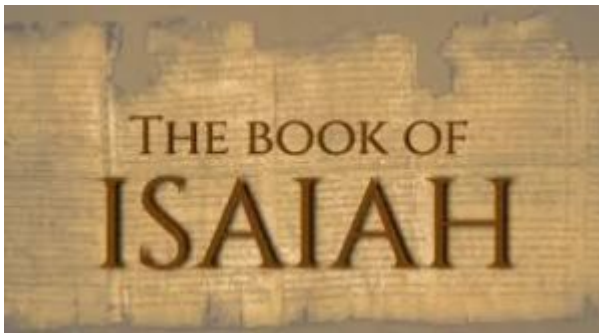


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Introduction to Isaiah Son of Amoz

*To Dr. Ronald Youngblood, my Old Covenant professor at Bethel Seminary West, who gave me a love for **the TaNaKh (Hebrews 9:18)**. He used his brilliant mind for good, and like Moses, was **a very humble man (Numbers 12:3)**.*



In many respects **Isaiah** is a miniature Bible. It has sixty-six chapters and the Bible has sixty-six books. The first thirty-nine chapters correspond to the thirty-nine books of the TaNaKh, speaking largely about **Isra'el** before the coming **Messiah**. The last twenty-seven chapters parallel the New Covenant, speaking largely about **the Messiah** and **His** messianic Kingdom. **Isaiah** is one of the books in the TaNaKh most often quoted in the B'rit Chadashah. When people read **Isaiah** it sometimes seems as though they are reading from the pages of the Gospels (**Chapters 9, 11, 40 and 53**).¹

The name **Isaiah** (Hebrew: **Yesha'yahu**) can be translated any one of three ways because of the Hebrew language: **The LORD** is salvation, **the LORD's** salvation, and the salvation of **the LORD**. But whichever way it is translated, the point is always the same; the two basic components are **God's** personal name and salvation, in that **Isaiah's** name is related to both **Joshua** and **Jesus**. As far as **his family**, three times in the book we are told **he** was **the son of Amos (1:1, 2:1, 13:1)**. **According to Jewish tradition, his father was also a prophet, and also according to Jewish tradition, his father was the brother of King Amaziah**. If this were true it would mean **Isaiah** was a member of the royal house. However, there is no proof of the validity of these traditions.

As far as his wife, she is never named. In **Isaiah 8:3** **she** is called **a prophetess**. The naming of **the son** communicated the message that **God's** word is sure and can be trusted. After the birth of **his son Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, Isaiah** probably knew that **he** must call **his wife a prophetess**, because **she** had literally been the bearer of the Word of **God**.

As far as his children, he had two **sons** whose names are significant as far as **his** prophecy is concerned. One was named **Shear-Jashub**, which means, *a remnant will return*, and the other was named **Shalal-Hash-Baz**, which means, *the spoil speeds* (the verb comes before the noun in Hebrew), or *the prey hastens*. Both names will have significant meanings for the **Jewish** history of this book, especially in **Chapters 6** through **12**. This is the extent of our knowledge of **his family**.

As far as other specific events in his life, either from **Isaiah** or in other books of Scripture, first, we know that **he** wrote a biography of **King Uzziah**, but it did not survive. So **Isaiah** is not the only book **he** wrote, but it is the only book we have according to **Second Chronicles 26:22**. A second event was the contentious encounter with **King Ahaz** in **Chapter 7** of **Isaiah**. A third event described how **God** directed **Yesha'yahu** to walk around in a loincloth and barefoot for three years as an object lesson to the nation (**20:1-6**). A fourth event was the invasion of the Assyrians under Sennacherib (**Chapters 36** and **37**). A fifth event is the sickness of **Hezekiah** (**Chapter 38**). A sixth event is the incident regarding the ambassadors from Babylon (**Chapter 39**).

As far as his death we do not have any specific information, **but a Jewish tradition says that he was put in the hollow of a tree trunk by King Manasseh and then sawed in half. Manasseh** was capable of doing things like that (**Second Kings 21:16**). In addition, **Hebrews 11:37** makes reference to the righteous of the TaNaKh who were sawed in half. We are never told specifically in Scripture that **Yesha'yahu** was one of these, but things like this did happen in **Jewish** history.

