

The Book of Isaiah

Chapter 7-12

Introduction: Isaiah's call in Chapter 6 will begin to make greater sense in light of Chapters 7-12.

- Several themes mentioned in the introductory lesson emerge in Chapters 7-12: Trust and Rebellion (focus today), Servanthood and Kingdom, and Judgment and Hope
- Isaiah will try to share with the people the vision of God he encountered (6): Great, Wise, Sovereign, Transcendent God CAN be trusted!
- The prediction of the people's response to Isaiah's words from Yahweh became a reality (6:9-10)
- Chapters 7-12 outline tragic consequences of one's refusal to trust God and instead trust human nations (specific historic setting)
- To avoid confusion, here is some clarity on names or places mentioned in this section

Northern Kingdom (Israel, Ephraim, Jacob, Samaria)

Southern Kingdom (Judah, Jerusalem, Zion)

Aram/Syria (Damascus=capital)

Assyria (Ninevah=captial)

I. Isaiah's Call to Trust (7:1-16)

A. Historical Context and Setting

READ: 2 Kings 15:37-16:6

1. Alliance formed between North (Pekah) and Aram (Rezin) in later days of Jotham, king of Judah
2. Alliance was initiated by Yahweh as a means of divine judgment

In those days the Lord began to send Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah. 38 So Jotham rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Abaz his son reigned in his place. 2 Kings 15:37-38 NKJV

3. Invasion likely occurred around 735 BC (3 years before the fall of Damascus and 13 years before the fall of Samaria—Northern Kingdom)
4. Alliance and invasion may have been an attempt to form a coalition against Assyria.

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5. Purpose of invasion is to replace Ahaz with Tabeel (7:6) on throne

B. Ahaz's reason for concern

1. Israel (Pekah) and Aram (Rezin) were invading Judah (Ahaz) but did not conquer (1)
2. Suffered casualties and many were taken captive

READ: 2 Chronicles 28:5-8

3. Second and more intense invasion—attempt to end Davidic dynasty—created great fear (2)

“His heart and the hearts of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake with the wind” (7:2).

- a. Troops were swarming the area (has allied itself)

And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. Exodus 10:14 NKJV

- b. Intend to bring Davidic dynasty down (6)

C. The Lord speaks to Ahaz through Isaiah

1. Meet Ahaz with your son, Shear-Jashub—“A remnant shall return” (3).
 - a. Hope—God will not utterly destroy His people (1:8)
 - b. Warning—Only a remnant will survive
 - c. Physical return from exile
 - d. Spiritual return to God

2. Fearfulness is unnecessary—why? (4-9)

- a. Addresses fear (4)
- b. Aram and Israel pose no threat and will not last (5-9) no fire in them
- c. Sovereign Lord's word trumps that of humanity

3. Ahaz instructed to ask for a sign
 - a. Ask anything—test God, be bold (10-11)
 - b. Last chance to restore faith and trust
 - c. Ahaz refuses (12) unbelief masked as piety
 - d. Frustration of Isaiah

4. A sign is given (14-16) but what is its meaning?

A couple of notes...

- a. For the sign to only have messianic connotation is to make this invaluable to Ahaz and the immediate context (16-17)
- b. Various interpretations provided (Ahaz's wife, Isaiah's wife and son, only messianic, etc.)
- c. Single meaning, double significance
- d. Meaning—God is with us and we need not fear what others may do to us (good for Ahaz and everyone that follows)
- e. First significance for Ahaz's day—don't need to rely on Assyria because God is with Judah
 - “alma” not typical word for virgin means “young woman of marriageable age”
 - Virginity of woman at time of announcement of sign is ALL that is intended
 - Possibly a young woman in crowd he is going to marry (his children and names had prophetic significance)

- f. Aram and Israel will be destroyed before child reaches an age of maturity (15-16)
- g. No need to fear small neighbors because God is with them, but God will bring what they trusted in against them—Assyria (18-19)
- h. Second significance—Messianic promise (“you” in 14 plural), God with us, offering salvation

Takeaways

1. We must view our circumstances from God's perspective and trust in His promise to save, preserve, and protect.
2. Trusting in earthly powers or things will always lead to divine judgment and tragic circumstances.
3. We do not have to live in fear because God is with us, He is for us, and He is our peace and comforter.

