the Book of Isaiah, to wit:

Isaiah 44:28 “That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.”

³ Source: “Book of Isaiah,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Isaiah.

⁴ Ibid.

Isaiah 45:1 “Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut....”

Isaiah 45:13 (NIV) “I will raise up Cyrus in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free, but not for a price or reward, says the LORD Almighty.”

None of these passages, however, associate Cyrus the great with being “Emmanuel” (i.e., “God is with us”) who will reign on David’s throne, that is prefigured in Isaiah, Chapter 9, to wit:

For to us a child is born,
To us a son is given,
And the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and peace
There shall be no end.
He will reign **on David’s throne**
And over his kingdom,
Establishing and upholding it
With justice and righteousness
From that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
Will accomplish this.

Isaiah 9: 6-7 [NIV]

Nor is the historical Cyrus ever described as the “Suffering Servant,” whom the Christians associate with being the “Messiah,” to wit:

“The Suffering and Glory of the Servant”

See, my servant will act wisely;
he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.
Just as there were many who were appalled at him—
his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being

and his form marred beyond human likeness—
so he will sprinkle many nations,
and kings will shut their mouths because of him.
For what they were not told, they will see,
and what they have not heard, they will understand.

Isaiah 52: 13-15 [NIV].

This description of the “Suffering Servant” is continued in Isaiah, Chapter 53. According to Augustine of Hippo’s *The City of God*, these two prophetic references, in Isaiah 52 and 53, point to Jesus Christ—not Cyrus the Great.⁵ The Reformed theologian John Calvin (1509- 1564) reaches the same conclusion.⁶

This reformed theological interpretation of The Book of Isaiah is a *neo-orthodox* Reformed interpretation, because it, unlike perhaps both Augustine and Calvin, does not reject the contention that the historical prophet did not write all of the words that are contained within The Book of Isaiah, but that there were, nevertheless, inspired authors who, living during the times of the Jewish return from the Babylonian captivity, witnesses the miraculous decree of Cyrus the Great, and thus attempted to append, or to redact and edit, The Book of Isaiah with footnotes and historical references. These footnotes and historical references were likely mistaken to be the literal words of Isaiah the prophet.

We may thus read Isaiah’s literal description of the Messiah in Chapter 9 into the subsequent messianic depiction that is in Chapters 52 and 53, which is likely an appendix by another prophetic voice. Be that as it may, the theological conclusions lead us to the same result: Israel would be restored under the rulership

⁵ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 634 (“Isaiah... should be called an evangelist rather than a prophet,” quoting Isaiah 52:13).

⁶ See, e.g., John Calvin’s *Commentaries on the Bible* (Isaiah 52:13), stating: “After having spoken of the restoration of the Church, Isaiah passes on to Christ, in whom all things are gathered together.... He calls Christ "his Servant," on account of the office committed to him. Christ ought not to be regarded as a private individual, but as holding the office to which the Father has appointed him, to be leader of the people and restorer of all things; so that whatever he affirms concerning himself we ought to understand as belonging also to us. Christ has been given to us, and therefore to us also belongs his ministry, for the Prophet might have said, in a single word, that Christ will be exalted and will be highly honored; but, by giving to him the title of "Servant," he means that he will be exalted for our sake.”)

Source: <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/calvin/isaiah/52.htm>

or kingship of a Messiah, a Prince of Peace, who would establish an eternal government and kingdom.

Chapter One

“Organization of The Book of Isaiah”

Augustine of Hippo wrote that Isaiah’s prophecy was so profound, and so descriptive of “Christ and the Church, that is, about the King and that city which he founded,” that “some say he should be called an evangelist rather than a prophet.”⁷

For this reason, some critics have claimed that the Prophet Isaiah could not have been the sole author of so precise of a prophetic prediction, so as, for example, to name “Cyrus” and to describe the return from Babylonian captivity and the rebuilding of the temple with such precision and exactitude; and that other Jewish writers may have redacted, or added to, the text of the Book of Isaiah.

This is a neo-orthodox Reformed view of the Book of Isaiah, because it is meant to address certain criticisms that have emerged since the 18th century, which neither Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 AD) and John Calvin (1509- 1564) had to confront, and that is whether the Prophet Isaiah himself wrote the entire Book of Isaiah. “Traditional rabbinic and Christian interpretation had viewed the book as the work of the prophet Isaiah who lived in Jerusalem in the late eighth and early seventh centuries B.C. Critical scholarship, beginning in the late eighteenth century, argued that the book was largely the product of at least two or three different authors widely separated in time and place. For a time interest in Isaiah was seemingly less in the grandeur and majesty of the book’s message than in the battle over its unity and compositional history.”⁸

First, the traditional Reformed view is that Isaiah wrote the entire Book of Isaiah.⁹ See, also, Reformed Forum, “The Authorship of Isaiah.”¹⁰

⁷ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 634 (“Isaiah... should be called an evangelist rather than a prophet,” quoting Isaiah 52:13).

⁸ Source: <https://www.monergism.com/topics/sermon-manuscripts-mp3s-scripture/isaiah>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Source: <https://reformedforum.org/podcasts/ctc607/>

The New Testament cites the book of Isaiah more than any other Old Testament book. Scripture itself treats the book as a literary work by a single author. In this episode, Will Wood, discusses critical approaches to this prophecy that tend to view the book of Isaiah as a composite work of many different people and even different groups. All the while, we will come to see that the question of authorship is not self-contained; it raises significant issues regarding fundamental matters of the faith.

Second, the traditional Reformed view is not diminished by the neo-orthodox viewpoint that, the first 39 chapters of the Book of Isaiah were likely written by the same author, whereas the remaining chapters were footnotes, commentaries, and appendices attached to the original book by later Jewish historians, theologians, rabbis, and prophets.

Third, the neo-orthodox Reformed viewpoint accepts the perspective that the Book of Isaiah may be divided into three separate parts: with the second and third parts constituting the footnotes and (or) appendices to the original work. The Roman Catholic Church and various other religious sects or scholars have thus divided the Book of Isaiah into the following parts:

A.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops¹¹

“The principal divisions of the Book of Isaiah”

- I. Isaiah 1–39
 - A. Indictment of Israel and Judah (1:1–5:30)
 - B. The Book of Emmanuel (6:1–12:6)
 - C. Oracles Against the Foreign Nations (13:1–23:18)
 - D. Apocalypse of Isaiah (24:1–27:13)
 - E. The Lord Alone, Israel’s and Judah’s Salvation (28:1–33:24)
 - F. The Lord, Zion’s Avenger (34:1–35:10)
 - G. Historical Appendix (36:1–39:8)
- II. Isaiah 40–55
 - A. The Lord’s Glory in Israel’s Liberation (40:1–48:22)
 - B. Expiation of Sin, Spiritual Liberation of Israel (49:1–55:13)
- III. Isaiah 56–66

Will Wood is Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia.

¹¹ Source: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/0>

B.

Wikipedia (Online Encyclopedia)¹²

“The principal divisions of the Book of Isaiah”

I. Proto-Isaiah, Chapters 1–39

- “[C]ontaining the words of the 8th-century BCE prophet Isaiah”¹³

II. Deutero-Isaiah, Chapters 40–55

- “[T]he work of an anonymous 6th-century BCE author writing during the Exile”¹⁴

III. Trito-Isaiah, Chapters 56–66

- “[C]omposed after the return from Exile.”¹⁵

“Another widely held view is that parts of the first half of the book (chapters 1–39) originated with the historical prophet, interspersed with prose commentaries written in the time of King Josiah 100 years later, and that the remainder of the book dates from immediately before and immediately after the end of the exile in Babylon, almost two centuries after the time of the historical prophet, and perhaps these later chapters represent the work of an ongoing school of prophets who prophesied in accordance with his prophecies.”¹⁶

¹² Source: “Book of Isaiah,” Wikipedia (Online Encyclopedia): https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Isaiah

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Source: “Isaiah,” Wikipedia (Online Encyclopedia): <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaiah>

Chapter Two

“Against the Self-Interest of Orthodox Judaism”

The Book of Isaiah does not promote the self-interests of orthodox Judaism. The entire Book of Isaiah undermines the self-interests of political Jews, such as the zealots who we find throughout the First and Second Maccabees.

The whole tendency of this prophetic work is to break down the provincialism of orthodox Judaism and to reestablish it as a universal and worldwide theological system that draws all nations on earth.

Most damaging to orthodox Judaism is the Book of Isaiah’s clear proscriptions (*all three sections*) against religious rituals, offerings and sacrifices and clear preferences for holiness, righteousness, justice and agape (i.e., social justice).¹⁷ Isaiah emphasizes the important fact that God is more interested in holiness than in religious rituals and sacrifices.

This is the one I esteem:
He who is humble and contrite in spirit,
And trembles at my word.
But whoever sacrifices a bull
Is like one who kills a man,
And whoever offers a lamb,
Like one who presents pig’s blood,
And whoever burns memorial incense,
Like one who worships an idol.
They have chosen their own ways,
And their souls delight in their
Abominations....

Isaiah 66:2-3. [NIV]¹⁸

¹⁷ Jesus of Nazareth would promote this same theological system in his “Parable of the Good Samaritan” (Luke 10: 25-37).

¹⁸ Ibid.

In addition, Isaiah's theological system seemingly dispenses with the re-establishment of the temple's rituals, sacrifices, and offerings (i.e., the ancient Mosaic ceremonial laws) by emphasizing a new method or a new way, to wit:

And a highway will be there;
It will be called the **Way of Holiness**.
The unclean will not journey on it;
It will be for **those who walk in that Way**;
Wicked fools will not go about on it.
No lion will be there,
Nor will any ferocious beast get up on it;
They will not be found there.
But **only the redeemed will walk there**,
And **the ransomed of the LORD** will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
Everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
And sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Isaiah 35: 8-10 [NIV]¹⁹

Why would an orthodox Jew write this? Why would other orthodox Jews accept The Book of Isaiah as prophetic?

