

Basic Training Bible Ministries
presents
The Gospel According to Isaiah



“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach the good tidings [Gospel] to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives ...” Isaiah 61:1

*“... and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD’ ... and He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’”
Luke 4:18–19, 21*

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The Gospel According to Isaiah

The Bible in Miniature

In his book, *Come with Me through Isaiah*, David Pawson says that Isaiah is the Bible condensed into one book. There are 66 books in the Bible, and 66 chapters in Isaiah. There are 39 books of the Old Testament; the first 39 chapters of Isaiah deal with Israel's history and its failures. There are 27 books in the New Testament; the last 27 chapters of Isaiah begin with the ministry of John the Baptist (Ch. 40), continue into the coming of Messiah (Ch. 42), into the crucifixion (Ch. 52–53), and then into the eternal state (Ch. 60–66).

Introduction to the Book of Isaiah

1. In the 8th Century B.C., Rome, Athens, and Sparta were founded (Pawson).
2. Yet, the greatest event of the century was the birth of a boy in Judah—Isaiah (“the salvation of Yah”). His father Amoz was a brother to King Amaziah, making Isaiah a member of the royal family (*Wilmington's Guide to the Bible*).
3. His name became his message to “*Judah and Jerusalem*” (Isa 1:1; Isa 2:1).
4. His message is divided into two major themes: the sins of Judah and the salvation of God (read Isa 1:5, Isa 1:16–18).
5. The promised salvation depended on a Savior (Isa 2:2–5; Isa 4:2–5).
6. However, the rebellious nation, in rejecting God's grace, had more sympathy for their enemies (Isa 2:6–9). Historically, the more a nation turns away from God, the more they sympathize with their enemies. A line can be crossed whereby God turns away from a nation and leaves them desolate (Mat 23:37–39; Luk 13:35; Act 7:51–53).
7. Therefore, Isaiah was commissioned with a message of both woe and promise (Isa 6:8–10, cf., Isa 3:10–12).
8. His message was to his generation (Isa 7:8–9), but also to every future generation.
9. Isaiah married a Bible-woman (“*prophetess*”), Isa 8:3.
10. Tradition/history tells us that Isaiah was martyred by Manasseh—sawn in two (Heb 11:32–40). “*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him [Christ] who brings good news [the Gospel], who brings peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, ‘your God reigns!’*” (Isa 53:7). “*For we did not follow ... fables ... but were eyewitnesses of His majesty ... we have the prophetic word confirmed*” (2Pe 1:16–19, cf. Isa 49:3 “*glorified*” with “*glory*” in Heb 1:1–3).

Note: Beware of Pawson on this one point: He does not believe in the security of our salvation, therefore denies the “eternal” in eternal life. Every expositor has presumptions. We should all try to recognize our own inclinations as we tend to read them into every passage, thus creating eisegesis, rather than exegesis (reading into the text the meaning we want, rather than seeing the meaning being presented). Exposition includes three general divisions:

- **I**—Isogogics, interpreting the Bible according to history and culture
- **C**—Categories/topics of Bible doctrine
- **E**—Exegesis, interpreting from the original text

An Atheist Converts Himself

Over two-thirds of the Bible is prophecy. For example, there are over 330 prophecies of the First Coming of Jesus Christ and over 500 of His Second Advent. Fulfilled prophecy is very powerful.

Peter Stoner did an investigation into the probability of prophecy being fulfilled (as quoted in *New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, pp. 193–194, by Josh McDowell, Peter Stoner in his book, *Science Speaks*, pp. 100–110). He declares the possibility of Jesus fulfilling even eight specific prophecies is 1 in 10 to the seventeenth power (equivalent to covering the State of Texas two feet deep with silver dollars, marking one of them, and having someone go into the state and pick this one out of all, **by chance**)! It was this research that led Stoner out of atheism and into faith in Jesus Christ.

Relevant Historical Background

It helps when reading the Gospels and Acts to remember that as a result of both Assyrian (begun in 725 B.C.) and Babylonian captivities (606–587 B.C.), followed by the ravages of Antiochus IV (called Epiphanes), the nation of Israel had undergone major changes. These changes were largely centered in the Eastern and Western factions of the *diaspora* (aorist, passive, participle, “sown as seed,” see Act 8:4).

Although Jerusalem remained the religious center for both, the thinking and culture differed considerably. By this time, the majority of the nation was living outside the land of Israel.

According to Josephus, there was “*no nation in the world which had not among them part of the Jewish people*” (*Jewish Wars*, ii, 16, as quoted by Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Ed. I, p. 5).

In the East, Babylon remained the capital and center of life for what we would call “the Hebrew faction.” Here, the focus was on the zeal for the Law, and the ancient customs were kept alive. These zealots, intensely Hebrew in every way, had nothing but contempt for the “Hellenists,” those Jews of the Western *diaspora*. How interesting that God would choose out of this group Paul, “*a Hebrew of the Hebrews*” (Phi 3:5), to reach the Western wing of the Roman Empire and the Gentiles for Christ. Interestingly, Paul was beheaded outside of Rome—killed at the end of the very persecution he started.

In the West, Alexandria became the center of scholarship and thinking.