History of the Book

In the early part of **Isaiah's** prophecies, the Assyrian Empire was in full power, but in the latter part of **Yesha'yahu's** prophecies, Assyria was beginning to decline and Babylon was on the rise. **Isaiah** prophesied during the reign of four Assyrian kings, all of whom played a major role in Jewish history. Tiglath Pileser III (745 to 727 AD), Shalmaneser V (726 to 722 AD), Sargon II (721 to 705 AD), and Sennacherib (704 to

681 AD). Shalmaneser V began the final siege against **the northern kingdom of Isra'el**, but died before he could finish it. **Isaiah** prophesied to the last seven kings of **the northern kingdom of Isra'el**. **He** began in the days of Jeroboam II, at which point **Isra'el** was at a new height in its power, and witnessed a slow decline all the way to King Hoshea, the last king of **Isra'el**. **Isaiah** lived in the time when Sargon II finally brought **the northern Kingdom** to its end.

In **Isaiah's** own book **he** simply listed the kings of **Judah** to whom **he** served as a **prophet**. First was **Uzziah** (783 to 742), secondly **Jotham** (742 to 735), thirdly **Ahaz** (735 to 715), and finally **Hezekiah** (715 to 687). **Uzziah's** reign was recorded in **Second Kings 14:21 to 15:7**, and **Second Chronicles 26:1-23**. **He** was generally characterized as being a good king who started out well, but ended up badly because of a specific sin. When **Uzziah** was king of **Judah**, Jeroboam II was king of **Isra'el**. Between these two kings, they extended the borders of **Y'hudah** and **Yisra'el** to the borders during the time when the kingdoms had flourished under David and Solomon. This was a new height of **Jewish** control in the Middle East. And it was in this atmosphere that **Yesha'yahu** began **his** prophecies. **Uzziah** was able to conquer **Isra'el's** surrounding enemies, the Philistines, the Edomites and others. **He** was so well known that even the Egyptians, who were reluctant to honor any Semite, honored and respected **him** (unlike today where both **Jews** and Arabs are considered Semitic, Egyptians in those days were descendents of Ham or Hamitic). **Uzziah** built up the country and its fortifications. **Judah's** strength was well recognized. But when **he** tried to perform a religious act in the Temple, which was left only to the **Jewish** priests, **he** was stricken with leprosy by **YHVH** and had to live out **his** days in a separate house by **himself**.

When **Jotham** became king, **his** reign was somewhat short. We are told that **he did right in the sight of ADONAI, as King Uzziah had done (Second Kings 15:32-38; Second Chronicles 27:1-9)**, but the same criticism was leveled against **him** that was leveled against **his** father (**Second Kings 15:35**). While **he** generally **did that which was right in the sight of the LORD**, **he** failed to remove the high places. **His** father, **Uzziah**, did not remove them either. They banished idolatry, but they were reluctant to remove the high places. Why is this reluctance prevalent, even among the good kings of **Judah**? What was it that separated the high places from normal idolatry? In order to prevent them from having to go all the way to **Jerusalem** to sacrifice, **the Jews in the northern kingdom of Isra'el** began to set up smaller temple forms (they would be quite small, yet contained a simulated Holy Place and a Most Holy Place) in various cities

around **Samaria** to sacrifice. They worshiped the right **Person**, but they did it in the wrong place. **ADONAI** had commanded that **He** should be worshiped at Temple in **Yerushalayim (Second Kings 18:22; John 4:20)**.

