

- b) The book of Isaiah is the Gospel of the Old Testament. Isaiah introduced the gift of God's son, the suffering of His Son and the kingship of His Son. It is all in the book of Isaiah, though not in chronological order.
- c) There is more information in the Bible, in subsequent books, about Christ, but the seed truths of Christ are found in the book of Isaiah.
6. The book of Isaiah is also called the Bible in miniature.
- a) The book of Isaiah is so beautifully arranged into chapters.
 - i. The first 39 chapters of the book reflect the Old Testament (which also has 39 books). These 39 chapters describe events before the exile.
 - ii. The next 27 chapters reflect the New Testament (which has 27 books). These 27 chapters describe events after the exile.
 - iii. Note however that chapter and verse divisions were not inspired by God. Chapter division may result in us not seeing a book as a whole book. Chapter and verse divisions started only about 500 years ago.
 - iv. Isaiah Chapter 39 ends when Israel went into exile and Chapter 40 picks up after exile.
 - There is actually a big time gap between Chapters 39 and 40. It is like the 400 years' gap between the last book of the Old Testament (Malachi) and the first book of the New Testament (Matthew).
 - In Matthew 3:1-3, John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord; this was prophesied in Isaiah Chapter 40 (start of "New Testament" of the book of Isaiah). Isaiah 40:3 says the voice of him who cries in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord.
 - Isaiah 40:2 says that Israel's iniquities will be pardoned. Isaiah 40:13 says, "Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord?"
 - v. Therefore Isaiah Chapter 40 introduces John the Baptist, the Lord, sins will be forgiven and age of the Holy Spirit, as recorded in the book of Matthew. Hence, it is important to know this book of Isaiah though it is a difficult book.
 - vi. The book is difficult because the prophecies are in the form of poetry and the collection of all these prophecies needed to be pieced together. By far, this book in the Old Testament is the most quoted book in the New Testament. Therefore, more time needs to be spent on these 3 books namely, the books of Genesis (Foundation), Isaiah (Gospel) and also Revelation (Hope).

Who was Isaiah?

1. Isaiah was one of the greatest prophets in the Old Testament, amongst others like Moses and Elijah. His name was Yeshayahu (Hebrew). "Yesha" means "save", "Yahu" is "Yahweh", which means "God". So, Isaiah means "God saves" which is the same as Jesus and Joshua (Yeshua).

2. Isaiah lived when Assyria was in power and the Northern Kingdom of Israel was embroiled in terrible sins.
3. Isaiah was sent to warn the Southern Kingdom against the 3 common sins of the Northern Kingdom, which are the 3 "I"s, namely idolatry, immorality and injustice.
 - a) In fact, all 3 sins are one because idolatry results in immorality and injustice.
 - b) This is because when we see our God as a "little god", we do not fear him (since he is just a miniaturised idol or doll which cannot see anything anyway). Therefore, we think we can do anything we like, committing the sins of immorality and injustice. But if our God is the big God (Bible-sized God), we know He watches us even in the dark and we would not dare to misbehave.
4. Prophet Isaiah's attack was on idolatry because once we miniaturise our God, we will begin to act immorally and unjustly. E.g. how Christians treat their workers poorly, or maids as cheap labour.

Who did Isaiah speak or warn against?

1. Kings and spiritual leaders like priests.
2. Isaiah was the grandson of King Josiah and was born in a palace. Therefore, he was warning his relatives. He had a long ministry over 5 kings.

How was Isaiah able to do this?

1. He was able to speak against such powerful leaders because Isaiah had a life-changing encounter with God (Isaiah Chapter 6). Isaiah was called by God after King Uzziah died. In the vision, Isaiah said, "Woe to me" when he saw God's holiness and his lips were cleansed by the angel with live coal to purge him of his sins.
2. Isaiah was sent to a stubborn people who would not hear.
3. Isaiah was sent not to enlighten them but to make their hearts duller and he was to warn them until the land became desolate. Note that God will assist you the way you want to go, whether you want to go with Him or against Him. God does not force us. He gives us free will.
4. Isaiah was given a ministry destined to fail because the more he preached, the more the people would harden their hearts. But Isaiah was faithful, he knew God was watching him after having that encounter in Isaiah Chapter 6. So you have to note that you can only serve God if you have the audience of one God and do not seek to get the praise of men; then you will not change the message due to pressure (1 Thessalonians 2:4).
5. Isaiah's wife was a prophetess and had 2 sons.
 - a) Their first son was named Maher-shalal-hash-baz which means "Grab the loot and run with the loot". It signified that the Babylonians would be coming to take everything away from the Southern Kingdom, Judah.
 - b) Their second son was named Shear-jashub, which means "A remnant shall return" and that gave some comfort.
6. It was clear that Isaiah expected to have a totally failed ministry except that he knew that God, on the Throne, would see him faithfully discharge his calling.

