

The Book of the Prophet ISAIAH

Introduction

Love of Isaiah as Scripture
Suggested Helpful Reading
Expository Preaching Thoughts
General Introduction to Isaiah
Outline Possibilities for Isaiah
Nations and Persons
Context is Crucial
Textual Corruptions
Interpretation
Observations
Objective
Application
Suggestions

Love of Isaiah as Scripture

- A. Opening the book of Isaiah should be like a treasure chest filled with precious stones.
 - 1. The Bible describes gospel preaching this way (Matt 13:51; I Cor 4:1; II Cor 4:7).
 - 2. The New England Patriots opened boxes with their Super Bowl rings; this is better.
 - 3. There is nothing more precious or pleasant than the words of God (Psalm 19:10).
- B. Scripture is much more precious than any other asset or legacy you have (Ps 119:111).
 - 1. God told Israel through Moses the nations would envy their wisdom (Deut 4:5-8).
 - 2. Peter declared scripture more sure than God's voice from heaven (II Pet 1:16-21).
 - 3. If you do not get excited about Isaiah ... or spend time reading it ... how can you think you are saved, since God wrote it to tell more of Jesus than any O.T. book.
- C. You must make the only wise choice to exalt God's words by affection and prayer.
 - 1. It is a choice to love every word of God (Luke 4:4; Ps 119:15-16,46-47,62,93,117).
 - 2. Your favorite verse, chapter, or book of the Bible should be the one in front of you.
 - 3. It is a choice to receive God's words over man's words for blessings (I Thes 2:13).

Suggested Helpful Reading

- A. II Kings 14-20 gives one version of the historical context for the persons and events.
 - 1. The Kings account will use Azariah for Uzziah, while Chronicles will use Uzziah.
 - 2. Chronicles' Uzziah (*strength of Jehovah*) = Kings' Azariah (*helped by Jehovah*).
 - 3. It is the combination of reading both versions that you get the Spirit's full message.
- B. II Chronicles 25-32 gives another version of historical context for persons and events.

- C. Hezekiah and Sennacherib are in three accounts – Kings, Chronicles, Isaiah – indicating God’s estimation of their importance to us by the study rule of emphasis.
- D. The three certain, dated contemporary prophets to Isaiah are Hosea, Amos, and Micah.
 1. While Isaiah prophesied to Judah, these three prophets preached primarily to Israel.
 2. Reading them adds to full understanding of the times and issues of this neighbor.
 3. Thus, there are 30 more chapters of context: Hosea (14), Amos (9), and Micah (7).
 4. As well, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah may have prophesied about Isaiah’s time to others.
- E. A Chronology of kings and prophets ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/prophets-table-with-notes.pdf>.
- F. Much more of king Hezekiah and Judah ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/hezekiah-lessons.pdf>.
- F. Much more about king Sennacherib ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/virgin-daughter-of-zion.pdf>.

Expository Preaching

- A. Expository preaching will take us through the sentences and words of this prophecy.
 1. Expository preaching is one of many traits of higher ground for a church to pursue.
 2. Many love expository preaching, for it gives a specific reference point for learning.
 3. Hearers can easily remember what they heard, read ahead, or review the passage.
 4. They can focus on sentences, verses, phrases, and words for learning and retention.
 5. It helps learn the Bible, not just a subject from the Bible, though both have value.
 6. It tends to keep the speaker closer to scripture, as God’s words drive the preaching.
 7. Expository preaching always opens up topical studies by Holy Spirit placement.
 8. Isaiah gives us ... backsliding (1), female accessories (3), a parable (5), fabulous vision (6), blindness on Israel (6,29), virgin birth (7), Bible inspiration (8), glorious names of Christ (9), dominion of God (10), wolves and lambs (11), use of Jehovah (12,26), apocalyptic language (13), Lucifer (14), Hezekiah’s prayer (38), God boasting of Himself (40-48), Cyrus (44-45), crucifixion (52-53), abundant pardon for sin (55), graphic condemnation of hypocrisy (58,66), Gentiles (60,42,11), etc.
 9. We want to know everything God has for His children in this powerful prophecy.
 10. For those superstitious about expository preaching, did Jesus or Paul ever use it?
 11. The best or only example of expository preaching in the Bible is helpful (Neh 8:8).
 12. Paul, by his epistles, used a topical method. See his quotations in Rom 3 or Heb 1.
- B. What attitude should we have when taking up a Bible book by expository preaching?
 1. God’s words are pleasant and profitable beyond comparison (Job 23:12; Psalm 1:2; 19:10-11; 119:72,97,103,105,111,127; Jeremiah 15:16; I Peter 2:2; II Pet 1:19-21).
 2. It is a spiritual book and every word is needed for the best life (Pr 30:5; Luke 4:4).
 3. It is a life-changing book for any that believe and obey, as Paul said (I Thess 2:13).
 4. We have found in the Bible 20+ one-word arguments by our Lord and His apostles, which further confirm the importance of every word – not one should be neglected.
 5. Can you be excited about one book, one chapter, one verse, or one word at a time?
 6. Hebrews is a precious book, by chapter one, the first argument, and the first word.
 7. John is precious to many, by chapter one, the preamble (1:1-18), and first phrase.
 8. Isaiah is precious to many, like chapters 6, 40, and 53 and verses 7:14; 9:6; 26:3-4.
 9. Your favorite chapters in Isaiah may not change, but let’s examine all the chapters.