The Book of Isaiah makes no promises of a restored "orthodox Judaism" under the old Law of Moses with its Levitical or liturgical practices.

The Book of Isaiah constantly describes a destruction of the old Judah and Israel and a redeemed or restored Jerusalem and Israel that expressly incorporates the Gentiles and every nation upon earth.

Hence, the Book of Isaiah depicts a "catholic" or "universal" theological system that shall govern this redeemed or restored Israel, to wit:

"I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations....

They will proclaim my glory among the nations. And they will bring all your brothers, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD...."

¹⁹ Ibid.

Isaiah 66:19-20 [NIV]

The Book of Isaiah’s theological system—whether it was written by the Prophet Isaiah himself or by a cadre of Jewish theologians, rabbis, or subsequent inspired prophets—clearly undermines the self-interest of orthodox Judaism, as orthodox Judaism was commonly conceptualized throughout the three or four hundred years leading up to the birth of Christ. See, e.g., First and Second Maccabees.

Indeed, the Book of Isaiah’s theological system is a blueprint of the New Covenant that is contained in the four Gospels and throughout the New Testament.²⁰

²⁰ Jesus of Nazareth promoted this same theological system in his teachings, e.g.: “Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus” (Luke 16:19-31); “Parable of the Sheep and the Goats” (Matthew 25: 31-46); and, “Parable of the Good Samaritan” (Luke 10: 25-37).

Chapter Three

“Divine Providence and the Gentiles”

The Prophet Isaiah, in chapter two of the Book of Isaiah, describes a theological system that includes all nations— not just the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. And these are the words of the prophet himself (not coming from the last two sections of that prophetic work), stating:

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

Isaiah 2: 1-2 [KJV].

In Chapter 3, the Prophet Isaiah lucidly describes the social and political turmoil which the people of Jerusalem and Judah will experience in the coming destruction. But in Chapters 3 and 4, the Prophet Isaiah also describes the divine protection and favor which God shall continuously bestow upon his “remnant,” even during the midst of crisis. “Tell the righteous it shall be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds.”²¹

In Chapters 4 and 11, there is reference to a “Branch” and a “Branch of Jesse” (i.e., the natural father of King David), to wit:

Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—The Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

Isaiah 11:2-5 [NIV]

²¹ Isaiah 3:10 [NIV].

And, to be clear, this Branch, who is vividly described in The Book of Isaiah, will be an international and global leader—not just the leader of a restored nation-state of ancient Israel. He “will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.” Isaiah 11:10 [NIV]

Within the first segment of the Book of Isaiah (chapter 1 through 39), we find several prophecies against several peoples and nations.

“The LORD is angry with all nations.” Isaiah 34:1-2. [NIV].

This demonstrates that God himself has a general divine covenant through which his divine Providence is executed:

- Prophecy on Assyria (used as God’s instrument to punish the kingdom Israel and chastise the kingdom of Judah). Isaiah, Chapter 8.
- Prophecy on Babylon, Assyria, and the Philistines. Isaiah, Chapters 13 and 14.
- Prophecy on Moab. Isaiah, Chapters 15 and 16.
- Prophecy on Damascus. Isaiah, Chapter 17.
- Prophecy on Cush. Isaiah, Chapter 18.
- Prophecy on Assyria, Egypt, and Cush. Isaiah, Chapters 19-20.
- Prophecy on Babylon, Egypt, and Arabia. Isaiah, Chapter 21.
- Prophecy on Phoenicia. Isaiah, Chapter 23.

But these Gentile nations are not to be accounted, as some have supposed, to be “predestinated” heathens who are doomed to everlasting punishment” for which there is no redemption. Because the Prophet Isaiah himself makes it clear that:

[I]t shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and **all nations shall flow unto it.**

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 this 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.

Isaiah 2: 1-3 [KJV]

The Book of Isaiah makes it clear that even the covenant that has been extended to Israel is meant to be “light” to the Gentiles, to wit:

“Israel Called to be a Light for the Gentiles”

I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness;
I will take hold of your hand.
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people
and a light for the Gentiles,
to open eyes that are blind,
to free captives from prison
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

Isaiah 42: 6-7 [NIV]

“See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples....”

Isaiah 49:22. [NIV]

“The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations.”

Isaiah 51:4. [NIV]

And **foreigners** who bind themselves to the Lord
to minister to him,
to love the name of the Lord,
and to be his servants,

all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it
and who hold fast to my covenant—

these I will bring to my holy mountain
and give them joy in my house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house will be called
a house of prayer for all nations.”

The Sovereign Lord declares—
he who gathers the exiles of Israel:
“I will gather still others to them
besides those already gathered....”

Isaiah 56: 6-8 [NIV]

“I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who
survive to **the nations**....

They will proclaim my glory among the nations. And they will bring
all your brothers, from **all the nations**, to my holy mountain in
Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD....”

Isaiah 66:19-20 [NIV]

Here in the Book of Isaiah, the “catholic” instincts of the Early Church— i.e., the
first Apostles, such as Peter and Paul—as stated, e.g., in the Book of Acts, are
vindicated.²²

²² Jesus of Nazareth promoted this same theological system in his teachings in “Parable of the Sheep and the Goats”
(Matthew 25: 31-46).

Chapter Four

“Social Justice is More Important than Religious Rituals”

So what, really, was the heart of the problem or social crisis in the Book of Isaiah?

Was it the failure to keep the Kosher Jewish diet?

Was it the failure to rest or to attend religious services on the Sabbath day?

Was it the failure to give tithes or to offer burnt sacrifices?

In a word, was it the failure to practice and keep the canons and tenets of orthodox Judaism?

Indeed, the Book of Isaiah does not say that the failure to practice orthodox Jewish religious rituals was major problem or the major crisis.

On the contrary, the major problem or the major crisis was the failure to practice “holiness” or “righteousness” and to practice “social justice.”²³

This was a major problem and a major crisis in both the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, as well as in all of the nations upon the earth, and particularly the several nations mentioned in the Book of Isaiah.

In the first part of the Book of Isaiah, which is attributed to the actual word of the Prophet Isaiah, we find the following admonition on social justice:

Woe to those who make unjust laws,
To those who issue oppressive decrees,
To deprive the poor of their rights

²³ Jesus of Nazareth promoted this same theological system in his teachings, e.g.: “Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus” (Luke 16:19-31); “Parable of the Sheep and the Goats” (Matthew 25: 31-46); and “Parable of the Good Samaritan” (Luke 10: 25-37).

And withhold justice from the oppressed of my people,
Making widows their prey
And robbing the fatherless.

Isaiah 10: 1-2 [NIV].

And, similarly, in the third part of the Book of Isaiah, which some believe are not the actual words of the Prophet Isaiah, but rather an appendix to the original work, we find the following admonition on social justice, to wit:

“[Y]our iniquities have separated you from God....”

Isaiah 59:2 [NIV].

“No one calls for justice; no one pleads his case with integrity.”

Isaiah 59:4 [NIV].

“The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths.”

Isaiah 59: 8 [NIV].

“So justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us.”

Isaiah 59:9 [NIV].

“So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter.”

Isaiah 59: 14 [NIV].

“Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.”

Isaiah 59:15 [NIV].

The Book of Isaiah thus clarifies— as do the Books of Hosea and Amos— the theological fact that “social justice” is the primary objective of religion. Without “social justice,” the other forms of religious practices are simply not pleasing to God.²⁴

²⁴ Ibid.

Chapter Five

“The Messiah will Establish Peace and Social Justice”

The spiritual and theological consistencies amongst the three segments within the Book of Isaiah constitute a singular prophetic message, all of which lead to the same theological, political, and historical conclusion: God’s Christ or Messiah will establish an everlasting kingdom wherein shall be everlasting justice and peace.

Hence, the Book of Isaiah begins with Judah and Israel but it quickly incorporates the destinies of the entire world under the leadership of Christ or the Messiah.

- In the Book of Isaiah, God is displeased with both the kingdoms of Judah and Israel as they then existed during the 8th and 7th centuries, B.C.;
- God then communicated several prophetic messages of divine punishment, to both Isaiah and several other Jewish or Israelitish prophets;
- God’s divine Providence governs all nations—including the Gentiles; God is a universal Sovereign over the nations; God has a general covenant with all nations—not just Judah and Israel;
- God’s divine punishment will destroy Judah and Israel—but not utterly and completely, because there shall remain a “remnant,” that will constitute a “redeemed and restored Israel”;
- God’s remnant, however, will be much larger than expected, because the Gentiles will be engrafted into the “redeemed and restored Israel”; and,
- God’s Christ or Messiah shall assume the helm of leadership or kingship over that redeemed and restored Israel.

From this vantage ground, the Book of Isaiah describes the Christ or Messiah as follows:

For to us a child is born,
To us a son is given,
And the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and peace
There shall be no end.
He will reign **on David's throne**
And over his kingdom,
Establishing and upholding it
With justice and righteousness
From that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
Will accomplish this.

Isaiah 9: 6-7 [NIV]

Later, in the third part of the Book of Isaiah, we find the following:

“The Suffering and Glory of the Servant”

See, my servant will act wisely;
he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.
Just as there were many who were appalled at him—
his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being
and his form marred beyond human likeness—
so he will sprinkle many nations,
and kings will shut their mouths because of him.
For what they were not told, they will see,
and what they have not heard, they will understand.

Isaiah 52: 13-15 [NIV].

Next, the Book of Isaiah then prophetically recounts, providing almost the exact description of the ministry, passion, crucifixion, and redemption of Jesus of Nazareth who is mentioned in the New Testament, as follows:

Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

By oppression[a] and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?

For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.

He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the Lord makes[c] his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life[d] and be satisfied[e];
by his knowledge[f] my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,[g]
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,[h]
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.