7. Many people questioned if Isaiah wrote the book because the 2nd part from Chapter 40 was after the exile but Isaiah already died 100 years before that.
 - a) However, that is exactly what prophecy is all about, Isaiah wrote about the future. He wrote the whole book.
 - b) If God does not know the future and cannot tell his prophets about the future, then He is not God. Some Bible schools teach that there are 2 or even 3 Isaiahs that wrote this one book, which is nonsense!
 - c) If we keep miniaturising God, then idolatry will set in and we will not believe that God knows the future.
8. Prophet Isaiah was given details about the future including King Cyrus (a Persian King who was not born yet) who will let the exiled Jews return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. Our infinite God sees the entire span of eternity. Therefore Prophet Isaiah was able to introduce the seed truths of the Gospel.

Isaiah (Part 3 of 4)

In the study of the book of Isaiah, it is best to mark key verses and then listen to the audio versions. Some of the key verses are:

1. Isaiah 6:3. Isaiah had an encounter with God in the Temple, in his vision. The verse says, “Holy, holy, holy, Almighty” and the whole Earth was filled with His glory. Isaiah must know 2 things before he could serve God.
 - a) The holiness of God. He is unique, separate from everything else. God and man are two different categories altogether; God is high and lifted up.
 - b) His glory filled the Earth. We can see His glory in His creation, such as the sea, thunder, etc. The chief purpose of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Our goal is to glorify Him, which is logical because He is the only one worthy of our worship.
2. Isaiah 7:14. A virgin shall bear a child and His name shall be called “Immanuel”.
 - a) “El” means God. “Immanu” means “with us”. So Immanuel means “God with us.” God lives among us.
 - b) The glorious God, high and lifted up, and yet so intimate with us. He is super high yet super close. We can talk to God reverently but we can also confidently come to Him, calling Him, “Abba, Father”, unlike other religions.
 - c) In the Old Testament, God lived among the Israelites in the Tabernacle BUT today Jesus does not live amongst us but the Holy Spirit lives in us, which is even better. How intimate!
 - d) It is hard for us to totally grasp this. If we can fully grasp God, then He is not God. To fully grasp that, our brain has to be bigger than God. You have to be bigger than a microbe to understand it; a microbe cannot understand us.
3. Isaiah 9:6-7. “God with us”. He was going to come closer to us by being born as a baby. The Almighty came in flesh – 100% God and 100% man (which is mathematically impossible). This is the mystery of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Isaiah was

- revealing more and more seed truths.
4. Isaiah 11:1-2 prophesized that Jesus would be coming as Man.
 - a) The Holy Spirit would be coming and Jesus would to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - b) "Shoot from Jesse" means Jesus would come from the kingly line of David. Though the Israelites were in exile and the kings were gone, the line of David came through a humble couple in Bethlehem from the seed of David; from the stump left of a cut down tree, a shoot would grow.
 - c) The Holy Spirit would be resting on Jesus. This is the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel and might. An ordinary Man filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus was so ordinary-looking that they had to pay 30 pieces of silver to identify Him when they wanted to arrest Him. Jesus was so ordinary and immersed among men but His power came from the Holy Spirit.
 5. Isaiah 11:6-12. This describes the future where for example, the lion and child will be together.
 - a) God would extend His hand a second time to all the lands (Cush, Edom, etc.) to gather back all the scattered Jews.
 - b) He would gather all the nations (Gentiles) and call back all the Jews from all the 4 corners of the Earth. The tribes of Israel are not lost tribes to Him. Our God is a faithful God who will not forget His promise to Israel.
 - c) There will be a glorious future, even better than the days in the Garden of Eden when animals were pets of Adam. This glorious future state could refer to both the Millennial Kingdom and the New Heaven and New Earth.
 - d) Therefore, while Satan thought that he could destroy the work of God, but in one full circle, God will bring us back to Eden. It is the restoration of the Garden of Eden. There will be no more fear between man and animals, and everyone will be at peace with each other, unlike in our present day when policemen are needed to prevent chaos and to maintain order.