4. Piety and trust are not equal. Piety is the mere appearance of religion while trust is the substance of our religion formed from a close connection with God.
5. God is greater, wiser, and transcendent making His ways better.
6. Signs do not create faith but instead confirm our faith.

II. The Consequences of Misplaced Trust (7:17-8:22)

- A. Judgment will come upon the land and people of Judah via the nation they trust in for help—Assyria (7:17-20; 23-25)—warning

“The dominating theme is Assyria (7:18) and its king (7:22; 8:4, 7). This was the power and the person on whom Ahaz trusted; this was the power and person of destruction” (J. Alec Motyer).

1. Completeness of the conquest
 - a. The land totally occupied (7:18-19)—no other means of salvation
 - b. The people stripped and humiliated (7:20)
2. The results of the conquest
 - a. The people in poverty (7:21-22)
 - b. Glimpse of hope—even a remnant (cf. 6:13)
 - c. The land in decay (7:23-25) see 5:5-6
3. The course of the conquest
 - a. Imminent destruction of Aram and Israel (8:1-4)
 - 734 BC TPIII begins march down seacoast
 - 733 BC Israel lost Galilee
 - 732 BC Damascus fell
 - Hoshea saved kingdom until 722 BC
 - b. Assyrian progress through Israel into Judah (8:5-8)
 - Land is swamped by waters, but unlike Israel can keep head above water (“neck” in v. 8)-Sennacherib (Isa 36-37)
 - The fulfillment of 6:9-13 on Judah waits for other hands

B. A “Believing Remnant” tucked away within the remaining people

NOTE: A people within a people

1. International collapse (9)
2. Fruitless consultation (10)

NOTE: Nothing devised against God’s people can succeed (54:15-17)

3. Isaiah set apart from the people by obedience to the Word of the Lord (11)
4. The fear of the ungodly (12)—be different

NOTE: Isaiah is showing the “separated life”

- a. Fear Northern threat
- b. Fear harm and dread
5. The fear of the godly—life governed by theological awareness of Yahweh (holy God) see 6:3 (13)
6. The privilege of the godly (14a)
7. The fate of the ungodly (14b-15)

NOTE: “The same God in his unchanging nature is both sanctuary and snare: it depends on how people respond to His holiness.” (J. Alec Motyer)

8. Isaiah and believing remnant separated unto the Word of the Lord (16-18)

NOTE: Obedience to the Word sets people apart

9. Fruitless consultation (19-20)
10. National collapse—exile (21-22)

Takeaways

1. We are not immune to the consequences of a fallen and sinful world, but we must recall where our citizenship ultimately lies.
2. We must never dismiss God in the equation of our life.
3. If fearing the Lord and obeying His word is primary, He will be our “sanctuary” guaranteeing our security and confidence in Him.

4. “True trust always involves an element of waiting. It means believing in results that we cannot see.” (John Oswalt)

III. A Glorious Hope is Still Available

- Chosen their way, not God’s
- Trusted humans over God
- Plunged self into darkness and confusion
- They’ve become prey of nations trusted

BUT...

- God does not intend to leave His people there

A. The hope described (9:1-3)

“A new situation”

1. What God does—contempt to honor (1)
2. What people enjoy—darkness to light (2)—(See Matthew 4:12-17)
3. What follows—increased joy and rejoicing (3)

B. The hope explained (9:4-7)

1. What God does—deliverance (4)—Egypt
2. What people enjoy—fruits of victory (5)—(Conquest)
3. What follows—King and his rule (6-7)

C. Uniqueness of this child’s birth

1. Out of disaster, God will bring final victory
2. Not a human king, but promised Messiah based on titles
3. This child-king desires to take over the government of our lives bringing peace and caring for people (orphans and widows)
4. Reveals God’s saving and rescuing nature (9:7)

IV. The Charges Against Israel and Consequences Experienced (9:8-10:4)

NOTE: Isaiah's prophetic word is directed at Ephraim (Israel) or Northern tribes/kingdom because they threw off Davidic allegiance (1 Kings 12:1) and apostatized from the Lord (1 Kings 12:25ff)

