

Term 2 2026



Series Overview

There is something majestic about the book of Isaiah. It is the opening work in that section of the Old Testament canon that confronts us with the world-shaking words of the prophets. Isaiah works as a magnificent introduction to the themes that the prophets will explore, and as a profound pre-emption of New Testament hope (outside of the Psalms it is the OT book the NT quotes the most).

Author, Date and Historical Context

Isaiah 1:1 tells us that we are reading the vision that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of kings who ruled between 783 BC (the beginning of Uzziah's reign) and 687 BC (the probable date of Hezekiah's death). Isaiah was a contemporary of Amos, Hosea and Micah, beginning his ministry in 740 BC (the year King Uzziah died (see 6:1)). He lived in a period when the people of God were divided into 10 northern tribes (Israel) and 2 southern tribes (Judah). During Isaiah's lifetime the northern kingdom ceased to exist and the focus of Isaiah's work was on the south.

Isaiah's ready access to the king suggest he was high born and moved in elite circles. He was married and had at least 2 sons (see 7:3 and 8:3), and he probably spent most of his life in Jerusalem, enjoying his greatest ministry influence under King Hezekiah (see 37:1–2). Tradition holds that he was put to death under King Manessah.

In terms of authorship, the simplest thing to say is that we have a work written by Isaiah some time in the late 700s or early 600s BC. People challenge this simple view, however, based on various pieces of evidence.

One is that the name *Isaiah* does not appear after chapter 39. For some this is evidence that chapters 40–66 are from an anonymous later writer who was highly influenced by Isaiah and was applying Isaiah's vision to his own context. Another piece of evidence is the appearance of the name *Cyrus* (44:28 and 45:1) who lived significantly later than the man Isaiah. Some argue that while God knows the future and his prophets can therefore predict it, it is more usual for biblical prophets to speak words that are immediately relevant to their hearers.

There are, of course, valid counter arguments to these views, such as 40–66 being a piece of writing from Isaiah (hence his name not appearing) and the nature of

God's word as 'eternal'. In the end it seems reasonable to assume that the major ideas and dominant vision of the book come from the man Isaiah as a faithful record of the vision God gave him in the 8th century BC which was crafted into a whole some time after his death.

Theology, Literary Features and Structure

Isaiah has a grand theological scope. The foundational themes of Old Testament theology are all present: *creation, sin, judgement, redemption* – all of which are expanded upon in profound ways in the New Testament.

Theological focal points include *Zion*, the hill upon which Jerusalem sits, and *The Day of the Lord*. *Zion* represents God's holy people; 'Redeemed Zion' becomes a way of envisioning where God is ultimately bringing all his people. *The Day of the Lord* refers to God's awful judgement on sin, and is associated in the New Testament with Christ's second coming and the accompanying final judgement.

Outside of the historical interlude (36–39) most of the book is various forms of poetry. That means it is carefully selected language which engages our feelings and imaginations as well as our rational minds. It does this largely through metaphoric imagery and personification.

There are various structural elements to Isaiah, but broadly it can be broken into two parts.

The Book of Judgement (chapters 1–39) concerns itself primarily with the consequences of Israel-Judah's sin against 'The Holy One of Israel', as well as the sin of the nations who also oppose the true and living God. It culminates in the historical account of Sennacherib's attempt to take Jerusalem (36–39).

The Book of Comfort (chapters 40–66) is primarily concerned with the deliverance and restoration of Israel – ultimately, of the whole creation. This includes the promise of the faithful Servant of the LORD, which finds its ultimate fulfilment in the person and work of Christ.

It is our hope that as you read Isaiah, you will have be greatly encouraged in your faith. It is the kind of book that keeps saying the same thing over and over again: in whatever period of history, in whatever military crisis, in whatever spiritual confusion, *trust in the Lord*. He is in control and working out his purposes for his glory and the ultimate good of his people.

Two Zions





ISAIAH 1:1–2:4

The Day of the Lord

ISAIAH 2:5-22

Isaiah's Commission

ISAIAH 6

Words about God 	What do they tell us about God's character?
	
	
	
	
	
	

Light in Darkness

ISAIAH 8:18–9:7

1. Think of the 'darkness' and 'light'. What are some of the things they're metaphoric for? As images, what feelings do they tend to evoke?

Read 8:18–22

2. According to vv.19-20, where are the Israelites looking for wisdom? Where should they?
3. How does Isaiah describe the people feeling? (vv.21–22). Why do you think they curse their king and their God?
 - In your experience, as God's people today where are we tempted to look for wisdom (other than God and his word)?