Chapters 13 to 23 – Judgement of the Nations.

One by one, the nations would be judged. It sounds repetitive and depressing but there is one common sin amongst the nations, which is pride. When people or nations succeed, pride set in. Most people do not think pride is a sin. It is the number one sin that brought Satan down.

1. Isaiah 14:12 describes the judgment of Babylon. It is poetry portraying someone lofty in his mind and thinks that there is nothing he cannot do. Success often makes us think that we are invincible. God hates pride. (See James 4:6) Do we think we will never fall? We see the sins of the Israelites in the Bible and we think that we are not like them and that in itself is pride!
2. Isaiah 25:6-8. Again the New Heaven and New Earth are described.
 - a) However, unlike in Chapter 11 where the description of the future focused on peace by taking away the negativity of war, here, it is not about the absence of fighting but about the abundance of blessings!

- b) See the poetry on the finest wine, etc. in these verses. Death would be swallowed up in this new place and there would be no more tears and suffering. Food speaks of abundance, not vapour nor vanity nor emptiness as elaborated in Ecclesiastes which describes life under the Sun.
- c) Life in the New Heaven and New Earth is substantial, not emptiness.
- d) Therefore, go through the Bible once to grasp the beauty of the connections in the various books.

What makes the New Heaven and New Earth so liveable?

1. Isaiah 33:24 says there are no sick people, and all iniquities are forgiven. We cannot stand confidently before God until we know that all our sins are forgiven.
2. Isaiah 38:17 says God has cast all our sins behind His back. These sins do not trouble us anymore. We tend to remember the sins we did to others as culprits or sins done to us as victims and these are barriers to perfect relationships.
3. Isaiah 35:5 says the blind can see, and the deaf can hear. Right now, we struggle to see and understand God - His holiness, His glory, etc. One day, we will see God face to face and can appreciate Him clearly as if we have had an eye transplant.

Isaiah Part 4 of 4

It is recommended that you continue to mark key verses as landmarks for easy reading of Isaiah. Isaiah 40 begins the “New Testament” part of Isaiah about the Good News rather than man’s horrible sinful behaviour like the “Old Testament”.

1. Isaiah 44:15-17.
 - a) Before touching on the Good News, here we are reminded of a common sin of idolatry. It is ridiculous that it is done over and over again and yet we do not find it absurd. People make idols from wood and use the same remaining piece of wood to barbecue meat or to make a fire, and pray to these idols as “gods”!
 - b) Before we see how meaningful Christ is, we must see how ridiculous idolatry is. Most of the world is still idolatrous, e.g. modern idols like football stars have brilliant skills but their lives are immoral. All human leaders are the same; one half of the person is so brilliant, the other half of him is so wicked. Therefore, these modern idols are no better.
2. Isaiah 45:22 tells us how to get Salvation.
 - a) Some earn favour with idols but God says, “Look to Me!” not “do not do this; or do not do that”.
 - b) The law does not save. We often put the Law (given at Mount Sinai) before the Passover, which clearly is the wrong order. The Law came after Israel’s liberation or salvation from Egypt, which is after the Passover event. Therefore, Salvation must come first. It’s a gift of God, not due to your works (Ephesians 2:8-9).
 - c) Therefore, look to the Lord like the Israelites looked to the blood on the doorpost and thanked God for the blood that covered them. Then, obeying the Law becomes our desire to please God who saved us. The desire to obey the

Law should be a result of Salvation, otherwise it is not Christianity but just another religion in which everyone tries to do good works to be saved.