For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Isaiah 53: 1-12 [NIV]

These prophetic descriptions of the Messiah are the reason why the Book of Isaiah is the most-cited Old Testament Book within the New Testament.

Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–395) believed that the Prophet Isaiah "knew more perfectly than all others the mystery of the religion of the Gospel." Jerome (c. 342–420) also lauds the Prophet Isaiah, saying "He was more of an Evangelist than a Prophet, because he described all of the Mysteries of the Church of Christ so vividly that you would assume he was not prophesying about the future, but rather was composing a history of past events." Of specific note are the songs of the Suffering Servant, which Christians say are a direct prophetic revelation of the nature, purpose, and detail of the death of Jesus Christ.²⁵

²⁵ Source: "Isaiah," Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaiah>

Similarly, Augustine of Hippo wrote that Isaiah's prophecy was so profound, and so descriptive of "Christ and the Church, that is, about the King and that city which he founded," that "some say he should be called an evangelist rather than a prophet."²⁶

²⁶ St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 634 ("Isaiah... should be called an evangelist rather than a prophet," quoting Isaiah 52:13).

Chapter Six

“Jesus of Nazareth and The Book of Isaiah”

In the Gospel of Luke, we find Jesus of Nazareth commencing his ministry in his small town of Nazareth (in Galilee), where he went into a local Synagogue and read Isaiah, Chapter 61, to wit:

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s
favor.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.

He began by saying to them, “**Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.**”

All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked.

Luke 4:14-22 [NIV]

Thus, Jesus of Nazareth expressly identified himself as the same Messiah who was spoken of in the Book of Isaiah, to wit:

- Isaiah 9: 6-7;
- Isaiah 52: 13-15; and,
- Isaiah 53: 1-12.

The Early Church, then, naturally re-read and re-interpreted the Book of Isaiah through the prism of Jesus's action and teachings.²⁷

Given the Book of Isaiah's emphasis upon this Messiah's multinational leadership and an everlasting kingdom, Jesus of Nazareth's "internationalization" of the Jewish religion— i.e., the substitution of the "bread and wine" for Mosaic ceremonial sacrifices—and the universal redemption of all of humanity (i.e., the predestinated elect), is in perfect alignment with the general theological scheme that is described in the Book of Isaiah.

²⁷ Jesus of Nazareth promoted the same theological system within the Book of Isaiah in his teachings, e.g.: "Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus" (Luke 16:19-31); "Parable of the Sheep and the Goats" (Matthew 25: 31-46); and, "Parable of the Good Samaritan" (Luke 10: 25-37).

CONCLUSION

The general mandate to establish justice— social justice— is described in the Book of Isaiah as a multinational obligation that God himself enforces upon all nations—not just the kingdoms of ancient Judah and Israel. The divine Providence of God thus governs and disciplines all nations that fail to establish true and meaningful social justice— especially, as the Book of Isaiah repeatedly emphasizes, justice for the poor and the oppressed.

When Jesus of Nazareth began his ministry, he identified himself with the Messiah who is vividly described in Isaiah 9: 6-7; Isaiah 52: 13-15; and Isaiah 53: 1-12. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is said to have read Isaiah Chapter 61, stating:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Thus, Jesus expressly associated himself with the fundamental duty of establishing justice— social justice for the poor, the prisoners, the blind, the oppressed, etc.— and with the God of justice who disciplines and punishes nations through His divine Providence. Jesus’ teachings exemplified the same teachings contained within the Book of Isaiah, e.g.:

- “Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus” (Luke 16:19-31);
- “Parable of the Sheep and the Goats” (Matthew 25: 31-46); and,
- “Parable of the Good Samaritan” (Luke 10: 25-37).

The Early Church must have viewed its mission and duty to “obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29) as fulfilling the same fundamental duty of establishing justice— social justice for the poor, the prisoners, the blind, the oppressed, etc.—and associating with the God of justice who disciplines and punishes nations through His divine Providence.²⁸

THE END

²⁸ Today, we might rightly call this the “High Church” mission or the prophetic mission of the church.

APPENDICE A

“A Note on the Book of Isaiah and Constitutional Law”

By

Roderick O. Ford, J.D., LL.D.

Does the Christian religion, as described in the Book of Isaiah, have something to say to government officials, lawyers, and judges? I believe that it does. For constitutional lawyers and judges all around the world, the fundamental challenge of establishing justice is the same challenge that is presented Book of Isaiah. That is to say, there is, at every turn, in secular law and secular jurisprudence, the duty to establish justice—the failure of which the Book of Isaiah admonishes and restates the divine consequences.

In neo-orthodox Reformed theology—at least as I understand it—the American Declaration of Independence, which is an extraction from Puritan theology,²⁹ tacitly restates this same theological scheme (i.e., divine Providence over all nations) that is presented in the Book of Isaiah, which proscribes slavery, tyranny and oppression.

²⁹ See, e.g., William Goodell, *The Democracy of Christianity* (New York, N.Y.: Cady & Burgess, 1852), p. 484, stating:

[T]he democracy of Christianity is signally illustrated in the history of the Puritans, and in the effects of their labors, in America.... [T]he people of Great Britain are indebted to the Puritans. What is wanting, both in England and America, to the completeness and the security of human freedom, is an undeviating fidelity to those principles of Christian democracy which the Puritans in some measure restored.

And, in the same text, on pp. 376-377, Rev. Goodell writes:

These Puritan and Common Law expositions of Paul, in Romans XIII, are among the most revolutionary maxims we have in modern times, and, as a matter of historical fact, they have wrought two tremendous revolutions already, one in England and one in America, whether they are to be regarded as sound expositions or otherwise. An echo of these expositions we have in our Declaration of Independence. Bracton, in his exposition of Romans XIII, had said:

‘He is called a king for ruling righteously, and not because he reigns. Wherefore he is a king when he governs with justice, but a tyrant when he oppresses the people committed to his charge.’

In nearly the same language our Declaration of Independence abjures the authority of the British monarch:

‘A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.’

These words of Jefferson seem but a paraphrase or application of Bracton’s, and Bracton’s are but his own inference from his own exposition of Paul.

For instance, the text of the American Declaration of Independence states, to wit:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the *Laws of Nature* and of *Nature's God* entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are *Life, Liberty* and the *pursuit of Happiness*.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government....

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of **divine Providence**, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Since this proclamation laid the foundation for the United States Constitution, we might rightfully conclude that the Declaration's governing principles of natural law and divine Providence undergird this Constitution as well.³⁰

And so, in a Puritan-Reformed sense, the American Declaration of Independence (1776) is “proto-Christian” within the sense of the Book of Isaiah and the Old Testament, because it acknowledges the sovereignty and the divine Providence of a

³⁰ James Madison, *The Federalist Paper*, No. 51 (“Justice is the end of government. It is the end of civil society. It ever has been and ever will be pursued until it be obtained, or until liberty be lost in the pursuit.”) See, also, Algernon Sidney Crapsey, *Religion and Politics* (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Whittaker, 1905), pp. 305-306 (“When the Constitutional Convention of 1787 sent forth the Constitution which it devised for the government of the nation it did so in these words: ‘We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our children, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.’ Now can any man write a more perfect description of the Kingdom of God on earth or in the heaven than is to be found in these words? A government resting upon such principles as these is not a godless policy; it is a holy religion.... When the people of the United States decreed by constitutional amendment that the government should never by law establish any religion, they did actually establish the only religion that could comprehend in its membership the whole American people.”)

God of nature,³¹ and it also places definite limits upon governmental power in order to prevent tyranny and oppression. Similarly, we may rightfully described the law of international human rights as being “proto-Christian,” because they likewise place the same restrictions upon all nations.

END OF NOTE

³¹ See, generally, the writings of the Latitudinarian Anglican and Bishop Joseph Butler (1692 -1752). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Butler. See, e.g., Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, supra, pp. 152, 155, 158 (“the Author of Nature”); p. 159 (“...the Author of Nature, which is the foundation of Religion”); p. 162 (“... there is one God, the Creator and moral Governor of the world”); p. 187 (“Christianity is a republication of natural Religion”); p. 188 (“The Law of Moses then, and the Gospel of Christ, are authoritative publications of the religion of nature...”); p. 192 (“Christianity being a promulgation of the law of nature...”); p. 243 (“These passages of Scriptures ... comprehend and express the chief parts of Christ’s office, as Mediator between God and men.... First, He was, by way of eminence, the Prophet: that Prophet that should come into the world, to declare the divine will. He published anew the law of nature.... He confirmed the truth of this moral system of nature....”). See generally the writings of the Latitudinarian Anglican and Chancery Lawyer Matthew Tindal (1657 - 1733), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Tindal. See, e.g., Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation, or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature* (Newburgh, England: David Deniston Pub., 1730) [Republished by Forgotten Books in 2012], pp. 52, 56, 61, 64, 72-74 (stating that Christianity is a republication of natural religion).

APPENDIX B

“Notes and Chapter Summaries on the Book of Isaiah”

By

Roderick O. Ford, J.D., LL.D.

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH (Chapter Themes)



CHAPTER 1

“Judah is a Rebellious Nation”

- Judah is compared to Sodom and Gomorrah; except Judah had a small remnant of righteous persons, God would have destroyed Judah as Sodom and Gomorrah;
- Religious rituals and orthodox are disdained without justice and the remediation of oppression;

- Rulers take bribes, and are the companions of thieves;
- Rather than utterly destroy Judah, God will purge it; He will take away the rebels and the sinners, and He will reestablish Judah as a “City of Righteousness, the Faithful City.”
- Redemption of Judah shall be “with justice.”

CHAPTER 2 “The Last Days- the End of the Age (the World)”

- All nations will stream into the Mountain of the Lord;
- Many peoples will acknowledge the Mount of the Lord (the House of the God of Jacob); and seek the Way of the Lord;
- The Law will go out of Zion; God will “judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples.” Isaiah 2:4 (NIV);
- Nations shall then cease to engage in warfare.