Read 9:1–7

4. 9:1 begins with a sharp contrast: *Nevertheless*. What does this suggest? In particular, what 'time' is in view, and what is the effect of this?
5. The light dawns in vv.2–5. What specific changes does Isaiah predict?
6. Consider Isaiah's description of the ideal ruler in vv.6–7. What details/titles stand out to you?

7. Consider the four titles he is given: *Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace* (v.6b).

i. What do you make of them? Are these appropriate human titles? Why/why not?

ii. Who then is Isaiah describing?

- Which of these titles in 9:6 strikes you the most?
- Do any of them particularly describe God/Jesus as you have known him (maybe especially during a time of difficulty)?

Read Matthew 4:12–17

8. What does Matthew say here about Isaiah 9:1–2 – and about Jesus' ministry? How does this better help us understand Isaiah's prophecy and God's promises?

Final Thoughts and Implications

9. While we no longer relate to God theocratically (i.e. a religio-political nation), is there still a connection between abandoning God's 'law and testimony' (8:20) and society's spiritual darkness? how would you describe it?

10. In what ways do we need to respond to and live out the vision of Isaiah 9:1–7 (and Matthew 4:12–17):

- As individuals?
- As a local church?
- As a global church?

The Branch from Jesse

ISAIAH 11

Where will he come from?	
What will he be like?	
What spirit will rest on him?	
What will he do?	

The Fall of Babylon

ISAIAH 13:1–14:27

1. The saying 'pride comes before the fall' originates from the Bible (Proverbs 16:18). What does it mean? What are some examples of it in our world today?

Read Isaiah 13:1–22

2. What phenomenon is being described? What specific event do you think is being foretold?

3. What is this invasion a sign of spiritually (cf. vv.6, 9–11)?

- What manifestations of the 'Babylonian pride' do we see in the world today?

4. Who is described in vv.3 and 5 as the LORD's 'weapons' who are 'carrying out [his] wrath' (cf. vv.17–18)? What initially seems strange about this? What does this show us?

- Consider the fact of God's judgement on sin. What about it comforts you? What about it challenges you?

Read Isaiah 14:1–2

5. At the centre of all this is a promise made to Jacob/Israel.

- i. What is it, and what is the motivation behind it?

- ii. What are the details of this promise? What do you think fulfilment of these promises ultimately looks like?

Read Isaiah 14:3–23

- 6.** Off the back of this pivotal promise of hope, God continues to address his people. What recurring themes are in these verses? What contrast keeps being made?

Read Mark 15:33–37 and 16:4–6

- 7.** What details does Mark record about Jesus' death?
- 8.** What significance is there in these details – and in the fact of Jesus' resurrection?

Final Thoughts and Implications

- 9.** Have you ever 'taken up a taunt' against the values of this world? What might it look like to do this?
- 10.** How do these chapters enrich our understanding of the work of Christ?

How to Insult God: Sennacherib and Hezekiah

ISAIAH 36–37

	Main Statements and/or Events
The Rabshekeh's first speech (36:4–10)	
The Rabshekeh's second speech (36:13–20)	
Hezekiah's reaction (37:1–4)	
Isaiah's reaction (37:5–7)	
The Rabshekeh's third speech (37:8–13)	
Hezekiah's reaction (37:14–20)	
God's response (37:21–38)	