10. Let us embrace Isaiah even to dull other books but for their cross-reference help.
 11. The choice to excitedly love each chapter, verse, and word as favorite will profit.
 12. Our thoughts and words should reflect Isaiah's inspired words while we study it.
 13. Most cannot synthesize too much data at a sitting, so we will not go deep often.
 14. Slow your reading down to take longer to meditate and exalt individual phrases.
- C. What benefit should we get from the study? What is Isaiah's value and preaching it?
1. Scripture is better than creation to conversion of our souls (Ps 19:1-6 cp 19:7-11).
 2. Scripture is given for doctrine, so we will hold truth on all things (II Tim 3:16-17).
 3. Scripture is given for reproof, so God will rebuke or reprove false ideas or actions.
 4. Scripture is given for correction, so we may be told to change some of our conduct.
 5. Scripture is given to instruct in righteousness, so we will be shown the right way.
 6. In Isaiah, we will hear God warn His church of hypocrisy and all nations for sins.
 7. In Isaiah, we will have many prophecies of Jesus and the gospel era with Gentiles.
 8. In Isaiah, we will have affairs and futures of nations altered by our sovereign God.
 9. In Isaiah, we will God boast of His divine greatness and share detailed prophecies.
 10. Let us reverently appreciate each chapter, verse, word of Isaiah as precious gold.
- D. Pray for your pastor, as he studies, prepares outlines, and preaches many sermons.
1. It is intimidating to conscientious men to rightly divide each phrase of God's word.
 2. We depend on God for correct understanding of His word (Ps 119:18; Ep 1:17-18).
 3. We must rightly divide the word of truth for its true sense (II Tim 2:15; Neh 8:8).
 4. We must grasp all the Holy Spirit intended but not go beyond the Spirit (Pr 30:6).
 5. We must make the lessons clear and simple as possible (II Cor 3:12; 4:2; Col 4:4).
 6. We must avoid things without profit, like esoteric heresies (Heb 13:9; Titus 3:9).
 7. We must preach boldly and authoritatively (Eph 6:19-20; II Cor 10:4-6; Jude 1:3).
 8. We must obey what we learn for blessing and safety (Luke 8:12-18; Jas 1:21-25).
 9. We must use repetition for best learning and retention (I Tim 3:2; II Pet 1:12-15).
 10. We must see and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ – the Person of all scripture (Jn 5:39).
 11. This speaker and writer is less than the least of all saints for starting such a project.
 12. God can open a book during preaching by blessing expository emphasis in context.
 13. Controversy is mother of orthodoxy, as it forces men to refine and defend doctrine.
 14. Expository preaching militates against proof-texting, sound bites, simple solutions.
 15. Expository preaching requires careful study of purpose, context, and comparisons.
- E. God blessed *Hebrews* (1988), *Ecclesiastes* (2008), *Romans* (2009-14), and *John* (2016-18).
1. We thanked God for context of Jewish believers in *Hebrews* shortly before the end of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the proofs of Jesus Christ's preeminence (33 sermons).
 2. We rejoiced in lessons from *Ecclesiastes* for maximizing a godly life here and how earthly ambitions are vanity and vexation without a heavenly context (35 sermons).
 3. We thanked God for context of Paul's defense of the gospel against Jewish legalists in *Romans* and a great foundation of doctrine and practice (159 sermons).
 4. We studied *Peter's epistles* assisting Paul with converted Jews (43+23 sermons).
 5. *John's gospel* revealed more of Jesus' doctrine, the preamble opening the book, the last half of it as intimate conversation with His apostles, and more (167 sermons).

- F. Put some effort into Isaiah to grasp and retain lessons and explanations in memory.
1. You could read two chapters of Isaiah each day to complete the book every month.
 2. An alternative to reading it yourself is to let Scourby read it as you follow the text.
 3. You could memorize some favorite verses from various chapters during the series.
 4. You could listen to the sermons again during the week from the website or podcast.
 5. You could pray for your pastor to make it very plain and for you to grasp it clearly.
 6. Learning from Isaiah will vary widely over the congregation, with the prepared and studious far outstripping the casual and neglectful, but let none be slothful as some.
 7. Choose to have the spirit and prayer of Samuel in God's presence (I Sam 3:7-10).
- G. We will trust our English Bible, rather than enter the nightmare of Hebrew criticism.
1. False teachers lied in Hebrew before modern textual critics attacked Isaiah, for the Jews rejected the Messiah of Isaiah long ago, though revealed so clearly, for God blinded that apostate nation and its leaders just as promised in the book of Isaiah.
 2. Some mock Roman Catholic use of Latin for 1500 years but then use Hebrew to cloud or corrupt the plain sense of scripture in the vulgar translations like English.
 3. I have not heard or read a verse where more light is shed by Hebrew than English.
 4. For why we use the King James Bible ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/proving-the-kjv.pdf>.

General Introduction to Isaiah

- A. The title of the book – *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah* – introduces three sweet things.
1. *Book* = one of 66 books of the Bible ... *Bible* = the canonical books of scripture.
 2. Isaiah's title indicates first that it is a volume in the divine library from God to you.
 3. *Prophet* = Messenger of God = Ambassador of Heaven's King = Revealer of Will of God = Declarer of Divine Truth = Kingdom Watchman = Barking Watchdog.
 4. Rejoice that God sent you a man to teach perfect truth (Neh 8:1-12; I Thess 5:20).
 5. *Best Preaching Service* ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/exposition/preaching-service/sermon.php>.
 6. *Isaiah* = Salvation of Jehovah = *Joshua* = Jehovah is salvation, like Elijah = Joel.
 7. *Isaiah* = *Isa* (salvation) + *iah* or *Jah* (Jehovah) = *Joshua* = *Jeho* + *shua* (salvation).
 8. When God sends a messenger with His words, whose name means *Jehovah Saves*, does it intrigue and excite you a little to read it? The content is exactly as his name.
- B. The content of the book of Isaiah lives up to what is covered above and so much more.
1. No book has more boasting by Jehovah of His *salvation* than here; Job has great boasting by God of His creation, and David sees salvation without God boasting.
 2. Just simple math of *salvation* used 26 times ... compared to Jeremiah's two uses!
 3. No O.T. book spends so many chapters and verses on God's deliverance of Judah.
 4. No O.T. book has more of substitutionary salvation than this prophecy of Isaiah.
 5. God in this book will speak to listeners to build faith and hope in Him and His Son.
 6. Isaiah is named in the O.T. (II Kgs 19:2; 20:1; 20:14; II Chr 26:22; 32:20; 32:32).
 7. Isaiah by translation is referenced as *Esaias* twenty-one times in the N.T. (Matt 3:3; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14; 15:7; Mark 7:6; Luke 3:4; 4:17; John 1:23; 12:38; 12:38; 12:41; Acts 8:28-30; 28:25; Romans 9:27; 9:29; 10:16; 10:20; 15:12).
 8. There are 60-75 quotes or references to Isaiah in the N.T., second only to Psalms.

