

# The Book of Isaiah

## Introduction

Date: 740 – 680 B.C.

### A. The Author

The **author** of the book of **Isaiah** was **Isaiah**, the son of Amoz (Isa.1:1). The name “**Isaiah**” means “**Yahweh is salvation.**” Though more is known about **Isaiah** than most of the other writing prophets, there is not much **information** on him.

**Born** into an influential, upper class family, Isaiah mixed with royalty and gave advice concerning the **foreign affairs** of the nation. He warned vigorously against **foreign alliances** and urged **Judah** to **trust the Lord** (7:4; 30:1-17). He also attacked the **social ills** of the day, not because he was a social reformer, but because he saw those abuses as symptoms of **spiritual decline** (1:3-9; 58:6-10). (**Isaiah Introduction**, Ryrie Study Bible, pg.1044)

**Isaiah** was **married** to a **prophetess** (8:3), and they had at least **two sons** with prophetic names. The elder was named **Shear-Jashub** (7:3), which means "a remnant shall return"; and the younger was named **Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz** (8:3), which means "quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil.”

**Isaiah's work** as a **prophet** began in the year **King Uzziah** of Judah died, **739 BC** (6:1), and his **prophetic ministry** covered the years from **740-680 BC**. He prophesied under the reign of **four Judean kings**—**Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah** (1:1), and likely met his **death** under a **fifth**, the evil **King Manasseh**. Christian tradition as early as the second century identifies **Isaiah** as one of the **prophets** whose **death** is described as having been “**sawn in two**” (Hebrews 11:37). **Isaiah** likely lived in **Jerusalem**, given the book’s concern with the city (Isaiah 1:1), and his **close proximity** to at least **two significant kings** during the period of his prophecy (7:3; 38:1).

Much of scholarship for the past **two centuries** has assigned **multiple writers** to **Isaiah**, dividing the book into **three sections**: 1–39, 40–55, and 56–66. However, these divisions come out of a **scholarly denial** of **predictive prophecy**. This position not only **limits** the **power of God** to communicate with His people, but also **ignores** the wide variety of **specific, predictive claims** about **Jesus the Messiah** scattered throughout the book. ([Insight for Living, Isaiah Intro.](#), Chuck Swindoll)

### B. The Times

**Isaiah’s prophetic ministry** took place in Israel during a time of **great struggle**. After **King Solomon**, Israel was divided into **two kingdoms**, the **Northern** and the **Southern**. The **Northern Kingdom** of **Israel** (10 tribes) was deteriorating **politically, spiritually, and militarily**, and finally fell to the powerful **Assyrian Empire** in **722 BC**. The **Southern Kingdom** of **Judah** looked as though it too would **collapse and fall** militarily to **Assyria**, but it withstood the attempted siege, through **divine intervention**, during the time of **king Hezekiah** (Isa. 37:36-37).

**Isaiah's ministry** was to a “**sinful nation**” that had “**abandoned the LORD** (Isa. 1:4). “Instead of serving Him with **humility** and **offering love** to their **neighbors**, the nation of **Judah** offered **meaningless sacrifices** in **God's temple** at **Jerusalem** and committed **injustices** throughout the nation.” This prompted **Isaiah's** pronouncements of **judgment**— “declarations made in the **hope** that **God's chosen people** would **return to Him**.” (Insight for Living, Isaiah Intro., Chuck Swindoll)

### C. The Main Theme

**Isaiah's overall theme** can be summed up by his declaration,

“Behold, **God is my salvation**, I will **trust** and **not be afraid**;.(Isa. 12:2)”

This echoes the meaning of **Isaiah's name**, which means the “**salvation of Yahweh**.” The word “**salvation**” is found **twenty-eight times** in **Isaiah**, more than in all the other **prophets** combined. Much is said, especially in the **early chapters** of **Isaiah** concerning **judgment** against those who turn their back on **the Lord**. However, the **prophet** clearly **predicts** that **God is faithful to His promises**, and will bring about the **salvation** of **His people**. He will **preserve** the “**remnant**” of **faithful believers**, “**those who will** continue on into the **glorious renewed world** **He** has **prepared** for **His children** in the **end times** (65:17–66:24).” (Insight for Living, Isaiah Intro., Chuck Swindoll)

### D. Messianic Prophecy

**Isaiah** has often been called “the **evangelical prophet**” because he declares so much about the **redemptive work** of the **Messiah**. More about the **person** and **work of Messiah** is found **here** than in any other book of the **Old Testament (Tanach)**.

Looking ahead, some of these passages are 1:18; 2:4, 6:3, 8; 7:14; 9:6-7; 11:9; 26:3; 35:1; 40:3, chap 53; 55:1; 57:15; 61:1-3. (**Isaiah Introduction**, Ryrie Study Bible, pg.1044)