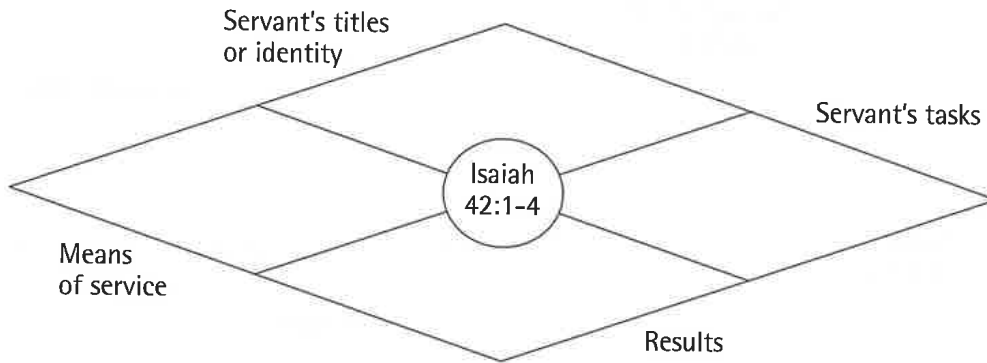
The God of All Comfort

ISAIAH 40

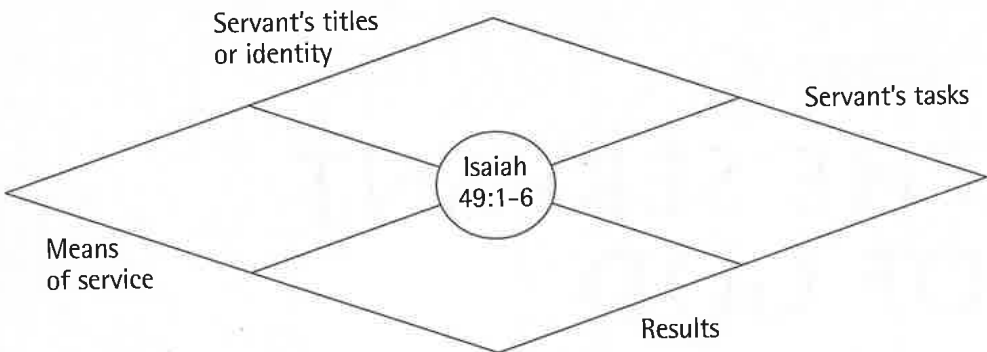
The Servant of God

ISAIAH 40-55

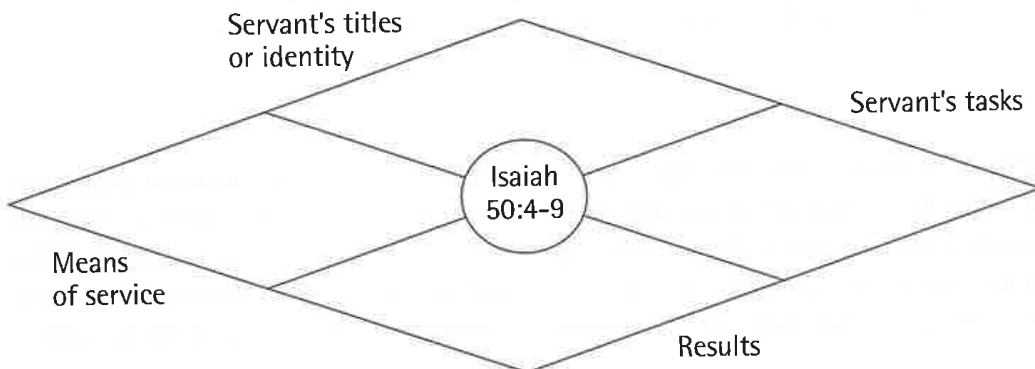
Read **Isaiah 42:1-4**, **49:1-6**, **50:4-9**, and **52:13 - 53:12**. After reading each of these 'Servant Songs', highlight the major emphasis in each by shading in that diamond.



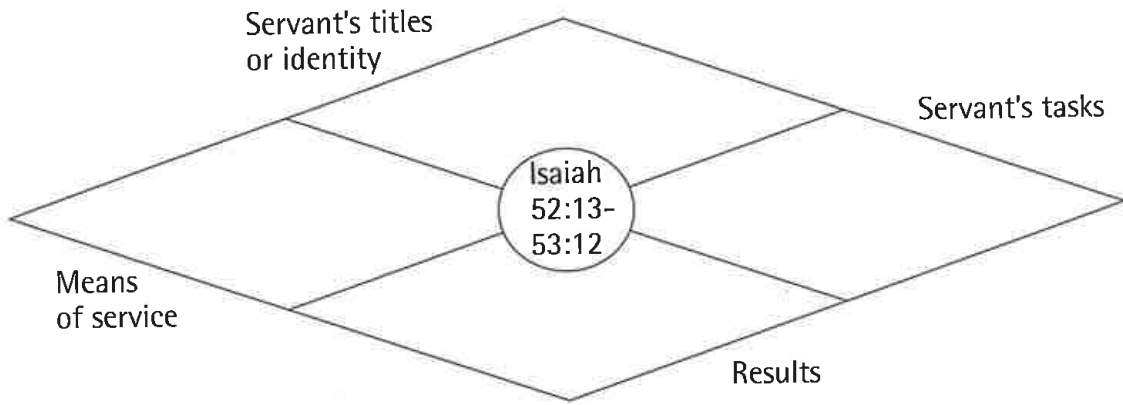
Overall message _____



Overall message _____



Overall message _____



Overall message _____

Come All You Thirsty

ISAIAH 55

Making Things New

ISAIAH 64:8–66:6

Notes



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