“The Day of Judgment: Judah is a Rebellious Nation”

- Judah’s leaders have figuratively abandoned the people;
- Judah is filled with great splendor, wealth, silver, gold, treasures, etc.; and arrogant leaders;
- God will judge these sinner and sin, and He will be reestablished and exalted.

CHAPTER 3 “Judgment on Jerusalem and Judah”

- God will save the remnant of the righteous; “[t]ell the righteous it shall be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds.” Isaiah 3:10 (NIV).
- But God will cause the unrighteous to turn on each other; “people will oppress each other—man against man, neighbor against neighbor.” Isaiah 3:5 (NIV)
- The “haughty” women of Judah are condemned and shall be judged; “[i]n that day seven women will take hold of one man and say, ‘We will eat our own food and provide out own clothes; only let us be called by your name. Take away our disgrace!’ The “haughty” women of Judah are condemned and shall be judged; “[i]n that day seven women will take hold of one man and say, ‘We will eat our own food and provide out own clothes; only let us be called by your name. Take away our disgrace!’ Isaiah 3:16-26 [NIV]; Isaiah 4:1 [NIV].

CHAPTER 4

“The Branch of the Lord”

- The “haughty” women of Judah are condemned and shall be judged; “[i]n that day seven women will take hold of one man and say, ‘We will eat our own food and provide our own clothes; only let us be called by your name. Take away our disgrace!’” Isaiah 3:16-26; Isaiah 4:1 [NIV]. “The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion...” Isaiah 4:4 [NIV].
- The Branch of the Lord will be established; justice will be established; and the remnant will be called holy; Mount Zion will be a refuge.

CHAPTER 5

“The Song of the Vineyard”

- Judah and Israel are compared to God’s vineyard which he planted and looked for good grapes but saw that it only yielded bad fruit.
- “The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.” Isaiah 5:7 [NIV].
- Condemnation of land enclosures, land monopoly, and injustice. Isaiah 5:8-10.
- “Therefore my people will go into exile...” Isaiah 5:13 [NIV]
- Condemnation of general moral deterioration; callous indifference toward righteousness. Therefore, God is angry and will punish. Isaiah 5:8-30.
- God “lifts up a banner for the distant nations, he whistles for those at the ends of the earth.” Isaiah 5:26 [NIV].

CHAPTER 6

“God Commissions Isaiah to Prophecy”

- Isaiah saw “the Lord”
- Isaiah saw seraphs/ seraphs, -- “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” Isaiah 6:3 [NIV].
- Isaiah’s lips are tainted with filth and sin, but one of the seraphs took a coal and touched his lips, and cleansed Isaiah. The Lord asked, “Who will go for us?” And Isaiah responded, “Here am I. Send me!” Isaiah 6:8. [NIV].

- Judah is callous; seeing but never perceiving; hearing but never understanding.
- Judah will be destroyed—but a “holy seed will be the stump in the land” Isaiah 6:11. [NIV].

CHAPTER 7 “The Sign of Immanuel”

- The King of Aram (Rezin) and King of Israel (Pekah) rise up against the King of Judah (Ahaz)
- Isaiah comforts King Ahaz, and says Israel will be too shattered to threaten Judah.
- The “king of Assyria” will be used to humble Aram and Israel. Isaiah 7:20.
- Verse 14: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” [NIV]ⁱ
- Verse 14- is a Prophecy of Jesus Christ—but first, both Judah and Israel shall experience great hardship, “before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right.” This may have a double meaning: relating both to Isaiah’s son, but also prefiguring the baby Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER 8 “Assyria, as the Lord’s Instrument”*

- Isaiah had sex with a prophetess, who bore a son named Maher-Shalal-Hash-Ba, which means “quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil.”
- Before this son is able to speak, the plunder of Samaria and the wealth of Damascus will be carried off by the king of Assyria.
- The king of Assyria is “the mighty floodwaters of the River” Isaiah 8:7. [NIV] It will overflow all channels and sweep into Judah and Israel.
- The Lord God Almighty is the only one in whom trust should be placed. Put no trust in the corrupt Judah and Israel. “The LORD Almighty... will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare.” Isaiah 8:14. [NIV]
- “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.” Isaiah 8:20 [NIV]
- Prophecy of great distress to Judah and Israel

*[NOTE: the Assyrians and Babylonians are from the same region and represent the same peoples. Isaiah’s prophecy thus addresses the Assyrian captivity of the northern kingdom of Israel; and the Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom of Judah.]

CHAPTER 9 “Prophecy of the Messiah; Unto Us a Child is Born”

- Versus 8 through 21, the end of Chapter 9, describes the general demise of both Judah and Israel due to moral degeneracy and apostasy.
- Verses 1-7 describe God’s redemption; “in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles....” Isaiah 9:1. [NIV].
- The description of the Messiah is then given as follows:

For to us a child is born,
To us a son is given,
And the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and peace
There shall be no end.
He will reign on David’s throne
And over his kingdom,
Establishing and upholding it
With justice and righteousness
From that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
Will accomplish this. Isaiah 9: 6-7 [NIV]

CHAPTER 10 “Mandate to Do Social Justice”

- Isaiah makes social justice a very high priority, stating:

Woe to those who make unjust laws,
To those who issue oppressive decrees,
To deprive the poor of their rights
And withhold justice from the oppressed of my people,
Making widows their prey
And robbing the fatherless. Isaiah 10: 1-2 [NIV].

- Isaiah states that peoples or nations who commit such social injustices will encounter a “day of reckoning.” Isaiah 10:3 [NIV].
- When this “day of reckoning” comes, “[t]o whom will you run for help?” Isaiah 10: 3. [NIV].

“The God of divine Providence (i.e., constitutional law and political science)”

- God calls Assyria “the rod of my anger” and “the club of my wrath!” Isaiah 10:5 [NIV] “to put an end to many nations” Isaiah 10:7 [NIV].
- God used Assyria to punish Israel and Judah
- But after God has achieved this purpose, he will then punish Assyria itself. Isaiah 10: 12.
- God’s divine Providence is described in Isaiah 10: 5-19, to wit: ““Are not my commanders all kings?”” Isaiah 10:8 [NIV]; and Isaiah 10: 13 [NIV], stating:

By the strength of my hand I
 Have done this,
 And by my wisdom, because I have understanding.
 I have removed the boundaries of nations,
 I plundered their treasures; like a mighty one I subdued their kings.

“The Remnant of Israel”

- A purification of the Israelites will take place; the Israelites will not look to, or trust in, the Assyrians, but they will truly “rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.” Isaiah 10:19.
- “A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God. Though your people, O Israel, be like the sand of the sea, only a remnant will return.” Isaiah 10:21.

CHAPTER 11 “The Messiah- A Branch from Jesse”

- The end times is foretold.
- Prophecy of “a Branch” who is “the stump of Jesse.” Isaiah 11:1 [NIV]
- The “Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—The Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.” Isaiah 11:2-5.
- The Branch, who is “the Root of Jesse” will be an international ruler—not just of Judah and Israel. He “will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.” Isaiah 11:10.
- The “Lord” will then “reclaim the remnant” that is “from the four quarters of the earth.” Isaiah 11:11-12. [i.e., Judah, Israel, and all the world].

CHAPTER 12 “Songs of Praise”

- The Hebrew religion becomes truly multinational in scope:
In that day you will say

‘Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name;
Make known among the nations what he has done,
And proclaim that his name is exalted.
Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things;
Let this be known to all the world.
Shout aloud and sing for joy,
People of Zion,
For great is the Holy One of
Israel among you.’ Isaiah 12:4-6 [NIV].

CHAPTER 13 “Prophecy regarding Babylon”

- “Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms,
The glory of the Babylonians’ pride,
Will be overthrown by God
Like Sodom and Gomorrah. Isaiah 13:19 [NIV].
- “See, I will stir up against them the Medes....” Isaiah 13:17 [NIV].

CHAPTER 14 “The Restored House of Jacob; Fall of Babylon, Assyria, and the Philistines”

- The restored House of Jacob is prophesied.
- “The Lord will have compassion on Jacob; once again he will choose Israel... Aliens will join them and unite with the house of Jacob. Nations will take them and bring them to their own place. And the house of Israel will possess the nations.... They will make captives of their captors and rule over their oppressors.” Isaiah 14:1-2. [NIV].
- Prophecy of the demise of “the king of **Babylon**” continues. Isaiah 14:3-23.
- Prophecy against the **Assyrian empire**. Isaiah 14:24-27 [NIV] (“I will crush the Assyrian in my land... For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him?”)
- Prophecy against the **Philistines**. Isaiah 14:28-32 [NIV] (“Do not rejoice, all you Philistines.... The poorest of the poor will find pasture and the needy will lie down in safety. But your root I will destroy by famine; it will slay your survivors.”)

CHAPTER 15 “Prophecy against Moab”

- “An oracle concerning Moab....” Isaiah 15:1 [NIV]
- “[T]he armed men of Moab cry out, and their hearts are faint.” Isaiah 15:4 [NIV]
- “My heart cries out over Moab....” Isaiah 15:5 [NIV]
- “Their outcry echoes along the border of Moab....” Isaiah 15:8 [NIV]

CHAPTER 16 “Prophecy against Moab continued....”

- “This is the world of the LORD has already spoken concerning Moab. But now the LORD says: ‘Within three years, as a servant bound by contract would count them, Moab’s splendor and all her many people will be despised, and her survivors will be very fee and feeble.’” Isaiah 16:13-14 [NIV].
- “My heart laments for Moab like a harp....” Isaiah 16: 11 [NIV]
- “Like fluttering birds pushed from the nest, so are the women of Moab....” Isaiah 16:1 [NIV].
- “The oppressor will come to an end, and destruction will cease....”
- “In love **a throne** will be established; in **faithfulness a man will sit on it**—one from the house of David—one who in judging **seeks justice** and speeds **the cause of righteousness....**” Isaiah 16:5 [NIV].