- A. Pride: National disaster due to pride falls on Israel (enemies attack) (9:8-12)
- B. Adulation of Great Men: Political collapse due to a lack of repentance (13), an undermining of leadership (14-16) and widespread suffering (17)
- C. Lack of Brotherly Love: Social anarchy/internal strife/self-concern (18-19) creating empty satisfaction (20), nation tears self apart, untied only against Judah (21)
- D. Moral perversion: Morality overturned, suffering of helpless (2), making helpless on day of judgment (3-4)

NOTE: You can see the spiral downward effect beginning with national disaster leading to moral decay—began with pride

NOTE: Yahweh's anger, not Assyria, must be dealt with (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4)

Takeaways:

- 1. Our security and value cannot be granted to us by others, instead it comes from God.
- 2. When we place our own interests before others we fail to see people as God sees them.
- 3. How can we and should we address social issues?

V. God's Judgment Against Israel and Assyria (10:5-19)

- A. Assyria is God's instrument of judgment (6)
- B. God's motives vs. Assyria's motives (6-11)
 - 1. God—just punishment (6)
 - 2. Assyria—world dominion (7-11)
- C. God's assessment vs. Assyria's assessment (12-14)
 - 1. God—pride of Assyria leads to judgment (12)
 - 2. Assyria—our abilities brought success (13-14)
- D. Assyria was an instrument of the Sovereign King (15)

NOTE: Judgment experienced in 722 BC

E. Assyria too will be judged (16-19)

VI. A Remnant Remains (10:20-34)

- A. Despite God's instruments of judgment, a remnant does survive (20-22)
- B. Thorough judgment will precede surviving remnants (23)
- C. God promises to protect and preserve His people (24-27)—Midian and Egypt examples
- D. Trust in the mighty one not in the ax in the mighty one's hand (28-34)

APPLICATION: All nations, powers, and people are subject to God, Lord over history

NOTE: Church will survive but not a guarantee everyone associated is guaranteed a place in Heaven

VII. The Glorious Hope Proclaimed Again (11:1-16)

NOTE: A true descendent from the house of David will come and rule with fairness, justice, and bring peace

A. Jesse's shoot: Ancestry and Endowment (1-2)

(See 6:13)

NOTE: Go back to Jesse not David as a renewed start (same line and branch)

NOTE: Image of a felled tree, but vitality in the stump

B. The rule of the descendant of Jesse (3-5)

- 1. Spirit of the Lord (see Genesis 41:38; Exodus 31:3; Judges 3:10), Ezekiel 36:27
- 2. Reign characterized by wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, fear of the Lord
- 3. Uniqueness of His rule (3-5)
 - A. Doesn't judge on appearance
 - B. Doesn't decide based on what it means to Him
 - C. No respecter of persons
 - D. Righteousness and faithfulness foundation
- 4. Result of His rule (His world)—(6-9)—Peace (Millennial Reign?)

- Renewed creation (reconciliation of old hostilities, allying of old fears, prey and predator reconciled (6)
- Change of nature (7)
- Curse removed (8)

READ: Revelation 20:1-6

C. Return of God's people, world dominion, and end division (10-16)

1. Began at cross (no Jew or Gentile; John 4)
2. Millennial Kingdom
3. Already but not yet
4. New Heaven and New Earth—Anticipate

VIII. The Thanksgiving Epilogue (12:1-6)

- A. Salvation and Redemption deserve worthy responses (thanksgiving and celebration)—(1-3)
- B. Thanksgiving, Prayer, Witness (4)

Conclusion: Judgment and hope dominate this section but we are left with some key takeaways

1. God's promises and plans cannot be thwarted by humanity—God is Lord of all and all authority submits to Him.
2. Reconciliation is promised and being achieved by God, so broken relationships and places where conflict and division exist have the ability to be reconciled and restored.
3. God did not offer salvation and redemption so we could simply enjoy the benefits, He expects us to declare God's transforming work to the world.
4. Those who trust God may not be immune from judgment, but they will be preserved, protected, and not alone—God with us.