

Isaiah יְשַׁעְיָהוּ (Salvation of Yahweh)

1. Critical Issues¹ mainly stem from a denial of predictive prophecy.
2. Talmud - *Baba Bathra* 15a states “Hezekiah and his company wrote Isaiah, Proverbs, the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes.” An apparent reference to compilatory and editorial activities (Prov. 25.1).
3. Textual issues. By and large the Hebrew text of Isaiah is stable and well preserved.² Harrison notes that “While the LXX version is often useful in elucidating certain difficulties it is itself somewhat free in its renderings, and appears to depend in many instances upon a rather different type of text from that used by the Massoretes.”³ Qumran included two Isaiah manuscripts, 1QIsa^a (the Great Isaiah Scroll), and 1QIsa^b. The first was complete and closely matched modern readings in Isaiah other than minor orthographic differences and not very serious scribal errors. The second scroll was very fragmentary and very close to the MT readings. Interestingly, the Great Scroll contained some contemporary phonetic variations (the second scroll preserved older readings) giving somewhat of a pronunciation guide for the pronunciation of Hebrew in the period before the Christian times.⁴
4. Modern Criticism
 1. Döderlein's commentary in 1775 said that there were two distinct works in Isaiah.
 2. J. G. Eichorn followed Koppe (1780) in asserting two authors but expanded the extent of the material to include chapters 40-66. Gesenius followed this but maintained that there was an essential unity. This is known as the Deutero-Isaiah or Second-Isaiah theory.
 3. B. Duham and K. Marti (1892) said that Second Isaiah wrote 40-55 prior to 538 B.C. while someone else wrote 56-66 from Palestine after 538 B.C. This is the Trito-Isaiah theory.
 4. From here some scholars have further fragmented each of these sections further so that there is a very subjective fragmentation to major portions of the book.⁵
5. Critical Arguments made
 1. Geographic change. Palestinian view for 1-39. Babylonian point of view for “Deutero-Isaiah.” The exile was supposed rather than predicted.
 2. Stylistic changes between two sections. Isaiah ben Amoz wrote more tersely while Deutero-Isaiah wrote more lyrically and impassionately.
 3. Theological Change. Ben Amoz section portrayed the divine majesty of Yhwh and his exaltedness above other gods while Deutero-Isaiah described Yhwh's uniqueness and eternity and denied the existence of other gods.
 4. Denial of Predictive prophecy Critics say that human experience (post-enlightenment) knows nothing of predictive prophecy and anything that resembles it is vaticinius ex eventu or a postdating of the prophecy. They deny the ability of anyone to predict and name Cyrus (44.28, 45.1) as well as the apparent captivity to and return from Babylon that is apparent from chapters 40-66.
6. Answers to the issues

¹Much of this is from R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament, ZPEB, and The Believer's Study Bible*.

²Harrison, 798.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., 799.

⁵Harrison, 767 n. 16.

1. Geographical perspective The material really has no Babylonian perspective or real references. Judah and Jerusalem are only places mentioned as the home of the Judaic kingdom. The familiarity of the author is with Palestine and not Babylon. The mountain in 57.7 is Palestinian and not Babylonian.

2. Stylistic. This would deny change in literary style of an author due to age, subject, and audience. It also ignores authorial imprint found in verbal agreements and similar literary figures of speech. Holy One of Israel is used 12 times in 1-39 and 13 times in 40-66 but only 6 times in the rest of the OT.

3. Theological The ideas of the later chapters of the prophecy were broader and more extended than in earlier chapters.

4. Prophetic Daniel chapt 9 predicted the fall of Israel over 500 years in the future. Josiah was foretold by name 300 years ahead of his time (I Kings 13.1ff) and Micah predicted Bethlehem as the birth place of the Messiah.

7. Historical Background (2 Kings 15-21 and 2 Chr. 26-33)

1. Author Isaiah, son of Amoz (1.1) father of Shear-Jashub (A remnant shall return) and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (Speed the spoil, hasten the booty). Resident of Jerusalem. Comfortable in the presence of kings. Ascension of Isaiah states that he was martyred during the reign of Manasseh (~687) by being sawn in two (Hebrews 11.37).

2. Began ministry the year Uzziah died (6.1) 740 to 681 (reports death of Sennacherib-681; 37.38) (approximately) during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (1.1) and probably Manasseh (696-642) though the text doesn't say so.

3. Milieu

1. Israel is fallen into apostasy and is shortly to be exiled by Assyria (as the instrument of Yahweh).

2. Judah fails (as did Israel) as the king is faithful to Yahweh, his God. It is when the leader is corrupted that judgment falls on the nation.

1. Uzziah "He did right in the sight of the LORD" but prideful in later days. Smitten with leprosy for burning incense in the temple. 2 Chron 26.22 states that Isaiah wrote the acts of Uzziah.

2. Jotham "He did right in the sight of the LORD" but the people acted corruptly.

3. Ahaz "He did not do right in the sight of the LORD. . . he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel; he made molten images for the Baals." Defeated by the king of Aram and delivered into the hands of Pekah, the king of Israel. Relied on the king of Assyria for help but Tiglath-pileser afflicted him and Ahaz turned to worshipping the gods of Aram and closed down the temple worship. When he died he was not buried with the kings of Judah but rather in the city.

4. Hezekiah “He did right in the sight of the LORD” (but, begged for more years, during which Manasseh was born, the king who is named as the reason for the fall of Judah (2 Kings 23.26)).
3. Assyria is in its rise with many Assyrian kings influencing the politics and fortunes of Judah and Israel. Samaria will fall under the hand of the Assyrian King Shalmaneser V in 722.⁶ Sennacherib, his grandson, came up against Jerusalem and besieged it in 701. At that time he also conquered Lachish ([Senacherib's Palace Walls, Lachish](#)).⁷ 2 Kings 19.35, Isaiah 37.36, Herodotus 2.141ff, Josephus, *Antiquities* 10.15ff. all report the loss of Sennacherib’s army at this time, Herodotus, followed by Josephus, laying part of the blame of the loss of his army on mice who brought a pestilence and destroyed their weapons.

8. Structure\Outline

Bifid Approach to Isaiah⁸

Volume 1	Volume 2
1. Ruin and Restoration of Judah (1-5)	1. Paradise lost and regained (34-35)
2. Narrative (6-8)	2. Narrative (36-39)
3. Agents of blessing and judgment (9-12)	3. Agents of deliverance and judgment (40-45)
4. Oracles against foreign nations (13-23)	4. Oracles against Babylon (46-48)
5. Judgment and deliverance of God's servant; glorification of Israel (24-27)	5. Redemption through the LORD’s people (49-55)
6. Ethical sermons (28-31)	6. Ethical sermons (56-59)
7. Restoration of Judah and Davidic kingdom (32-33)	7. Paradise regained (55-66)

Outline according to Harrison⁹

1. The First Half, ch. 1-33
 1. Prophecies about the ruin and restoration of Judah, 1-5
 2. The call of Isaiah; biographical material, 6-8
 3. Present world empires and their roles, 9-12
 4. Prophecies regarding foreign nations, 13-23
 5. Universal judgment and the deliverance of Israel, 24-27
 6. The moral indictment of the Chosen People, 28-31

⁶ The records of Shalmaneser V’s reign are sparse. Shortly after the conquest of Samaria he died and his son Sargon II actually did most of the deporting. *ANET*, 285-87.

⁷ These walls are now, of course, in the British Museum.

⁸ Raymond B. Dillard & Tremper Longman III *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 281. Dillard and Longman follow W. H. Brownlee *The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) in this..

⁹Harrison, 764.

7. The restoration of the Davidic regime, 32.33
2. The Second Half, ch. 34-66
 1. Judgment upon Edom and the restoration of the ransomed, 34-35
 2. Biographical material from the time of Hezekiah, 36-39
 3. Prophetic assurances, 40-45
 1. Comfort, 40
 2. Deliverance, 41-44
 3. Divine judgment, 45
 4. Pronouncements against Babylon, 46-48
 5. Redemption through the work of the Servant, 49-55
 6. Ethical pronouncements, 56-59
 7. Life in the restored Zion, 60-66

Much of Brownlee's argument for this division of Isaiah is based on the transitional quality of 34-36 (from the time of the Assyrian crisis to the exile and beyond), and the existence of a 3 line gap in the Qumran Isaiah scroll. Many Deutero-Isaiah adherents put these chapters in the second half.

1. Themes and Major Passages

1. Holiness of YHWH (Holy One of Israel) קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל

1. קְדוֹשׁ (qādôš) ἅγιος (hagios)

The whole idea of the word is that of separateness. Yhwh is so other than us that there exists a gulf of separation that is not easily (not at all from our perspective!) breached. It is to be clean, pure, consecrated. Set apart or aside for specific service or cultic activity. This is seen closely associated to activity associated with the Tabernacle (Ex 29.21, 37; 30.29). Even items used by profane people were holy because they had been devoted to the Yhwh (Nu 16.38 [BHS 17.3]). The noun qādôš connotes the concept of "holiness," i.e. the essential nature of that which belongs to the sphere of the sacred and which is thus distinct from the common or profane. This distinction is evident in Lev. 10.10 and Ez. 22.26 where qādôš occurs as the antitheses of חֹל (hól), profane or common.¹⁰

2. YHWH himself—"Holiness refers to his essential nature; it is not so much an attribute of God as it is the very foundation of his being. "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of

¹⁰R. Laird Harris, Gleason Archer, Jr., Bruce Waltke *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), s.v. קְדוֹשׁ.

host.” (Is 6.3) Thrice holy, intensely holy is the LORD . Holiness, accordingly, is the background for all else declared about God.”¹¹

3. YHWH as Savior and Redeemer. Because of his holiness and faithfulness to his covenant promises (unlike his covenant partners, Judah and Israel and us) he will not forsake or abandon his people but he himself (and no other, Is. 43.11) will be their savior and redeemer, their גֹּאֵל (go’ēl--Lev. 25.47-49, Ruth). They had been sold for nothing and would be redeemed without money. Israel would be redeemed by her own husband. This is especially evident in 52.13-53.12.12.

2. Selected passages

1. Parable of the Vineyard, chapt. 5. A vineyard was planted and given a ripe, fertile environment in which to produce good and abundant fruit. Instead it produced worthless fruit and became good only for being dug up and laid waste. The reason for this is given in vs. 7 where we find that, “he looked for justice, but behold bloodshed, for righteousness but behold a cry of distress.” The rest of chapt. 5 contains the specifics of the indictment—much of it pointing to a complete lack of “loving their neighbor as themselves.” In chapter 1 we read,

רְחֹצוּ הַזְּכוֹת	"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;
הַסִּירוּ רָע מֵעֲלֵיכֶם מִנְּגִיד עֵינַי	Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight
חֲדְלוּ הָרָע	Cease to do evil,
לִמְדוּ הַיָּטִב	Learn to do good;
דְּרֹשׁוּ מִשְׁפָּט	Seek justice,
אֲשֶׁר־ו חָמוּץ	Reprove the ruthless,
שִׁפְטוּ יָתוּם	Defend the orphan,
רִיבוּ אֶלְמָנָה	Plead for the widow.

So too Micah 6.8, “He has told you O man, what is good-and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

¹¹Walter E. Elwell, ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), s.v. Holiness.

¹²Dillard, 276-77.

Chapter 9, Prince of Peace

7.14—the Virgin birth passage

14.12 Son of the Dawn

37.36 Herodotus & Sennacherib

52.13-53.12—The Servant Song