CHAPTER 17 “Prophecy Against Damascus”

- “Damascus will not longer be a city, but will become a heap of ruins” Isaiah 17:1 [NIV]
- “In the evening, sudden terror! Before the morning, they are gone!” Isaiah 17:14.
- “Yet some gleanings will remain, as when an olive treat is beaten, leaving two or three olives on the topmost branches....” Isaiah 17:6 [NIV]

CHAPTER 18 “A Prophecy about Cush”

- “Woe to the land of whirring wings, along the rivers of Cush...” Isaiah 18:1 [NIV]
- There will be devastation and punishment, but also redemption:

At that time gifts will be brought to the LORD Almighty
 From a people tall and smooth-skinned,
 From a people feared far and wide,
 An aggressive nation of strange speech,
 Whose land is divided by rivers—
 The gifts will be brought to Mount Zion,
 The place of the Name of the LORD Almighty. Isaiah 18:7 [NIV]

CHAPTER 19 “A Prophecy about Egypt, Assyria, and Israel”

- The LORD God will chastise and punish the Egyptians, but he will also offer to them redemption. “The LORD will strike Egypt with a plague; he will strike them and heal them. They will turn to the LORD...” Isaiah 19:22. [NIV]
- Egypt, together with Assyria and Israel will be redeemed together: “The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth.” Israel 19:24 [NIV].
- Egypt, Assyria, Israel: “The LORD Almighty will bless them, saying, ‘Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyrian my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance.’” Isaiah 19: 25.

- Egypt shall be converted:

In that day five cities in Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD Almighty. One of them will be called the City of Destruction.

In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the heart of Egypt, and a monument to the LORD at its boarder.

It will be a sign and witness to the LORD Almighty in the land of Egypt. When they cry out to the LORD because of their oppressors, he will send them a savior and defender, and he will rescue them. So the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the LORD. They will worship with sacrifices and grain offerings; they will make vows to the LORD and keep them.

Isaiah 19: 19-21.

CHAPTER 20. “A Prophecy Against Egypt and Cush”

- This prophecy takes place at a particular time in history: when “the supreme commander, sent by Sargon king of Assyria, came to Ashdod and attacked and captured it....” Isaiah 20:1
- God told Isaiah to take off sackcloth from his body and shoe from his feet, for 3 years.
- This was a sign: the stripped/ barefeet represented the Assyrian captivity of the Egyptians and the Cushites.
- Those who fled to Egypt and Cush for help, will not find deliverance.

CHAPTER 21 “A Prophecy Against Babylon, Edom, and Arabia”

- The Prophecy of Babylon is told. Isaiah is frightened by the vision of what he sees. He trembles:

Look, here comes a man in a chariot with a team of horses.

And he gives back the answer:

‘Babylon has fallen, has fallen!

All the images of its gods lie

Shattered on the ground! Isaiah 21:9 [NIV]

- The Prophecy of Edom is told. The man in a chariot the watchman says “Morning is coming, but also the night.” Isaiah 21:12 [NIV] This may mean destruction, but then redemption.
- The Prophecy of Arabia is told. Isaiah says: “Within one year, as a servant bound by contract would count it, all the pomp of Kedar will come to an end. The survivors of the bowmen, the warriors of Kedar, will be few.’ The LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken.” Isaiah 21:16.

CHAPTER 22. “Prophecy about Jerusalem”

- There is sin in the city of Jerusalem, “But see, there is joy and revelry.... ‘Let us eat and drink,’ you say, ‘for tomorrow we die!’” Isaiah 22:13 [NIV].
- But God will change the person to hold the position of authority (i.e., prime minister) within that city, from a man named Sheba, to “Eliakim son of Hilkiah.” Isaiah 22:20.

CHAPTER 23. “Prophecy about Tyre (Phoenicia)”

- Tyre and Sidon were two great ancient cities of Phoenicia, a sea-trading nation.
- “.... The grain of Shihor; the harvest of the Nile was the revenue of Tyre, and she became the marketplace of the nations.” Isaiah 23:3 [NIV].
- Isaiah says that Phoenicia is sinful, and like a “prostitute.” Isaiah 23:15.

- God will punish Phoenicia:

Is this your city of revelry,
The old, old city,
Whose feet have taken her
To settle in far-off lands?
Who planned this against Tyre,
The bestower of crowns,
Whose merchants are princes,
Whose traders are renowned in the earth?
The LORD Almighty planned it,
To bring low the pride of all glory
And to humble all who are
Renowned on the earth. Isaiah 23: 7-9. [NIV]

- “Be silent, you people of the island and you merchants of Sidon,
Whom the seafarers have enriched.” Isaiah 23:2. [NIV]

CHAPTER 24. “Disobedience to the divine Covenant (Noahic) in the Earth)”

- Isaiah prophesies about the end of the present age: “[i]n that day.”
- God will punish “the powers in the heavens above....” Isaiah 24:21.
- God will punish “the kings on the earth below.” Isaiah 24:21.
- The kings of the earth “will be herded together like prisoners.” Isaiah 24:22.
- “[T]he LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders, gloriously.” Isaiah 24:23.
- There is universal covenant in the earth [not just a special Abrahamic or Mosaic covenant]. Isaiah 24:5 [NIV].

The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws,
Violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant.
Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt.
Therefore earth’s inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left. Isaiah 24:6 [NIV]

- “Terror and pit and snare await you, O people of the earth.” Isaiah 24:17.

CHAPTER 25. “Praise to the Lord”

- Isaiah celebrates God’s coming justice. “He will bring down your high fortified walls....” Isaiah

25:12 [NIV].

- Isaiah describes divine Providence as follows: “you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago.” Isaiah 25:1 [NIV].
- God has “been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat.” Isaiah 25: 4.
- God will “remove the disgrace of his people.” Isaiah 25: 8 [NIV]
- “Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us.” Isaiah 25:9 [NIV].
- “On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines.” Isaiah 25:6 [NIV].

CHAPTER 26.

“A Song of Praise”

- Isaiah describes divine Providence as follows: “LORD, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us.... [O]ther lords besides you have ruled over us, but your name alone do we honor.” Isaiah 26:12-13.
- Isaiah describes social justice:
He humbles those who dwell on high,
He lays the lofty city low;
He levels it to the ground
And casts it down to the dust.
Feet trample it down—
The feet of the oppressed,
The footsteps of the poor. Isaiah 26:5-6 [NIV].

CHAPTER 27.

“Deliverance of Israel”

- Isaiah again references the last days or the end times: “in that day.”
- God will slay “Leviathan the gliding serpent.” Isaiah 27:1 [NIV]
- In that day, “Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit.” Isaiah 27:6 [NIV].
- “And in that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who were perishing in Assyria and those who were exiled in Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.” Isaiah 27: 12. [NIV].

CHAPTER 28.

“Woe to Ephraim”

- Isaiah warns “Ephraim’s drunkards,” of God’s judgment. Isaiah 28:1, 3. [NIV].

In that day the LORD Almighty
Will be a glorious crown,
A beautiful wreath
For the remnant of his people.
He will be a spirit of justice
To him who sits in judgment,
A source of strength

To those who turn back the battle at the gate. Isaiah 28: 5-6. [NIV].

- “A stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation.” Isaiah 28:16.
- Justice and righteousness will be made “the measuring line” and “the plumb line.” Isaiah 28:16.
- God will teach and instruct. “His God instructs him and teaches him the right way.” Isaiah 28:26.
- “All this also comes from the LORD Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom.” Isaiah 28: 29.

CHAPTER 29.

“Woe to David’s City”

- It is futility for the “hordes of nations” to “fight against Mount Zion.” Isaiah 29:8.
- God wants true worship, justice, and righteousness.
- God does not want religious ritualism without holiness. Isaiah criticizes the people of Jerusalem for the practice of religious ritualism only:

The Lord says:

‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips,
But their hearts are far from me.

Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.’ Isaiah 29:13. [NIV]

- We are the “clay,” but God is the “Potter.” “Can the pot say of the potter, ‘He knows nothing?’” Isaiah 29:16 [NIV]
- “In that day,” the humble will rejoice in the LORD; the eyes of the blind will see. Isaiah 29:19 [NIV].

CHAPTER 30. “Woe to the Obstinate Nation that Sins through Oppression and Deceit”

- Isaiah continues his critique of the people of Jerusalem

- “These are rebellious people,
Deceitful children,
Children unwilling to listen to the
LORD’s instruction.
They say to the seers,
“See no more visions!”
And to the prophets,
“Give us no more visions of what is right!
Tell us pleasant things,
Prophecy illusions.
Leave this way,
Get off this path,
And stop confronting us
With the Holy One of Israel!” Isaiah 30:9-11 [NIV].

- Isaiah this describes the calamity, due to the *sin of a lack of justice*, as follows:
Therefore, this is what the Holy One of Israel says:
‘Because you have rejected this message,
Relied on **oppression**
And depended on **deceit**,
This sin will become for you
Like a high wall, cracked and bulging,
That collapses suddenly, in an instant. Isaiah 30:12-13.

- Isaiah also speaks of redemption, as follows:
“In repentance and rest is your salvation,
In quietness and trust is your strength,
But you would have none of it...
Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you;
He rises to show you compassion.
For the LORD is a God of justice.
Blessed are all who wait for him! Isaiah 30:15, 18. [NIV].

CHAPTER 31. “Woe to Those Who Rely on Egypt (Or Ungodly, Powerful

Nations for Support”

- Isaiah forewarns against political alliances with ungodly, rich, and powerful nations. This is a political science lesson for smaller nations (e.g., developing nations in the Third World).
- Isaiah critiques Israel’s reliance upon Egypt for help, without putting trust and faith in God.
- “But the Egyptians are men and not God” Isaiah 31:3 [NIV].
- “Like birds hovering overhead, the LORD Almighty will shield Jerusalem; he will shield it and deliver it, he will ‘pass over’ it and will rescue it.” Isaiah 31:5 [NIV].
- “Assyria will fall by a sword that is not of man; a sword, not of mortals, will devour them.” Isaiah 31:8 [NIV].

CHAPTER 32. “The Kingdom of Righteousness”

- Isaiah describes Judea-Christian political science (i.e., divine Providence) and Christian polity as follows:

“[A] king will reign in righteousness

And rulers will rule with justice.

Each man will be like a shelter from the wind

And a refuge from the storm.” Isaiah 32:1-2 [NIV]

“[T]he noble man makes noble plans, and by noble deeds he stands.” Isaiah 32:8 [NIV].

- Isaiah describes the times... exploitation, oppression, and perversion:
 - The “fool” is “called noble” Isaiah 32:5 [NIV]
 - The “scoundrel” is “highly respected” Isaiah 32:5 [NIV].
 - The “fool” is “busy with evil” Isaiah 32:6 [NIV].
 - The “fool” speaks “folly” Isaiah 32:6 [NIV].
 - The “fool... practices ungodliness” Isaiah 32:6 [NIV]
 - The “fool... spreads error concerning the LORD” Isaiah 32:6 [NIV]
 - The “fool” withhold food from “the hungry... and from the thirsty he withholds water.” Isaiah 32:6 [NIV]
 - The “scoundrel... makes up evil schemes” Isaiah 32:7 [NIV]
 - The “scoundrel... Destroy the poor with lies, even when the plea of the needy is just.” Isaiah 32:7 [NIV]
- Lastly, Isaiah forewarns the Women of Jerusalem not to be complacent or to feel secure, because coming justice of the LORD is sure to come. Isaiah 32: 9-20.

CHAPTER 33. “Distress and Help”

- Isaiah continues his description of Judea-Christian political science (i.e., divine Providence)
- God’s voice is immutable, unchangeable, sovereign, irresistible: “At the thunder of your voice, the peoples flee; when you rise up, the nations scatter.” Isaiah 33:3. [NIV].
- God is the “sure foundation... a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure.” Isaiah 33: 5-6. [NIV].
- “For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us.” Isaiah 33: 22 [NIV].

CHAPTER 34. “Judgment Against All Nations- Establishment of Zion”

- Isaiah emphasizes God’s multinational covenant with “all nations” and states that, because of their transgression, “[t]he LORD is angry with all nations.” Isaiah 34:1-2. [NIV]

- Isaiah emphasizes that day of judgment when the LORD will establish Zion:

For the LORD has a duty of vengeance,

A year of retribution, to uphold Zion’s cause....

Look in the scroll of the LORD and read:

None of these will be missing,

Not one will lack her mate.

For it is his mouth that has given the order,

And his Spirit will gather them together.

He allots their portions;

His hand distributes them by measure.

They will possess it forever and dwell there

From generation to generation. Isaiah 34: 8, 16-17. [NIV]

CHAPTER 35. “Joy of the Redeemed—The ‘Way of Holiness’”

- Isaiah describes “a highway” which will be the sole and only avenue to “enter Zion.” Isaiah 35:8, 10. [NIV].
- Isaiah describes a sort of spiritual state of those person who are “redeemed,” as if they will be in a spiritual state of redemption, residing in God’s kingdom called Zion, even while those person who have not been redeemed are still living.
- After the calamities of Judah, Israel, and the nations, Isaiah then describes of a restoring of Israel, but not by armies, warfare or human ingenuity, but rather through a sort of spiritual restoration that shall occur within the hearts and minds of individual. To that end, Isaiah writes:

And a **highway** will be there;
 It will be called **the Way of Holiness**.
 The **unclean will not journey on it**;
 It will be **for those who walk in that Way**;
 Wicked fools will not go about on it.
 No lion will be there,
 Nor will any ferocious beast get up on it;
 They will not be found there.
 But **only the redeemed will walk there**,
 And **the ransomed of the LORD will return**.
 They will enter Zion with singing;
 Everlasting joy will crown their heads.
 Gladness and joy will overtake them,
 And sorrow and sighing will flee away. Isaiah 35: 8-10.

- For this “Way of Holiness,” which shall be available only to “the redeemed” is the foundation of the Gospels and the message of Christ. [See, e.g., John 3:1-17 (Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus)].

CHAPTER 36. “Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem”

- 14th year of King Hezekiah’s reign in the Southern Kingdom of Judah
- Sennacherib, King of Assyria, attacked Judah’s several fortified cities.
- Sennacherib’s field commander approached King Hezekiah’s chief administrators and requested that they surrender to the King of Assyria, stating the King Hezekiah’s God would not, and could not, save the from the hand of the king of Assyria.

CHAPTER 37. “Jerusalem’s Deliverance foretold”

- Isaiah prophesied the God would deliver Judah and Jerusalem from the Assyrians
- Tirhakah, the Cushite king of Egypt, marched against Sennacherib, and when Sennacherib hears this, he again warns Hezekiah and tells him to surrender.
- Isaiah reassures Hezekiah that God will deliver Judah.
- 1 angel killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night. Isaiah 37:36.
- Sennacherib is soon assassinated by 2 of his own sons Adrammelech and Sharezer. Isaiah 37:38.

CHAPTER 38.

“Hezekiah’s Illness”

- Hezekiah falls ill, and he is on his deathbed.
- Isaiah tells him that he is about to die and to get his affairs in order.
- Hezekiah cries out to God, and his life is extended by 15 years.

CHAPTER 39. “Envoys from Babylon Examines Hezekiah’s Wealth”

- Baladan king of Babylon sent letters to Hezekiah upon learning of his illness and restoration of health.
- Hezekiah allowed the Babylonian envoys to see all of his storehouses of silver, gold, spices, fine oils, and armory.

“Isaiah Prophesies the Babylonian Captivity”

- Isaiah is very disturbed that Hezekiah has done this:

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, ‘Hear the word of the LORD Almighty:

The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Isaiah 39:5 [NIV].

CHAPTER 40.

“God’s Divine Providence”

- Prophecy of God’s future salvation for his people.
- Prophecy about God’s sovereignty, power, and justice.

He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth,
 And its people are like grasshoppers.
 He stretches out the heavens like a canopy,
 And spreads them out like a tent to live in....
 Do you not know? Have you not heard?
 The LORD is the everlasting God,
 The Creator of the ends of the earth....
 He gives strength to the weary
 And increases the power of the weak. Isaiah 40:22-24, 28-29 [NIV]

CHAPTER 41. “God’s Divine Providence”

- God is the great I AM: “calling forth the generations from the beginning” Isaiah 41: 4.
- “He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him.” Isaiah 41:2.
- This eternal sovereign God is the protector of Israel. Therefore, Israel should not be afraid of the kings, rulers, and oppressors in the earth.

The poor and needy search for water,
 But there is none;
 Their tongues are parched with thirst.
 But I the LORD will answer them;
 I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. Isaiah 41:17. [NIV]

CHAPTER 42. “Servant of the Lord: the Messiah”

- Isaiah then describes a “servant”:
 “Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
 my chosen one in whom I delight;
 I will put my Spirit on him,
 and he will bring justice to the nations.
 He will not shout or cry out,
 or raise his voice in the streets.
 A bruised reed he will not break,
 and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.
 In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;
 he will not falter or be discouraged
 till he establishes justice on earth.
 In his teaching the islands will put their hope.” Isaiah 42: 1-4 [NIV]

“Israel Called to be a Light for the Gentiles”

“I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness;
I will take hold of your hand.
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people
and a light for the Gentiles,
to open eyes that are blind,
to free captives from prison
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. Isaiah 42: 6-7 [NIV]

“Divine Providence”

It pleased the LORD
for the sake of his righteousness
to make his law great and glorious. Isaiah 42: 21 [NIV]

Who handed Jacob over to become loot,
and Israel to the plunderers?
Was it not the LORD,
against whom we have sinned?
For they would not follow his ways;
they did not obey his law. Isaiah 42: 24 [NIV]

CHAPTER 43. “Divine Providence, and the Restoration of Israel”

- Isaiah speaks of the redeemed Israel. “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.” Isaiah 43:1 [NIV].

Do not be afraid, for I am with you;
I will bring your children from the east
and gather you from the west.
I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’
and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’
Bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the ends of the earth—
everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.” Isaiah 43:5-7 [NIV].

- Isaiah speaks of Israel's sins, unfaithfulness, but he also speaks of God's mercy and salvation.

So I disgraced the dignitaries of your temple;
I consigned Jacob to destruction[d]
and Israel to scorn. Isaiah 43:28 [NIV].

CHAPTER 44. “Israel the Chosen”

- Isaiah mentions “Cyrus” (i.e., Cyrus the Great of Persia)

Who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, ‘Let it be rebuilt,’ and of the temple, ‘Let its foundations be laid.’” Isaiah 44:28.

[NOTE: Isaiah was an 8th-century prophet; the Babylonian captivity did not occur until the 6th century, in 597 B.C. Cyrus would have lived following the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity, cir. 527 B.C. Hence, some scholars believe that Isaiah himself did not write this passage.]

CHAPTER 45. “Israel the Chosen”

- Isaiah again mentions “Cyrus” (i.e., Cyrus the Great of Persia)

This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armour, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut....
Isaiah 45:1.

I will raise up Cyrus in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free, but not for a price or reward, says the LORD Almighty. Isaiah 45:13.

[NOTE: Isaiah was an 8th-century prophet; the Babylonian captivity did not occur until the 6th century, in 597 B.C. Cyrus would have lived following the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity, cir. 527 B.C. Hence, some scholars believe that Isaiah himself did not write this passage.]

CHAPTER 46. “God is Superior to the gods of Babylon”

- The gods and idols of Babylon have no power of the true God of Israel.