- C. Your Old Testament has all the prophets at the end – 17 books by 16 inspired writers.
1. These follow poetry books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song.
 2. They have been divided into major and minor prophets by the Jews and also by us.
 3. The distinction of major and minor has nothing to do with value but rather of size.
 4. The Major Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel (4 prophets and 5 books).
 5. The Minor Prophets are Hosea through Malachi (12 prophets and 12 books).
 6. *Overview of Prophets (slides)* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/old-testament-prophets-slides.pdf>.
- D. Isaiah is first of the 17 prophets in Bible order for being major and prophesying first.
1. Many Bible readers count it the most beautiful and valuable as well as the above.
 2. It is the most Messianic of the major prophets, but some minors push it for density.
 3. Its language throughout is some of the most sublime in the Bible and all literature.
- E. Isaiah is a substantial book of the Bible with 66 chapters and 1292 verses in our KJV.
1. Isaiah is the second largest book by chapters after Psalms. Jeremiah is 3rd with 52.
 2. Isaiah is 4th largest by verses – Psalms (2461), Genesis (1533), Jeremiah (1364).
 3. Therefore, Isaiah averages only 19.58 verses per chapter versus the Bible of 26.16.
 4. Expository preaching of John took longer due in part to 41.86 verses per chapter.
 5. Chapters were not introduced into the Bible until early 1200s by Stephen Langton.
 6. Verses were not introduced into printed Bibles until 1551 (N.T.) and 1571 (O.T.).
 7. While not inspired, they have been preserved by God for us, and they are helpful.
- F. Isaiah is one of three books to use the name JEHOVAH, rather than the name LORD.
1. In Isaiah 12:2 and 26:4, both glorious passages, God preserved JEHOVAH for us.
 2. The small context of both passages is precious and similar (Isaiah 12:1-3; 26:1-4).
 3. Only Exodus and Psalms have JEHOVAH or JAH (Exodus 6:3; Ps 83:18; 68:4).
 4. We reject Yahweh as a name of anything to do with the Creator God by the KJV.
 5. There is no evidence directly or indirectly for such a use of the tetragrammaton.
- G. Isaiah includes conversion of Gentiles several times with short and long prophecies.
1. *Gentiles* occurs 15 times; *nations* occurs 41 times; unassigned *people* about 80.
 2. As early as opening chapter 2, Isaiah prophesied of us and Jerusalem (Is 2:1-5).
 3. And Isaiah closed out his book by prophesying of Gentiles at the end (Is 66:18-24).
 4. Between chapters 2 and close of 66 are many prophecies of salvation of Gentiles.
- H. The Dead Sea Scrolls contained the complete Isaiah Scroll, 1000 years older than any.
1. The scrolls (1946/47 – 1956) were found in the Qumran Caves near the Dead Sea.
 2. They were by the best estimates written about 200 B.C. Isaiah had all 66 chapters.
 3. They were close to the Aleppo Codex of the Masoretic Text of around 1000 A.D.
 4. Please know we do not care about close or very close when it comes to scripture.
 5. We trust the Author who knew the exact words and gave them to us in the KJV.
 6. We believe this by *Faith ... Fruit ... Facts ... Fools ...* insurmountable evidence.
 7. For these four proofs to trust the KJV ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/proving-the-kjv.pdf>.
 8. Great Book ... https://books.google.com/books/about/Perfected_Or_Perverted.html?id=6H0SGwAACAAJ.
 9. A similar Baptist view ... http://www.torontobaptist.org/kjb_material/Superiority%20of%20KJB.htm.

- I. The overview of Isaiah is simple enough if we are careful to reduce it to the basics.
 1. *God will punish Judah and the nations for sins, but He will send several deliverers, especially His Son, to save elect Jews and Gentiles to rebuild a glorious kingdom.*
 2. While outlines of Isaiah are found elsewhere in this Introduction, the division after chapter 39 is helpful to see warnings of judgment and then promises of salvation.
- J. Isaiah is a Messianic Prophecy easily more than the other Majors and also the Minors.
 1. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel are later and more historical and earthly than Messianic.
 2. Some minor prophets like Haggai or Malachi are quite dense with mention of Messiah, but Isaiah's magnitude of the coming Christ and His great works prevails.
 3. Isaiah has been called the Fifth Gospel due to its extensive prophecies of Jesus.
 4. About 1/3 of Handel's *Messiah* is from Isaiah (15 or more of the 51 singing parts).
 5. David's *Messianic Psalms* are glorious, but Isaiah has greater breadth and depth.
 6. For introduction to *Messianic Psalms* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/messianic-psalms.pdf>.
- K. Jesus and apostles in the New Testament quote Isaiah second only to David's Psalms.
 1. There are between 60 and 75 quotations or references to Isaiah's words in the N.T.
 2. David's Psalms have over 100 references – no wonder – Jesus is the Son of David.
 3. OT is used Psalms (68), Isaiah (55), Deuteronomy (44), Genesis (35), Exodus (31).
 4. Ten O.T. books are never quoted in the N.T. – Judges, Ruth, Ezra, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Obadiah, Jonah, Zephaniah.

A sample of the variety of topics touched on in Isaiah is wide and interesting.

Apocalyptic language applied	Accessories and beauty tools of women	Agriculture wisdom given to some
God boasting of Himself	Graphic ridicule of idolatry / idolaters	New heaven and new earth
Cyrus named 200 years early	Hezekiah's prayer not found elsewhere	Seductive movements of women
Babylon taken by little Media	Virgin birth of Jesus Christ Immanuel	Parable of vineyard with sour grapes
Historical triplicate of Hezekiah	Substitutionary atonement clearly stated	Jesus' beard plucked prophesied here
Kings as our nursing fathers	Theme for the movie <i>Chariots of Fire</i>	God used Sennacherib like a tool
Glorious names of Jesus here	Only occurrence of Lucifer in the Bible	Isaiah walks naked for three years
Mock associations/confederacies	Conversion of Gentiles to great light	Blinding and destruction of the Jews
Fabulous vision of God's glory	Inspiration of scripture for the future	Animal metaphors of violence ended
United Nations sculpture verses	Rare use of Jehovah for name of God	Taking away men as a judgment

Outline Possibilities of Isaiah

- A. They are possibilities because of his back-and-forth style within and without chapters.
 1. For example, chapter 10 and chapters 36-39 are about Sennacherib, but Babylon's fall, though about 200 years after these, is dealt with in chapters 13 and 44-48.
 2. For example, Jesus is introduced strongly in chapters 7-11 but then again in 50-53.
 3. His statement and restatement in a different form helps for Daniel and Revelation.
- B. An outline helps get an overview of a book by seeing its parts, changes, and progress.
 1. Especially in a book of 66 chapters, it helps to put chapters in sections by a theme.
 2. With so many chapters, often with unique themes, an outline shows the big picture.
 3. You have been taught that Isaiah's 40s are some of the best about the glory of God.

- C. The simplest outline is to make a division in the middle of the book by a large change.
1. After chapter 39 ... warnings of judgment subside, promises of salvation increase.
 2. We do this in Romans: salvation ends after chapter 11, and duties finish the book.
- D. While the single Isaiah division is compared to the division in the Bible, be careful.
1. There are 66 books in the Bible and 66 chapters in Isaiah, so simple eyes light up.
 2. Then the big and obvious division is after 39, just like the OT ends after 39 books.
 3. Chapter 40 begins with comfort like the NT in general and by Isaiah 40 quotations.
 4. Chapter 66 refers to new heavens and a new earth like the 66th book of Revelation.
 5. We will not pursue more similarities, for there is little value and many difficulties.
 6. Here is an example of the effort to match Isaiah to the Bible ... <http://isaiahminibible.com/>.

Outline by King of Judah

Chapters 1-5 ... Uzziah
 Chapters 6 ... Jotham
 Chapters 7-12 ... Ahaz (Syro-Israelitish Invasion)
 Chapters 13-27 ... Ahaz (Great Assyrian Invasion)
 Chapters 28-35 ... Hezekiah (Before 14th Year)
 Chapters 36-39 ... Hezekiah (14th Year of Reign)
 Chapters 40-66 ... Hezekiah (After 14th Year)

Outline by Message

1-5 Warnings against Jerusalem
 6-12 Book of Immanuel
 13-24 Warnings against Nations
 25-27 Judah Preserved
 28-31 Warnings to Israel and Judah
 32-35 Judah Blessed
 36-39 Historical Section
 40-48 Book of Consolation – Jehovah and Cyrus
 49-57 Book of Consolation – Nations and Return
 58-66 Book of Consolation – Future and Duties

Simple Timeline (Mauro)

727 B.C. Uzziah
 675 B.C. Jotham
 660 B.C. Ahaz
 645 B.C. Hezekiah
 640 B.C. Samaria Taken
 631 B.C. Jerusalem Besieged
 617 B.C. Manasseh
 562 B.C. Amon
 560 B.C. Josiah
 526 B.C. Babylonian Captivity
 457 B.C. Cyrus the Persian
 26 A.D. Baptism of Jesus Christ
 30 A.D. Death of Jesus Christ
 70 A.D. Final Ruin of Jerusalem

Single-Word Chapter Descriptions

<u>Chapters 1-11</u>	<u>Chapters 12-22</u>	<u>Chapters 23-33</u>	<u>Chapters 34-44</u>	<u>Chapters 45-55</u>	<u>Chapters 56-66</u>
Hypocrisy	Messiah	Tyre	Edom	Cyrus	Messiah
Terror	Babylon	World	Gospel	Cyrus	Hypocrisy
Women	Lucifer	Salvation	Sennacherib	Babylon	Warning
Salvation	Moab	Praise	Prayer	Babylon	Warning
Vineyard	Moab	Prosperity	Sick	Messiah	Messiah
Vision	Damascus	Israel	Ambassadors	Messiah	Messiah
Virgin	Ethiopia	Judah	Messiah	Judah	Messiah
Confederacy	Egypt	Confederacy	Sovereignty	Judah	Discrimination
Son	Egypt	Confederacy	Messiah	Messiah	Prayer
Sennacherib	Arabia	Hezekiah	Messiah	Messiah	Salvation
Messiah	Judah	Sennacherib	Cyrus	Messiah	Salvation

Favorite Sections/Verses of Isaiah or Teasers for Isaiah

1:2-3	8:13-15	25:6-9	40:1-5	45:18-19	53:10-12	59:14-21
1:9-15	8:19-20	26:3-4	40:6-8	45:22-25	54:1-5	60:1-3
1:16-20	9:1-2	28:9-13	40:9-11	46:1-4	54:9-10	60:15-16
2:1-5	9:6-7	28:16	40:12-18	46:9-11	54:17	61:1-3
2:17-22	10:5-7	28:23-29	40:21-26	48:13	55:1-5	61:10-11
3:1-4	10:12-15	29:9-16	40:28-31	48:16-20	55:6-9	62:1-5
3:12	11:1-5	29:20-21	41:10	49:7-11	55:10-11	63:1-6
3:16-17	11:6-9	30:8-11	41:21-24	49:15-16	56:4-8	63:7-9
4:6	11:10	30:18-21	42:1-7	49:22-23	56:9-12	64:4
5:4	12:1-3	31:1	43:1-7	50:4-6	57:1-2	64:6
6:1	13:17-20	33:22	43:10-13	50:10-11	57:15	65:1
6:5-7	14:12-14	34:1-8	44:6-8	51:11	58:1	65:18-25
6:8	14:24-27	35:1-10	44:21-28	52:7	58:8-12	66:1-2
6:9-13	19:11-14	37:22	45:1-4	52:13-15	58:13-14	66:10-14
7:14	23:1	37:36-38	45:7-9	53:5-6	59:1-2	66:20-24

Messianic Verses

7:14	8:14	11:1-5	42:1-4	52:13-15	55:3-4	61:1-3
8:8	9:6-7	28:16	50:5-9	53:1-12	59:20	

Gospel Era of New Testament

11:6-9	40:1-11	56:3-5	60:1-2			
35:1-10	55:1-2	59:21	62:1-4			

Conversion of Gentiles

2:2-4	11:9-12	42:5-12	49:1-12	55:5	60:1-14	66:7-14
9:1-2	18:7	45:22-25	54:1-3	56:6-8	65:1	66:18-24

Nations and Persons

Judah (the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin) had been an independent nation since Rehoboam's folly cost him the other ten tribes about 176 years before Uzziah. Their kings were generally better than Israel's kings, with good ones like Jehoshaphat and

Hezekiah, but they also had terrible kings like Ahaziah and sons and Manasseh. God loved Judah for Jerusalem, the temple, and sending His Son through the line of David.

Israel (the ten tribes that revolted) had been an independent nation since Rehoboam's folly. Their first king Jeroboam set up calf worship in Bethel and Dan to keep the people from Jerusalem. They grew even worse under Omri, and they added Baal worship with Ahab and Jezebel. Jehoshaphat foolishly committed affinity with them. Since Israel did not have the Davidic line for Jesus, God destroyed them by Assyria and scattered them.

Uzziah (*strength of Jehovah*), or Azariah. Began reign at 16 for 52 years. He was a good and strong king, so God blessed him, but he left high places for the people and presumed to offer incense, so God gave him leprosy (II Chron 26:1-23; II Kings 14:21-22; 15:1-7).

Jotham (*Jehovah is upright*). Began reign at 25 for 16 years. He was a good and strong king, and it is noted by the Spirit he did not repeat his father's temple mistake, but he left the high places again, and the people were still corrupt (II Chr 27:1-9; II Kgs 15:32-38).

Ahaz (*possessor*). Began reign at 20 for 16 years. He was very wicked, like the kings of Israel. He made idols for Baal, sacrificed children, joined Assyria, stole from the temple, closed the temple, etc. His profane wickedness and presumptive rebellion are noted uniquely (II Chr 28:22). God judged Judah and Ahaz by Syria and Israel (II Chr 28:1-27).

Hezekiah (*strength of Jehovah*). Began reign at 25 for 29 years. He exceeded all other kings of Judah by trust in God, so He blessed him mightily, though trying him. He failed with Babylon's ambassadors (II Kgs 18-20; II Chr 29-32; Isaiah 36-39). The main events of his life are recorded three times in the Bible, a rare occurrence, thus Spirit-emphasis. For more about Hezekiah and lessons ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/hezekiah-lessons.pdf>.

Syria (capital at Damascus) was an enemy nation north of Israel, the ten tribes being north of Judah. They were longtime enemies of the combined nation and the two nations. Israel conspired with Syria against Judah, thus the danger of Isaiah 7:1-2. God delivered Judah in spite of wicked king Ahaz and gave a glorious sign to prove it (Is 7:3-16; 8:1-4). Rezin king of Syria and Pekah king of Israel are the named confederates against Judah.

Assyria (capital at Nineveh) was a growing empire north and east of Syria, and God used it to destroy Syria and Israel and neighboring nations, and to try Hezekiah and Judah, but destroyed Sennacherib's army by an angel. Assyria was eventually defeated by Babylon. God saved Nineveh from destruction by Jonah and then destroyed it as Nahum foretold.

Babylon or Chaldea (capital at Babylon) east and within the Assyrian Empire would grow and overthrow Assyria to establish the great kingdom God described as the head of

gold. Nebuchadnezzar would lead them against Judah and take them captive for 70 years. This great and impregnable city was taken in a night by God blessing Darius and Cyrus.

Context Is Crucial

A. CONTEXT

1. Context of any speech or writing is important, but it is fully explained elsewhere.
2. A simple rule for remembering context is *who, whom, why, what, when, and where*.
3. The context of Hebrews made it easy to understand, especially *whom* and *when*.
4. For much more about value of context ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/slaves-to-context.pdf>.

B. WRITER (WHO)

1. We remember God is sole Author of scripture with chosen writers (II Peter 1:21).
 - a. Immediately after a one-verse introduction, Isaiah told us that God had spoken.
 - b. This sober reminder should get our attention as the real source of the lessons.
2. It wastes precious time and distracts from the message to speculate about a writer.
 - a. If God reveals truth and wisdom by a dumb ass, embrace them (II Peter 2:16).
 - b. Amos was a herdsman and gathered fruit, but God's prophet (Amos 1:1; 7:14).
 - c. We do not know much about Isaiah, and it is counterproductive to speculate.
 - d. The presumption he had royal blood with easy access to the palace is worthless.
 - e. John the Baptist was greater, and he was a wild man in the wilderness of Judea.
3. Isaiah (*salvation of Jehovah*) = Joshua (*Jehovah is salvation*), like Elijah = Joel.
4. Isaiah = *Esaias* in the N.T., with 21 uses (Matthew 3:3 through Romans 15:12).
5. Once the name is known, who can argue that his prophetic work exalts salvation?
6. Isaiah is called the *son of Amoz* thirteen times (II Kings 19:2,20; 20:1; II Chron 26:22; 32:20,32; Isaiah 1:1; 2:1; 13:1 20:2; 37:2,21; 38:1).
7. Jewish tradition says Amoz was Amaziah's brother, so Isaiah was Uzziah's cousin.
8. Jewish tradition says Isaiah at 90 was sawn asunder by Manasseh as in Heb 11:37.
9. His written ministry spanned four reigns – Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Is 1:1; 6:1; 7:1,3; 14:28; 20:1-2; chapters 36-39).
10. Uzziah's last year (Is 6:1) to Hezekiah's fourteenth year (Is 36:1) is forty-six years.
11. Isaiah wrote a history of king Uzziah, but God did not preserve it (II Chron 26:22).
12. Isaiah had a fabulous vision and call in the last year of Uzziah's reign (Is 6:1), but this does not have to initiate his ministry (Ezek 1:1 – 3:27 cp 33:21-33), for we have five chapters of his prophecy prior to this glorious vision of God; Peter had his ministry greatly deepened by a vision in Acts 10 to prepare for Gentiles; Paul had his ministry expanded by a vision of the man of Macedonia (Acts 16:9-10).
13. Isaiah was a married man under Ahaz, with a wife called a prophetess (Is 8:3), a son Shearjashub – *a remnant shall return* (Is 7:1-3; 10:21), and then a son Mahershalhashbaz – *the spoil speedeth, the prey hasteneth* for Assyria's overthrow of Syria and Israel (Is 8:1-4).

14. Apostate textual critics say Isaiah 40-66 and more chapters were written by others.
 - a. They deny supernatural, detailed prophecy of Cyrus, so they say parts of Isaiah were written during the Babylonian exile or later – history instead of prophecy!
 - b. This is how seminaries destroy faith – deny faith-building, praise-inducing fulfilled prophecies of God – to question, *Yea, hath God said* (Gen 3:15).
 - c. Many volumes have been written on Isaiah, questioning and speculating about the variety of writers and the times of their writings that make up this book.
 - d. They invented *Proto-Isaiah* (1-39), *Deutero-Isaiah* (40-55), *Trito-Isaiah* (56-66).
 - e. They actually suggest many more contributors to many places in chapters 1-39.
 - f. We reject the liars by the book's name without any stated distinction anywhere.
 - g. A unique phrase, *Holy One of Israel*, is throughout (25), unlike other prophets.
 - h. There are other similar or identical clauses in both parts or halves of the book.
 - i. There are similar descriptions by contemporary prophets denying a late date.
 - j. There are detailed prophecies about Babylon, including Medes, in both parts.
 - k. Best of all, the N.T. assigns quotations from all parts of Isaiah as belonging to Isaiah (John 12:38-41, etc.), especially the latter half of Isaiah (Matthew 3:3; 8:17; 12:17-21; Luke 3:4; 4:17-19; John 1:23; Acts 8:28; Romans 10:16,20).
 - l. For a short defense of one Isaiah ... <http://thebiblecanbeproven.com/one-isaiah-or-two-isaiahs/>.

C. AUDIENCE (whom)

1. The audience or expected readers of any writing may be important for its context.
2. Isaiah prophesied to the Jews of Judah (the two tribes), not to Israel (the ten tribes).
3. He at times addressed kings of Judah – Ahaz (Is 7:1-3) and Hezekiah (Is 37:6-7).
4. Three contemporary prophets to Isaiah prophesied primarily to Israel (the ten tribes); they were Hosea (Hosea 1:1), Amos (Amos 1:1), and Micah (Micah 1:1).
5. The two nations – Judah and Israel – were often enemies, as when Israel revolted.
6. Isaiah includes Israel's losing confederacy with Syria against Judah (Isaiah 7:1-7).

D. PURPOSE (why)

1. Judah had backslid from the glory days of David and Jehoshaphat to evil of Ahaz.
2. Isaiah warned Judah of her sins, Israel of hers, and all the Gentile nations of theirs.
3. He foretold national and political upheaval of all the nations by His sovereign rule.
4. He promised blessings to Judah by Hezekiah, by Cyrus, and by Messiah Immanuel.
5. He foretold great things for elect Jews and Gentiles in the gospel era of God's Son.
6. Isaiah 1:2 indicates God's furious judgment for sin in the first half (chapters 1-39).
7. Isaiah 40:1 indicates God's sovereign salvation by two deliverers (chapters 40-66).
8. Warning of sin and promise of reward by obedience and grace is a perfect purpose.

E. METHOD (what)

1. Isaiah warned against sin over and over, which was to bring Judah to repentance.
2. Isaiah promised certain judgments, which were also to bring national repentance.
3. The oft-promised deliverances were to produce comfort and hope after repentance.

4. Back and forth, Isaiah warned and comforted, repeatedly, for fear and for hope.
 - a. Though Assyria and Babylon would hurt Judah much, they would be delivered.
 - b. He detailed Babylon's destruction before or without Judah's capture (Is 13-14).
 - c. Not only did this method give hope, but it teaches wisdom to remember mercy.
5. Throughout, Isaiah gave glimpses of the Messianic kingdom coming with greater glory for Judah than they had ever had before, including conversion of Gentiles.

F. TIMING (when)

1. The first verse of the book settles the time of Isaiah – during four kings of Judah.
 - a. We easily see two good kings, one very bad king, and then one very good king.
 - b. During this time, the ten tribes of Israel were defeated by Assyria and scattered.
 - c. During this time Assyria waxed great ... but after Isaiah Babylon destroyed it.
2. There are several timing verses for further historical context that should be remembered and used (Isaiah 1:1; 6:1; 7:1; 7:3-12; 8:3-8; 14:28; 20:1-2).
3. The timing of Isaiah may also be seen in the catalog of prophets found in the O.T.
 - a. Three prophets are clearly stated as his contemporaries (Hosea, Amos, Micah).
 - b. By checking the first verses in each of these books, you will see Isaiah's timing.
 - c. Also observe how Isaiah is first among the majors and Hosea among the minors.
 - d. Thus, though without clear proof, Joel was likely a contemporary by its location.
 - e. Obadiah, with audience and matter similar to Isaiah 34, could be the same time.
 - f. Jonah, by position and to Nineveh in greatness, was earlier (II Kings 14:23-29).
 - g. Nahum was also about Nineveh, which was likely around time of Sennacherib.
4. His prophecies are so precise that critics assign chapters 40-66 to exile in Babylon.
 - a. Unreasonable and wicked men are faithless – they deny supernatural foretelling.
 - b. They expanded this lying theory to include three Isaiahs and more chapters.
5. Use these slides for overview ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/old-testament-prophets-slides.pdf>.
6. Use this table for a chronology ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/prophets-table-with-notes.pdf>.

G. LOCATION (where)

1. Isaiah was likely in Jerusalem much of the time; he spoke to Hezekiah in person.
2. His audience was in Jerusalem and Judah, especially the kings of it (Is 1:1; 2:1).

TEXTUAL CORRUPTIONS

- A. There are corruptions in text, which we will consider when we come to the places.
- B. There are corruptions in interpretation, which we will also point out in their place.
- C. Here are a few of the variations in translation that have frustrated many, but not us.
 1. Isaiah 7:14 in the RSV and others removes virgin to replace it with young woman.
 2. Isaiah 9:1 is corrupted to promise glory rather than the KJV's grievous affliction.
 3. Isaiah 9:3 says God did not increase the joy, for their joy was mere carnal pleasure.
 4. Isaiah 14:12 has star added to it which confuses Lucifer or Satan with Jesus Christ.
 5. Isaiah 26:4 has JEHOVAH removed in most but tripled in the ASV. Bible Babel!
 6. Isaiah 44:8 has God removed to replace it with rock. Do you worship another god?

- D. Here are a few of the variations in translation that have frustrated many, but not us.
1. Dispensationalists, or those afraid to reject them, see a Jewish millennial kingdom.
 2. Though we have the book of Acts, they see widespread Jewish conversions later.
 3. Most commentaries and handbooks use Ussher/Ptolemy's false chronology, thus reducing Cyrus to little consequence rather than God's great shepherd for the Jews.
 4. Ptolemy or Prophet ... <https://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/prophecy/cyrus-decree-to-rebuild.php>.

INTERPRETATION

- A. Our interpretation will be based on our presuppositions taken from the overall Bible.
1. No prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation; we will not allow Isaiah to teach anything contrary to what we know from the rest of scripture (II Peter 1:20).
 2. There is one Author, so Isaiah agrees with David and Paul (II Pet 1:21; I Cor 2:13).
- B. We will use our English KJV Bible, not the critical commentaries attacking scripture, questioning canonicity, altering words, inventing Isaiahs, altering meanings, etc.
- C. We trust the KJV as God's words in English ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/proving-the-kjv.pdf.
1. See point G in the introduction at the top for more about English vs. Greek.
 2. See our one-word arguments ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/one-word-arguments-titus.pdf>.
- D. *Inspired ambiguity* means we will allow more than one interpretation or application of words, if both are true, and if both fit the words and context. There is nothing so broad as God's word, though Origenistic allegorizing is foolishly and heretically wrong (Ps 119:96). Consider the ox as an example of two applications, both true (I Cor 9:9-10).
- E. Rules of hermeneutics here ... www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/scripture/knowning-the-scriptures.php.

OBSERVATIONS

- A. Fulfilled prophecy is for God's glory and to build faith and joy, which we will see.
- B. Fulfilled prophecy is very important to God, thus extensive boasting in Isaiah 40-48.
- C. *Fulfilled Prophecy* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/prophecy/glory-of-fulfilled-prophecy/sermon.php>.
- D. *God Boasting in Isaiah of Prophecy* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/boasting-about-god-isaiah.pdf>.

OBJECTIVE

- A. We will cover it section by section, for we do not want to linger more than needed.
1. We will not deeply analyze all its words or even phrases for the reasons following.
 2. We will not waste time analyzing ancient nouns or verbs we can explain quickly.
- B. It is 66 chapters; we cannot stay long in any. Think how long John and Romans took.
- C. Hopefully we can cover most of its chapters in one sermon, getting the main lessons.
- D. We are N.T. Christians; we want to see Jesus Christ and the gospel era where possible.
1. We will not force bites for N.T. events or doctrines; it must be the Spirit's intent.
 2. God called N.T. pastors to be able ministers of the N.T., so Isaiah is not top shelf.
- E. If you do not love Jesus Christ ... Anathema Maranatha (I Cor 16:22; Ep 6:24).

APPLICATION

- A. Embrace the book ... the prophet ... the message ... and how it fits you in your life.

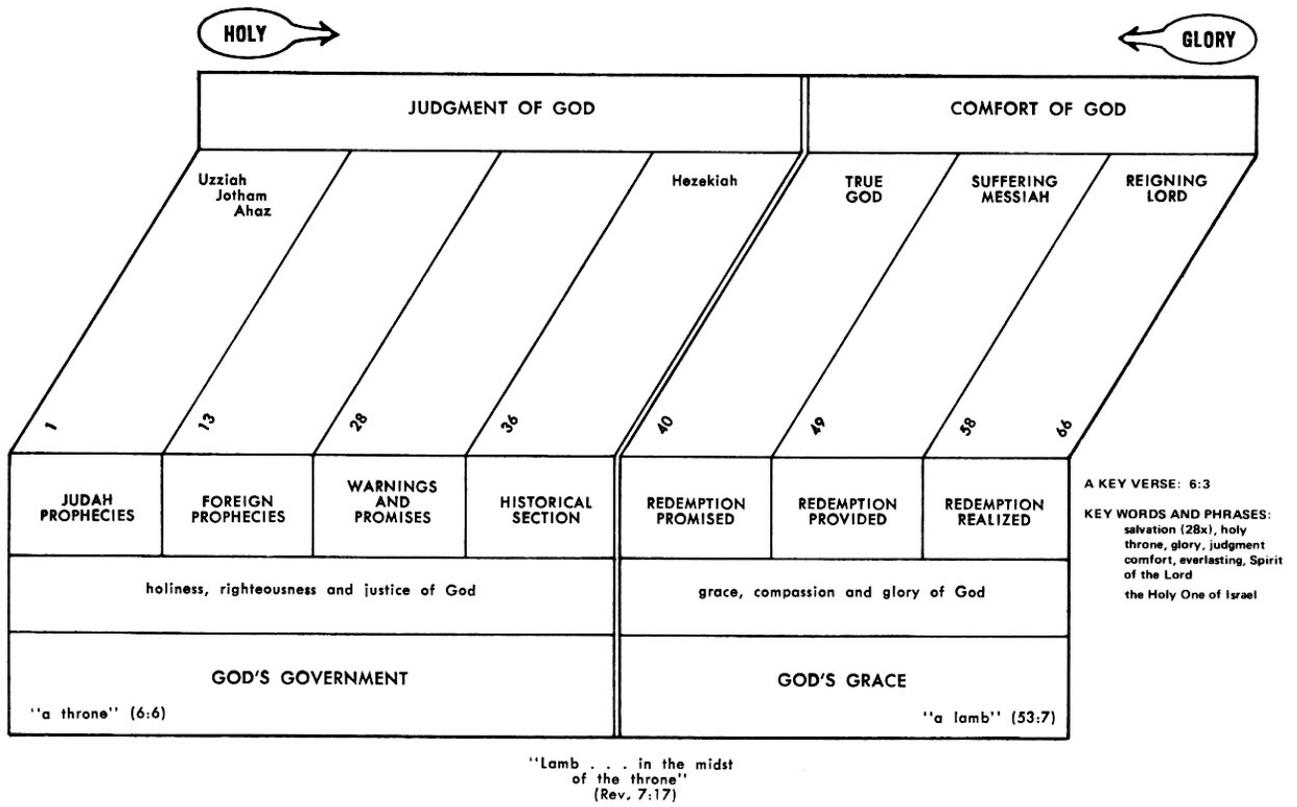
- B. Consider how Isaiah 1:2 tells you that the words of Isaiah are God speaking to you.
- C. While I will interpret it in context of its historical setting, I will apply it to our times.
- D. Isaiah may have preached 2700 years ago, but it has value (Rom 15:4; I Cor 10:6-11).

SUGGESTIONS

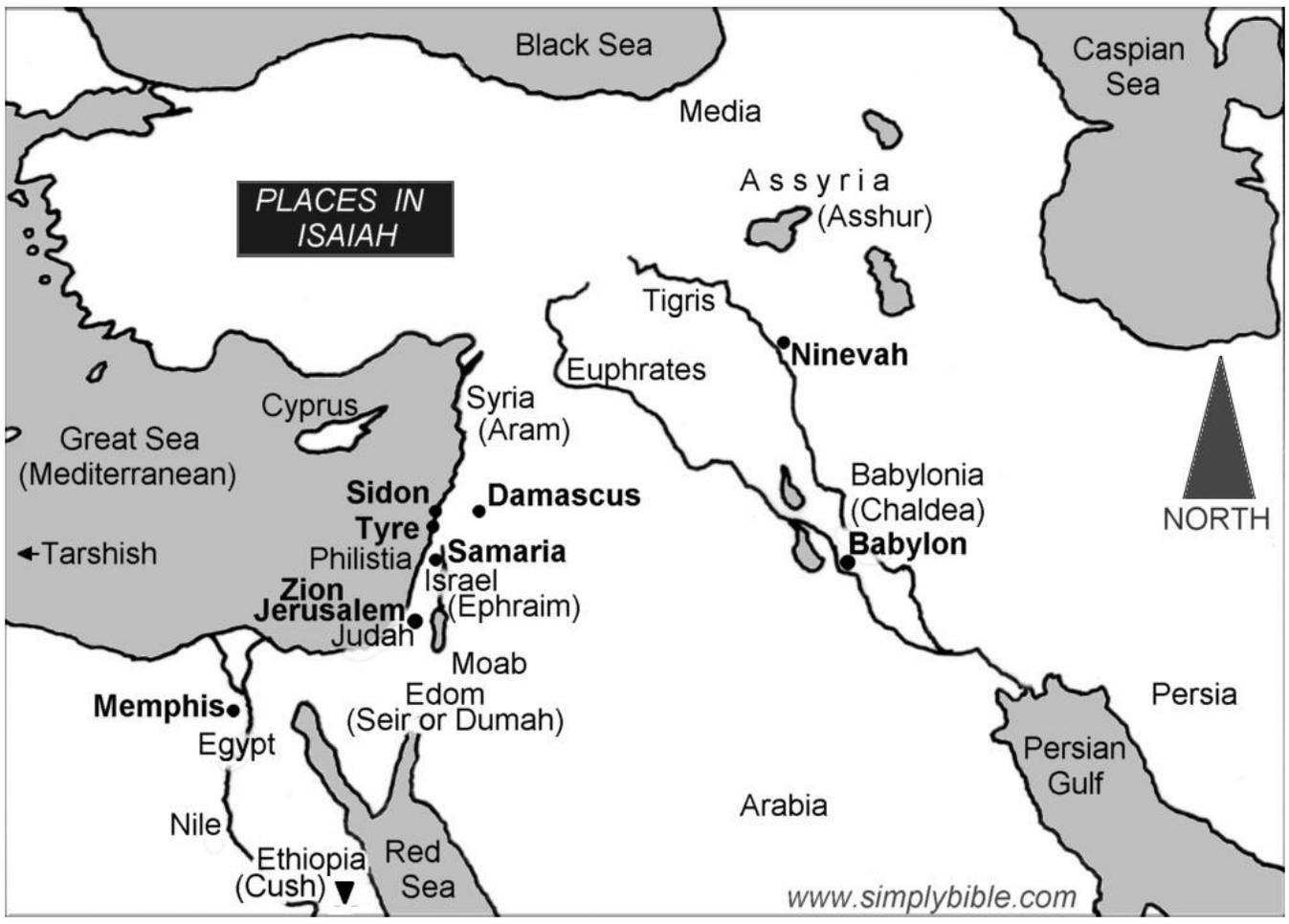
- A. If you wish I proceeded faster, be patient; consider others; thoroughly grasp the book.
- B. If you wish I proceeded slower, read, review, and study each week for comprehension.
- C. The more familiar you are with Isaiah, the greater your benefit and joy by the series.
- D. Also read II Kings 14-20 and II Chronicles 25-32 to understand the historical context.
- E. An alternative to reading it yourself is to let Scourby read it as you follow the text.
- F. In addition to reading King and Chronicles, you could read Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, and Zephaniah as contemporaries. Jonah is quite different.
- G. As we have learned, pray for the spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph 1:17; 3:14-19).
- H. If Paul needed prayers, then your pastor needs them even more (Eph 6:19; Ps 119:18).

For Further Study

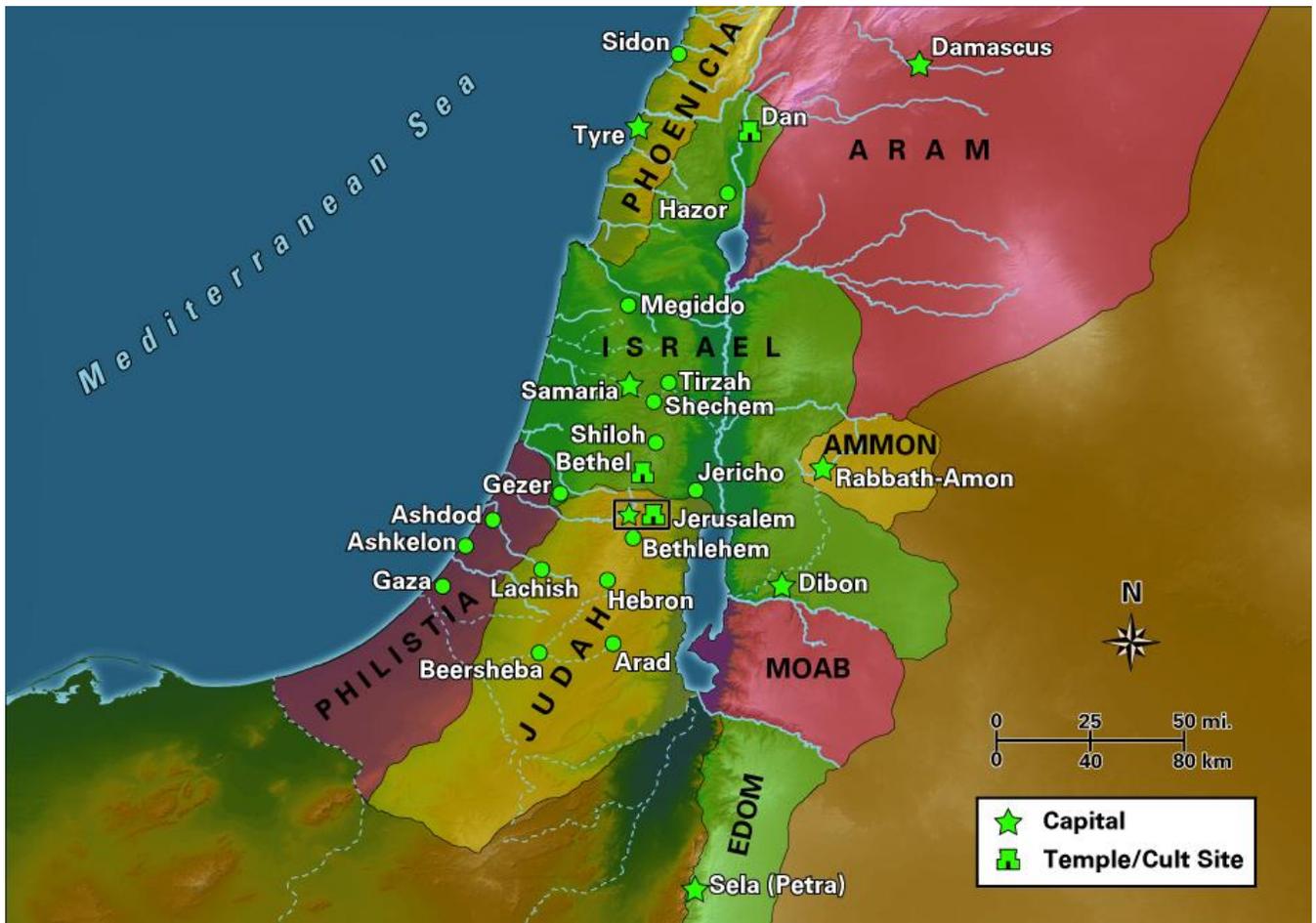
1. Overview of O.T. Prophets (PPT slides) ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/old-testament-prophets-slides.pdf>.
2. Chronology Table of O.T. Prophets ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/prophets-table-with-notes.pdf>.
3. See the many links for further study at the end of #2 above. This will provide further study you need.
4. See the diagram next of the book's chapters (close but not perfect) that may help visual learners.
5. See the maps then following to be familiar with the nations and directions Isaiah will appeal to.



https://www.preceptaustin.org/isaiah_commentaries



<https://thelonghaulwithisaiah.wordpress.com/2013/09/23/2-local-beginnings/>



<https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/tools/map-gallery/i/map-israel-and-judah>



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moab>