Then came **Ahaz**, who was a bad king (**Second Kings 16:1-20; Second Chronicles 28:1-27**). Of the four kings under which **Yesha'yahu** prophesied, **he** was the worst of the group. **Second Chronicles 28:1** clearly says: **Unlike his father David, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord**. Because **he** tried to get along with everybody, **he** is charged with three types of sins. First, **he walked in the ways of the kings of Isra'el**, which was a corruption of the true form of worship. **He** worshiped in the wrong place, on the high places. Second, **he** also worshiped the gods of the Canaanites and the false god Ba'al. It was in **his** day that the two kingdoms of **Isra'el** and Syria aligned themselves for the purpose of doing away with the House of David. It was this conspiracy that led to **the virgin birth** prophecy in **7:14**. When **Ahaz** took a trip to Damascus and saw the pagan altar in the temple there, **he** was so impressed that **he** had the **Jewish** high priest make one just like it to set up in place of the altar that Solomon had built. **He** brought idolatry right into the Temple compound itself. Thirdly, **he** began to worship the Ammonite god, Molech and sacrifice **his** own children to this god outside the walls of **Jerusalem**, in the Valley of Ben Hinnom. So, especially in **Isaiah's** day, Hinnom became known as a valley of continual burning. In Hebrew, they Valley of Hinnom is *Ge Hinnom* and that is where we get the word Gehenna, a place of continual burning. One of the worst things that **Ahaz** did was to align **himself** with the Assyrians and end up under Assyrian domination. This led to problems for **Hezekiah**.

Hezekiah (Second Kings 18:1 to 20:21; 2 Chronicles 29:1 to 32:33) was a good king; in fact we are told **he** was even better than David. Not only did **he** restore religious practices that **his** father **Ahaz** had done away with, but also **he** went beyond what **Uzziah** and **Jotham** had done, and destroyed the high places. **He** was not afraid to do this, even though other good kings had been afraid to remove them. **Hezekiah** totally cleansed the Temple of idolatry and declared the second month as the great national Passover. **He** even did some evangelistic campaigns into the northern area that had not been destroyed by the Assyrians.

Themes of the Book

There are seven themes in the book of **Isaiah**. First, some have called this book the Gospel of **Yesha'yahu** because **he** deals quite a bit with first coming prophecies.

Secondly, **he** deals with Messianic times, and Second Coming prophecies. Thirdly, **he** deals with **the Day of ADONAI**, and has much to say about the Tribulation Period. Fourthly, **the prophet** emphasizes **the LORD's** sovereignty. Fifthly, **he** emphasizes **God's** holiness. One of **Isaiah's** favorite phrases, **the Holy One of Isra'el**, is mentioned continually. Sixthly, **he** deals with the remnant and the remnant motif of **Isra'el**. Although this motif begins with Elijah, **Isaiah** develops it more than any other prophet in the **TaNaKh**. Finally, there is a continual call to the **southern kingdom of Judah** for repentance.

Outline of the Book

There are ten major divisions in the book. In the first three divisions, which comprise **Chapters 1** through **5**, **Isaiah** lays down basic themes, which **he** will detail and develop in the rest of **his** book saying, in effect, "Here is what I am going to be talking about." So the first five chapters are key. That is why **he** does not start out to explain how **he** became a **prophet**. **He** saves that until **he** gets to **Chapter 6**. Then **he** talks about **his** prophetic office, saying, in effect, "Here is my right to do what I am doing." As a result, in **Chapters 7** through **66** **he** goes into detail about the themes **he** laid out in **Chapters 1** through **5**.

The Use of the Hebrew name ADONAI rather than YHVH

A basic problem in **Judaism** is that **God's** personal name is never actually spoken. When Moses saw a bush that burned without being consumed in the wilderness of Midian, **God** revealed **Himself** to Moses and told him **His** own personal name, which consists of four letters, **YHVH** (**Yud-Hay-Vav-Hay**), also known as the Tetragrammaton (four-letter writing). Today, **ADONAI** is a word used to refer to **God** by many people of the **Jewish** faith. **Jews** simply translate **YHVH** as meaning, **the Name**.

The name of **God** is a serious topic in Judaism, and when the Herod's Temple was in existence there were many rules and traditions surrounding its use. Only the High Priest was allowed to speak **the Name**, and then only in the Temple. With the destruction of the Temple (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Mt - The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple on Tisha B'Av in 70 AD**), pronunciation of **the Name** fell into disuse. Scholars passed down knowledge of the correct pronunciation of **YHVH** for many generations, but eventually the correct pronunciation was lost, and we no longer know it with any certainty. We do not know what vowels were used, or even whether the **Vav** in **the Name** was a

vowel or a consonant.

Nevertheless, the relation between a name (*shem*) and a thing (*davar*) hold a foundational level of importance in the Holy Scriptures. From the **Jewish** mindset, *naming* and *being* are the same thing. As a result, the names of people in the TaNaKh reflect their personal characteristics. In the same way, **the Name of God** reflects **Him** and **His** attributes.

Some people mistakenly pronounce the name of **God** as “Jehovah.” Unfortunately, this word comes from the fact that ancient Hebrew Masoretic annotations put the vowels for **ADONAI** under the consonants of **YHVH** to remind people not to pronounce **YHVH** as written. But a sixteenth century German Catholic scribe, while transliterating the Bible into Latin for the Pope, wrote **the Name** out as it appeared in his texts, with the consonants of **YHVH** and the vowels of **ADONAI** together, and came up with the word JeHoVaH (“J” is pronounced “Y” in German), and regrettably, the name suck.

Therefore, God does not have many names, He has only one name - YHVH (Yud Hay Vav Hay). All the other names in the Bible describe His characteristics and attributes. Hear, Isra’el! ADONAI our God, ADONAI is One (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Jewish tradition, then, forbids the pronunciation of **the Divine Name**, but instead chooses to use **ADONAI** in its place. As a result, I will be using **ADONAI**, **Ha’Shem**, or other characteristics or attributes of **His** in this devotional commentary instead of **YHVH**.

The Use of the Hebrew term TaNaKh rather than the phrase, the Old Testament

The Hebrew word **TaNaKh** is an acronym, based on the letters **T** (for “**Torah**”), **N** (for “**Neviim**,” or the Prophets), and **K** (for “**Ketuvim**,” or the Sacred Writings). It is the collection of the teachings of **God** to human beings in document form. The term “Old Testament” implies that it is no longer valid, or at the very least outdated. It implies, something old, to be either ignored or discarded. But **Yeshua Himself** said: **Don’t think I have come to abolish the Torah and the Prophets, I have not come to abolish but to complete (Matthew 5:17 CJB)**. As a result, I will be using the Hebrew acronym **TaNaKh** throughout this devotional commentary.

Isaiah Son of Amoz

1: 1

DIG: Isaiah's ministry spanned the reigns of four kings of Judah, almost 50 years. What do you know about Uzziah (see Second Chronicles 26:3-5, 16-20)? Or Jotham (see Second Chronicles 27:1-3)? Or Ahaz (see Second Chronicles 28:1-8, 22-25)? Or Hezekiah (see Second Chronicles 29:1-9; 31:20-21; 32:24-26)? How could you sum up what was going on in Judah during their reigns?

The vision concerning Y'hudah and Yerushalayim that Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw during the reigns of Uzziah (during the last year of his reign), and **Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, king of Judah**, begins **Isaiah**. The term **vision** is the Hebrew word meaning *to see as a prophet*. It denotes prophetic perception either in vision or in word. When **Isaiah** uses the term **vision** itself, (as is the way **God** often deals with **His** prophets), **he** means that in **vision** form **he** was projected either into another place in **his** own time or into another time. **He** was able to see what was happening and describe it. Many of **Isaiah's** prophecies were given to **him** by **vision** rather than by direct word; while there are places in the book where **he** receives a direct word (where **he** says that **God** whispers in **his** ear).

Isaiah's basic topic is what **he** saw concerning **Judah and Jerusalem**, of which **he** was a native. **God's prophet** sees all of the covenant people of **Isra'el** as being typified in **Y'hudah and Yerushalayim**. **He** deals with Gentile nations only as they come into contact with the kingdom of **Judah** and **the City of David**.

He was a real **prophet** in that **he** is master of the Hebrew language. When you compare **his** book with a contemporary of **his**, such as **Micah**, there is a big difference. **Isaiah's** Hebrew is superb, **he** writes in Hebrew Technicolor; while **Micah** writes in black and white, **his** is rough and coarse. But **Micah** is a country **prophet**, while **Yesha'yahu** is from the big city of **Tziyon**. **Isaiah** uses many words that are called *hapax legomena*. These are words that are not found anywhere else in the Hebrew Scriptures.