As Edersheim (a Christian Jew) notes, “*With those of the East rested the future of Judaism; with them of the West, in a sense, that of the world*” (Ed. I, p. 17). From the Alexandrian school came Philo, the philosopher who gave to the Jews a new conception of the *Logos* (Joh 1:1, Joh 1:14), as well as the Greek version of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint. This version, by the time of Jesus, held the place of the “Authorized Version.” It became, in fact, the “people’s Bible” throughout the Roman Empire, which would soon become the cradle of Christianity.

The evidences of this brief historical sketch are seen, not only in the words Paul used in Philippians to refer to himself as “*a Hebrew of the Hebrews*” (Phi 3:5), but also in the crowd that gathered on Pentecost, “*Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven*” (Act 2:5). They also help explain the later disharmony that led to the choosing of the first deacons, because of “*a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution*” of bread (Act 6:1).

It is worth pointing out that even in the Eastern diaspora, Hebrew was no longer spoken, but rather, Aramaic. Among those of the West, the common language was *Koine* (common) Greek.

An Age of Expectation

In his book, *The Life of Christ*, Archbishop Fulton Sheen shows that during the first century, the whole world was in a state of expectancy. This, he affirms, based on quotes from the time:

- From Rome, Tacitus wrote, “*People were generally persuaded in the faith of the ancient prophecies, that the East was to prevail, and that from Judea was to come the Master and Ruler of the world.*”
- From Suetonius, a Roman historian, we read, “*It was an old and constant belief throughout the East, that by indubitably certain prophecies, the Jews were to attain the highest power.*”
- From the Chinese *Annals of the Celestial Empire* comes the statement, “*In the 24th year of Tchao-Wang of the dynasty of the Tcheou, on the 8th day of the 4th moon, a light appeared in the Southwest which illumined the king’s palace. The monarch, struck by its splendor, interrogated the sages. They showed him books in which this prodigy signified the appearance of the great Saint of the West whose religion was to be introduced into their country.*”
- Among the Greeks, Aeschylus in his *Prometheus*, six centuries before Jesus’ coming, wrote, “*Look not for any end, moreover, to this curse until God appears, to accept upon His head the pangs of thy own sins vicarious.*”
- Cicero mentioned the ancient Greek oracles pointing to a “*King whom we must recognize to be saved.*” Even Plato and Socrates spoke of the *Logos*, and the Universal Wise Man yet to come.

Bishop Sheen goes on to say, “*What separates Christ from all men is that first He was expected ... and [secondly] that once He appeared, He struck history with such impact that He split it in two ... Every other person who ever came into this world came into it to live. He came into it to die ... The Scripture describes Him as ‘the Lamb slain as it were, from the beginning of the world.’”*

And one last lengthy, but worthwhile quote: “*Yet if one searches out the various Messianic currents in the Old Testament, and compares the resulting picture with the life and work of*

Christ, can one doubt that the ancient predictions point to Jesus and the kingdom which He established? God's promise to the patriarchs that through them all the nations of the earth would be blessed; the prediction that the tribe of Juda[h] would be supreme among the other Hebrew tribes until the coming of Him Whom all nations would obey; the strange yet undeniable fact that in the Bible of the Alexandrian Jews, the Septuagint, one finds clearly predicted the virgin birth of the Messia[h]; the prophecy of Isaia[h] 53 about the patient sufferer, the Servant of the Lord, who will lay down his life as a guilt-offering for his people's offences; the perspectives of the glorious everlasting kingdom of the House of David—in whom but Christ have these prophecies found their fulfillment? ... And once the fulfillment of these prophecies did historically take place in the person of Christ, not only did all prophecies cease in Israel, but there was discontinuance of sacrifices when the true Paschal Lamb was sacrificed."

(Above quotes from Sheen, *The Life of Christ*, pp. 2–4).

The Magi from the East knew not only the time, but the sign of His coming—probably passed down from Daniel.

I. The Birth of the Humble King

Isaiah says more about the birth, life, and death of Jesus Christ than any other prophet. Although he couldn't see or understand it all, Isaiah was being faithful to delivering the message God had given him. Consider the three following facts about the birth of Christ:

A. The Necessity of Virgin Conception/Birth—Isa 7:14, Mat 1:20–25

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

In Isa 7:10, Isaiah is speaking to King Ahaz (of the Southern Kingdom), urging him to ask for a sign. The unbelieving Ahaz, in his arrogance, said, *"I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!"* (Isa 7:12). *"'You' is plural here. Isaiah turns from the king whom he has dismissed in judgment and addresses all who are present. The sign is for many. The word 'Lord' speaks of the sovereignty of God, of His great control over all His creation. The pronoun 'Himself' adds an absolute certainty to the impending sign,"* *The Nelson Study Bible*, New King James Version, © 1997, pg. 1123.

Let's address some important questions:

- Why was the *"virgin"* conception seen as a sign of the coming Messiah? Jesus came not just by virgin birth, but by virgin conception. This places the emphasis on God's creative power in bringing Him into the world.
- Why was this important?
- Why is *"begotten"* so unique?

1. There must be virgin conception—Mat 1:20–23; