

# **The Book of Isaiah**

## **Salt & Light Institute**

### **Winter 2010**

#### **Week 3: Introduction to the Book of Isaiah**

## **From Sermon to Book**

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- **Three Steps Getting from Sermon to Book:**
  - Step 1: The Prophet's Sermon
  - Step 2: Putting the sermon into writing
  - Step 3: Making a book out of the sermon texts
- **Two Sermons in the Book**
  - Sermon of the biblical prophet (Isaiah)
  - Sermon of the prophetic author (writer of Isaiah)

## The Background of the Prophet

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- Who was Isaiah?
  - Began ministry around 740 BC when Uzziah died
  - Seems to be from Jerusalem
  - Was a prophet, obviously
  - The rest we're just not sure about
  - Seems to have died sometime after 861 (37.38)

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## The Background of the Prophet

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- His call to be a prophet (Isaiah 6)
  - Yhwh's holiness is at the heart of Isaiah's call
  - Isaiah is seen as part of the sinful community
    - He has unclean lips, like they do
    - He needs cleansed by fire, like they do
  - Regardless of the king, Isaiah serves a greater monarch, the Holy One of Israel
  - His commission is a somber one, "How long?"

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## The Background of the Prophet

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- Where does Isaiah fit into Israel's history?
  - Divided monarchy: Israel and Judah
  - He served as prophet under four kings of Judah
  - Uzziah (2 Kgs 15.1-7; 2 Chr 26.3-4)
    - STARTED GREAT, FINISHED BADLY
  - Jotham (2 Kgs 15.33-38; 2 Chr 27.1-9)
    - DID MOSTLY WELL
  - Ahaz (2 Kgs 16.1-20; 2 Chr 28.1-27)
    - HORRIBLE KING
  - Hezekiah (1 Kgs 18-20; 2 Chr 29-32; Isa 36-39)
    - GREAT KING

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## The Background of the Prophet

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- What else in the ancient world is interacting with Israel at this time?
- In Isaiah 1-39, two key events
  - The invasion of Israel by Assyria in 725-721 is the background to chapters 7-12 with Ahaz
  - The invasion of Judah by Assyria in 701 as a result of Hezekiah's involvement in anti-Assyrian coalition
- In Isaiah 40-66, the time of the Babylonian exile is initially in view, but it moves beyond it

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## The Background to the Book

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- “The book of the vision of Isaiah”
  - This is what 2 Chronicles 32.32 calls it
- Who wrote it, and when?
  - Isaiah probably wrote down portions (8.16)
  - 8.16 also seems to indicate the larger Book was collected and arranged by a group of his disciples
  - This happened and was well-known by its title by the time Chronicles was written, late in the post-exilic period

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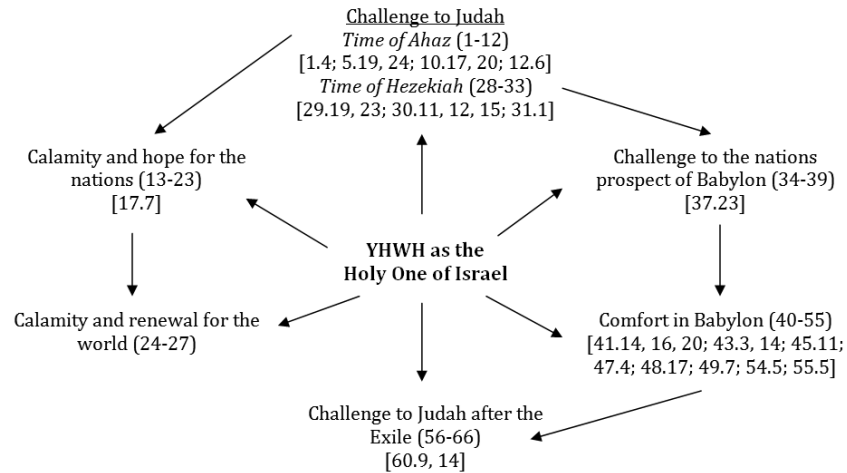
## The Background to the Book

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- Why and how was it written?
  - To “unbind the testimonies” (8.16)
    - Maybe this happened during the final years of Isaiah’s life?
  - The message of the book goes beyond Isaiah’s original sermon (29.18; 32.3)
- Clues from Isaiah 1

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## The Theological Outline of Isaiah



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## Other key themes

- Trustworthiness of the Lord
  - Key theme in Isaiah 30-31
  - Revealed in contrast of the kings
- Redeemer/Savior
- Servant of the Lord
  - 42.1-7; 49.1-9; 50.4-11; 52.13-53.12; [61.1-3]
- Signs and Visions of the Future

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