3. Isaiah 50:6. The key focus in Isaiah 50 is the Suffering Saviour.
 - a) Isaiah 50:6 shows the beginning of Christ's sufferings (slapped and stricken). The Israelites cannot accept a Suffering King because to them, they die for their king, and not their king dies for them.
 - b) In our hearts we desire a king who would die for us but such a king does not exist on the Earth. We call people our ministers, i.e. they are supposed to serve us. But that is a dream, even prime ministers who are supposed to be chief servants act like bosses.
 - c) To the Jews, their king cannot be slapped, etc.
4. Isaiah 52:7 speaks about the beautiful feet bringing Good News. We are to publish the Good News of our Saviour. The saving work is by God, so what is our job? Simply to declare the Good News! In the olden days, messengers ran back on feet to declare victory of wars, etc. Similarly, we cannot keep the Good News to ourselves.
5. Isaiah 52:14 describes the sufferings of Christ. It was a shocking scene in which Jesus was marred in appearance beyond human semblance (not recognisable as a man). It was not like what the actor Mel Gibson depicted on the cross because "marred, beyond human semblance" means it was a bloody mess of hanging flesh such that you could not make out whether it was the flesh of a person or meat of an animal.
6. Isaiah 53. Why did Jesus look like that? Suffering?
 - a) Isaiah 53:2 says Jesus was born as an ordinary carpenter, a labourer building houses.
 - b) Isaiah 53:3 says He was rejected and despised by man. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. No one looked up to Him unlike the Pharisees whom people held up with high regard.
 - c) Isaiah 53:4. He bore our sins and hence looked like that, all bloody.
 - d) Isaiah 53:5 says with His wounds, we were healed (spiritually).
 - e) Isaiah 53:6-7 tell us that He suffered so much because He carried all our sins. He suffered silently.
 - f) Isaiah 53:8-9 say that His tomb was a rich man's tomb. (See fulfilment of this prophecy in Luke 23:50-52.)
 - g) Isaiah 53:10-11 say that it pleased God to bruise Him. It was God's will to crush Him for us to be saved.
 - h) Isaiah 53:12 says that He was numbered among the transgressors and bore the sins of many and made intercessions for the transgressors.

All His suffering was because He was bearing our sins. What love! How the great God of heaven can be so humble. It is only in His second coming that He comes as the Conquering King but the messages in Isaiah were all jumbled up and the Israelites could not accept Jesus as the Suffering Servant. Only some Messianic Jews have been able to see Christ in the book of Isaiah.

7. Isaiah 55. How do we get this amazing gift of Salvation?
 - a) Isaiah 55:1 says "Come, all who thirst and are hungry."

- b) Salvation is free and unconditional. It is not “stop doing this first or doing that first”. Only after being saved, will you want to do good works and be able to do them
8. Isaiah 56:10 says God’s watchmen are blind and ignorant, slumbering and not having beautiful feet to preach His Good News. Many pastors today are career men, dumb dogs loving praises of men, preaching nice things, peddling a false gospel as a greedy man.
9. Isaiah 61:10. How will we be dressed? We will be clothed with the garment of Salvation.
10. Isaiah 65:17-25 describes the future.
- a) As mentioned earlier, this passage possibly have verses that refer to both the Millennial Kingdom (of 1000 years rule) as well as the New Heaven and New Earth.
 - b) Verse 20 probably refers to the Millennial Kingdom (1000 years reign) where no infant will live only a few days, as all would live at least 100 years old.
 - c) The current heaven and Earth will pass away with a New Heaven and New Earth created by God as in verse 17. People will rejoice as there would be no weeping because there would be no death in the New Heaven and New Earth. People will not labour in vain. Wolf and lamb will feed together. People will not hurt and destroy each other. They will enjoy God and His new creation.
 - d) But let us remind ourselves not to be too arrogant in interpreting future things as we cannot be too sure about how to interpret them.
11. Isaiah 66 is the last chapter. Isaiah 66:1-2 says that God looks for someone who knows his place, that he is man and not God. A man with a humble heart, a poor and contrite spirit as in Psalm 51:17. God hates pride (James 4:6).

We need to acknowledge that all we have is Him and all things we have are from Him, be it talents, riches, health, etc. Every breath is from Him. If He takes it away, we are just dust. Even on this Earth, what does God want from you? To act justly, to love mercy and to be humble (Micah 6:8). Isaiah gives us a glimpse of the Saviour, the Millennial Kingdom and the New Heaven and New Earth. It gives us enough to begin our journey to develop more knowledge about Him in the rest of the Bible.