“Divine Providence/ Predestination and Foreknowledge”

Remember the former things, those of long ago;

I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is none like me.

I make known the end from the beginning,

from ancient times, what is still to come.
I say, 'My purpose will stand,
and I will do all that I please.' Isaiah 46: 10 [NIV]

CHAPTER 47. "The Fall of Babylon"

- Isaiah prophesies of the fall of Babylon, following the Babylonian captivity and rise of Cyrus the Great of Persia
- "Go down, sit in the dust, Virgin Daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, Daughter of the Babylonians. No more will you be called tender and delicate." Isaiah 47:1 [NIV]

[NOTE: Isaiah was an 8th-century prophet; the Babylonian captivity did not occur until the 6th century, in 597 B.C. Cyrus would have lived following the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity, cir. 527 B.C. Hence, some scholars believe that Isaiah himself did not write this passage.]

CHAPTER 48. "The Fall of Babylon"

- Isaiah prophesies of the fall of Babylon, following the Babylonian captivity and rise of Cyrus the Great of Persia
- "The LORD's chosen ally will carry out his purpose against Babylon; his arm will be against Babylon; his arm will be against the Babylonians." Isaiah 48: 14. [NIV].
- "Leave Babylon, flee from the Babylonians! Announce this with shouts of joy and proclaim it. Send it out to the ends of the earth; say, 'The LORD has redeemed his servant Jacob.'" Isaiah 48:20 [NIV].

[NOTE: Isaiah was an 8th-century prophet; the Babylonian captivity did not occur until the 6th century, in 597 B.C. Cyrus would have lived following the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity, cir. 527 B.C. Hence, some scholars believe that Isaiah himself did not write this passage.]

CHAPTER 49. "The Servant of the LORD; Restoration of Israel; Gentiles added to the Fold"

- Isaiah predicts that the territory of Israel is too small to hold the future descendants of Jacob. "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." Isaiah 49:6 [NIV].

"See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples...." Isaiah 49:22. [NIV]

"Then all mankind will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob." Isaiah 49: 26 [NIV].

CHAPTER 50. “Israel’s Sin and the Servant’s Obedience”

- Israel was sold to slavery because of its sins.
- Isaiah, as an obedient servant, summon strength to speak for God.

“The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back. I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard....” Isaiah 50:5-6. [NIV].

CHAPTER 51. “Universal laws of Justice; Light to the Nations”

- “The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations.” Isaiah 51:4. [NIV]
- “The ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads.” Isaiah 51:11 [NIV].
- God will redeem the oppressed, the poor, and Israel.

CHAPTER 52. “The Messiah Shall Suffer and Redeem Israel”

- God will redeem the oppressed, the poor, and Israel.
- Isaiah tells of the Suffering Servant:

“The Suffering and Glory of the Servant”

See, my servant will act wisely[b];

he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

Just as there were many who were appalled at him[c]—

his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being

and his form marred beyond human likeness—

so he will sprinkle many nations,[d]

and kings will shut their mouths because of him.

For what they were not told, they will see,

and what they have not heard, they will understand. Isaiah 52: 13-15 [NIV].

CHAPTER 53. “The Messiah Shall Suffer and Redeem Israel”

- Isaiah continues to speak of the Suffering Servant:

Who has believed our message

and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

By oppression[a] and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?

For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.[b]

He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the Lord makes[c] his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

After he has suffered,

he will see the light of life[d] and be satisfied[e];
by his knowledge[f] my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,[g]
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,[h]
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.

For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors. Isaiah, Chapter 53: 1-12 [NIV]

CHAPTER 54. “The Future Glory of Zion”

- Zion will inherit all the nations; “your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities.” Isaiah 55:3 [NIV].
- “In righteousness you will be established: Tyranny will be far from you...” Isaiah 55:14 [NIV]
- “[N]o weapon forged against you will prevail...” Isaiah 55:17 [NIV].

CHAPTER 55. “The Future Glory of Zion- Continued”

- Isaiah tells of future covenant with Zion. “I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.” Isaiah 55:3.
- Zion will inherit all nations: “[s]urely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.” Isaiah 55: 5. [NIV].
- Isaiah describes universal redemption:
Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. Isaiah 55: 7 [NIV].

CHAPTER 56. “Universal Redemption offered to All Nations”

- Isaiah invites all foreigners to the new covenant brotherhood of Zion:

This is what the Lord says:

**“Maintain justice
and do what is right,**
for my salvation is close at hand
and my righteousness will soon be revealed.

2 Blessed is the one who does this—
the person who holds it fast,
who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it,
and keeps their hands from doing any evil.”

3 Let no **foreigner** who is bound to the Lord say,
“The Lord will surely exclude me from his people.”
And let no eunuch complain,
“I am only a dry tree.”

4 For this is what the Lord says:

“To the **eunuchs** who keep my Sabbaths,
who choose what pleases me
and hold fast to my covenant—

5 to them I will give within my temple and its walls
a memorial and a name
better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
that will endure forever.

6 And **foreigners** who bind themselves to the Lord
to minister to him,
to love the name of the Lord,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it
and who hold fast to my covenant—

7 these I will bring to my holy mountain
and give them joy in my house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house will be called
a house of prayer for all nations.”

8 The Sovereign Lord declares—
he who gathers the exiles of Israel:

“I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered....” Isaiah 56: 1-8 [NIV]

CHAPTER 57. “The Death of the Righteous is Glory, Peace and Rest”

- Isaiah puts what may seem like a tragic death of the righteous in perspective. “Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.” Isaiah 57: 2 [NIV].
- “[T]he man who makes me his refuge will inherit the land and possess my holy mountain.” Isaiah 57: 13 [NIV].

CHAPTER 58. “True Fasting- What God Really Wants”

- God is not pleased with the traditional forms of fasting. He is much more interested in holiness and justice.
- “Why have we fasted, they say, and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?’ Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers.” Isaiah 58:3 [NIV].
- “Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself? Is it only for bowing one’s head like like a reed and foe lying on sackcloth and ashes? Is this what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?” Isaiah 58:5 [NIV]
- “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: To loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter....” Isaiah 58:6. [NIV].

CHAPTER 59. “Sin, Redemption and Social Justice”

- “[Y]our iniquities have separated you from God....” Isaiah 59:2 [NIV].
- “No one calls for justice; no one pleads his case with integrity.” Isaiah 59:4 [NIV].
- “The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths.” Isaiah 59: 8 [NIV].
- “So justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us.” Isaiah 59:9 [NIV].
- “So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter.” Isaiah 59: 14 [NIV].

- “Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.” Isaiah 59:15 [NIV].

“New Covenant- the Spirit of God Poured Out”

- “As for me, this is my covenant with them,’ says the LORD. ‘My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever.” Isaiah 59:21 [NIV].

CHAPTER 60. “The Glory of Zion; divine Providence; Redemption of Israel”

- Isaiah again emphasizes the providence of God: “[f]or the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined.” Isaiah 60:12. [NIV].
- Isaiah again prophesies the redemption of Israel: “Although you have been forsaken and hated, with no one traveling through, I will make you the everlasting pride and the joy of all generations.” Isaiah 60:15 [NIV].

CHAPTER 61. “Holy Spirit and Social Justice”

- Isaiah describes the Spirit of holiness as follows:

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
 Because the LORD has anointed me
 To preach good news to the poor.
 He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
 To proclaim freedom for the captives
 And release from darkness for the prisoners,
 To proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor
 And the day of vengeance of our God,
 To comfort all who mourn,
 And to provide for those who grieve in Zion.... Isaiah 61: 1-3 [NIV].

- “For I, the LORD, love justice....” Isaiah 61:8 [NIV].
- Isaiah proclaims that this theological scheme is applicable to all nations, stating, “so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.” Isaiah 61: 11 [NIV].

CHAPTER 62. “Zion’s New Name”

- Zion will be called “a new name.” Isaiah 62:2. [NIV].

- That new name will “be called Sought After.” Isaiah 62:12. [NIV]
- Zion will be “a banner to the nations.” Isaiah 62:10 [NIV].
- “The LORD has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: ‘Say to the Daughter of Zion, ‘See, your Savior comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.’” Isaiah 62:12 [NIV].

CHAPTER 63. “Day of Judgment and Redemption of Israel”

- Isaiah describes a God of divine judgment, punishment, and redemption. “For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come.” Isaiah 63: 4 [NIV].
- “O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.” Isaiah 63:16. [NIV].

CHAPTER 64. “Day of Judgment and Redemption of Israel”

- Isaiah continues his description of a God of divine judgment, punishment, and redemption.
- “Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.....” Isaiah 64:4 [NIV].
- “O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.” Isaiah 64: 8 [NIV].

CHAPTER 65. “Day of Judgment and Redemption of Israel”

- Isaiah continues his description of a God of divine judgment, punishment, and redemption.
- Israel has sinned and been punished; thereafter, God will redeem Israel, and the government shall be as follows:

Whoever invokes a blessing in the land will do so by the God of truth;

He who takes an oath in the land will swear by the God of truth.

For the past troubles will be forgotten and hidden from my eyes. Isaiah 65: 16 [NIV].

- God will create a “new heaven” and a “new earth.” Isaiah 65: 17. “The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.” Isaiah 65:17 [NIV]. “The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but the dust will be the serpent’s food.” Isaiah 65:25 [NIV].

CHAPTER 66. “Day of Judgment and Redemption of Israel”

- The Book of Isaiah ends with the same theme of divine Providence, judgment, punishment, and redemption of Israel.

- Isaiah emphasizes the important fact that God is more interested in holiness than in religious rituals and sacrifices.

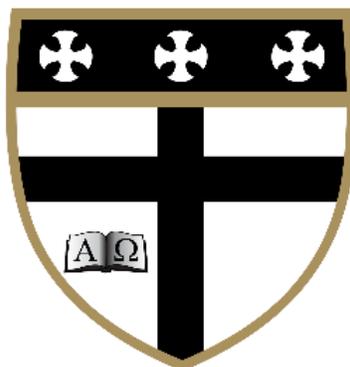
This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit,
And trembles at my word.

But whoever sacrifices a bull
Is like one who kills a man,
And whoever offers a lamb,
Like one who presents pig's blood,
And whoever burns memorial incense,
Like one who worships an idol.

They have chosen their own ways,
And their souls delight in their
Abominations.... Isaiah 66:2-3. [NIV].

- All nations of the earth shall be brought into the new covenant: "I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations.... They will proclaim my glory among the nations. And they will bring all your brothers, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD...." Isaiah 66:19-20.
- The "new heavens" and the "new earth" will endure forever; but so shall the everlasting punishment of "those who rebelled against" God; "their worm will not die." Isaiah 66: 22-24.

THE END



END NOTE

ⁱ John Calvin's Commentaries on the Bible (Isaiah 7:14)

"Verse 14

14. *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign.* Ahaz had already refused the sign which the Lord offered to him, when the Prophet remonstrated against his rebellion and ingratitude; yet the Prophet declares that this will not prevent God from *giving the sign* which he had promised and appointed for the Jews. But what sign?

Behold, a virgin shall conceive. This passage is obscure; but the blame lies partly on the Jews, who, by much cavilling, have labored, as far as lay in their power, to pervert the true exposition. They are hard pressed by this passage; for it contains an illustrious prediction concerning the Messiah, who is here called *Immanuel*; and therefore they have labored, by all possible means, to torture the Prophet's meaning to another sense. Some allege that the person here mentioned is Hezekiah; and others, that it is the son of Isaiah.

Those who apply this passage to Hezekiah are excessively impudent; for he must have been a full-grown man when Jerusalem was besieged. Thus they show that they are grossly ignorant of history. But it is a just reward of their malice, that God hath blinded them in such a manner as to be deprived of all judgment. This happens in the present day to the papists, who often expose themselves to ridicule by their mad eagerness to pervert the Scriptures.

As to those who think that it was Isaiah's son, it is an utterly frivolous conjecture; for we do not read that a deliverer would be raised up from the seed of Isaiah, who should be called *Immanuel*; for this title is far too illustrious to admit of being applied to any man.

Others think, or, at least, (being unwilling to contend with the Jews more than was necessary,) admit that the Prophet spoke of some child who was born at that time, by whom, as by an obscure picture, Christ was foreshadowed. But they produce no strong arguments, and do not show who that child was, or bring forward any proofs. Now, it is certain, as we have already said, that this name *Immanuel* could not be literally applied to a mere man; and, therefore, there can be no doubt that the Prophet referred to Christ.

But all writers, both Greek and Latin, are too much at their ease in handling this passage; for, as if there were no difficulty in it, they merely assert that Christ is here promised from the Virgin Mary. Now, there is no small difficulty in the objection which the Jews bring against us, that Christ is here mentioned without any sufficient reason; for thus they argue, and demand that the scope of the passage be examined: "Jerusalem was besieged. The Prophet was about to give them a sign of deliverance. Why should he promise the Messiah, who was to be born five hundred years afterwards?" By this argument they think that they have gained the victory, because the promise concerning Christ had nothing to do with assuring Ahaz of the deliverance of Jerusalem. And then they boast as if they had gained the day, chiefly because scarcely any one replies to them. That is the reason why I said that

commentators have been too much at their ease in this matter; for it is of no small importance to show why the Redeemer is here mentioned.

Now, the matter stands thus. King Ahaz having rejected the sign which God had offered to him, the Prophet reminds him of the foundation of the covenant, which even the ungodly did not venture openly to reject. The Messiah must be born; and this was expected by all, because the salvation of the whole nation depended on it. The Prophet, therefore, after having expressed his indignation against the king, again argues in this manner: “By rejecting the promise, thou wouldest endeavor to overturn the decree of God; but it shall remain inviolable, and thy treachery and ingratitude will not hinder God from being, continually the Deliverer of his people; for he will at length raise up his Messiah.”

To make these things more plain, we must attend to the custom of the Prophets, who, in establishing special promises, lay down this as the foundation, that God will send a Redeemer. On this general foundation God everywhere builds all the special promises which he makes to his people; and certainly every one who expects aid and assistance from him must be convinced of his fatherly love. And how could he be reconciled to us but through Christ, in whom he has freely adopted the elect, and continues to pardon them to the end? Hence comes that saying of Paul, that

all the promises of God in Christ are Yea and Amen.
([2 Corinthians 1:20](#).)

Whenever, therefore, God assisted his ancient people, he at the same time reconciled them to himself through Christ; and accordingly, whenever famine, pestilence, and war are mentioned, in order to hold out a hope of deliverance, he places the Messiah before their eyes. This being exceedingly clear, the Jews have no right to make a noise, as if the Prophet made an unseasonable transition to a very remote subject. For on what did the deliverance of Jerusalem depend, but on the manifestation of Christ? This was, indeed, the only foundation on which the salvation of the Church always rested.

Most appropriately, therefore, did Isaiah say, “True, thou dost not believe the promises of God, but yet God will fulfill them; for he will at length send his Christ, for whose sake he determines to preserve this city. Though thou art unworthy, yet God will have regard to his own honor.” King Ahaz is therefore deprived of that sign which he formerly rejected, and loses the benefit of which he proved himself to be unworthy; but still God’s inviolable promise is still held out to him. This is plainly enough intimated by the particle לכן, (*lachen*.) *therefore*; that is, because thou disdainest that particular sign which God offered to thee, הוּא, (*hu*.) *He*, that is, God himself, who was so gracious as to offer it freely to thee, he whom thou *weariest* will not fail to hold out *a sign*. When I say that the coming of Christ is promised to Ahaz, I do not mean that God includes him among the chosen people, to whom he had appointed his Son to be the Author of salvation; but because the discourse is directed to the whole body of the people.

Will give you a sign. The word לָכֶם, (*lachen*.) *to you*, is interpreted by some as meaning *to your children*; but this is forced. So far as relates to the persons addressed, the Prophet leaves the wicked king and looks to the nation, so far as it had been adopted by God. He will therefore give, not *to thee* a wicked king, and to those who are like thee, but *to you* whom he has adopted; for the covenant which he made with Abraham continues to be firm and inviolable. And the Lord always has some remnant to whom the advantage of the covenant belongs; though the rulers and governors of his people may be hypocrites.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive. The word *Behold* is used emphatically, to denote the greatness of the event; for this is the manner in which the Spirit usually speaks of great and remarkable events, in order to elevate the minds of men. The Prophet, therefore, enjoins his hearers to be attentive, and to consider this extraordinary work of God; as if he had said, “Be not slothful, but consider this singular grace of God, which ought of itself to have drawn your attention, but is concealed from you on account of your stupidity.”

Although the word עלמה (*gnalmah*,) a virgin, is derived from עלם (*gnalam*,) which signifies to hide, because the shame and modesty of virgins does not allow them to appear in public; yet as the Jews dispute much about that word, and assert that it does not signify virgin, because Solomon used it to denote a young woman who was betrothed, it is unnecessary to contend about the word. Though we should admit what they say, that עלמה (*gnalmah*) sometimes denotes a young woman, and that the name refers, as they would have it, to the age, (yet it is frequently used in Scripture when the subject relates to a virgin,) the nature of the case sufficiently refutes all their slanders. For what wonderful thing did the Prophet say, if he spoke of a young woman who conceived through intercourse with a man? It would certainly have been absurd to hold out this as a sign or a miracle. Let us suppose that it denotes a young woman who should become pregnant in the ordinary course of nature; ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ everybody sees that it would have been silly and contemptible for the Prophet, after having said that he was about to speak of something strange and uncommon, to add, A young woman shall conceive. It is, therefore, plain enough that he speaks of a virgin who should conceive, not by the ordinary course of nature, but by the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit. And this is the mystery which Paul extols in lofty terms, that

God was manifested in the flesh. ([1 Timothy 3:16.](#))

And shall call. The Hebrew verb is in the feminine gender, *She shall call*; for as to those who read it in the masculine gender, I know not on what they found their opinion. The copies which we use certainly do not differ. If you apply it to the mother, it certainly expresses something different from the ordinary custom. We know that to the father is always assigned the right of giving a name to a child; for it is a sign of the power and authority of fathers over children; and the same authority does not belong to women. But here it is conveyed to the mother; and therefore it follows that he is conceived by the mother in such a manner as not to have a father on earth; otherwise the Prophet would pervert the ordinary custom of Scripture, which ascribes this office to men only. Yet it ought to be observed that the name was not given to Christ at the suggestion of his mother, and in such a case it would have had no weight; but the Prophet means that, in publishing the name, *the virgin* will occupy the place of a herald, because there will be no earthly father to perform that office.

Immanuel. This name was unquestionably bestowed on Christ on account of the actual fact; for the only-begotten Son of God clothed himself with our flesh, and united himself to us by partaking of our nature. He is, therefore, called *God with us*, or *united to us*; which cannot apply to a man who is not God. The Jews in their sophistry tell us that this name was given to Hezekiah; because by the hand of Hezekiah God delivered his people; and they add, “He who is the servant of God represents his person.” But neither Moses nor Joshua, who were deliverers of the nation, were so denominated; and therefore this *Immanuel* is preferred to Moses and Joshua, and all the others; for by this name he excels all that ever were before, and all that shall come after him; and it is a title expressive of some extraordinary excellence and authority which he possesses above others. It is therefore evident that it denotes not only the power of God, such as he usually displays by his servant, but a union of person, by which Christ became God-man. Hence it is also evident that Isaiah here relates no common event, but points out that unparalleled mystery which the Jews labor in vain to conceal.”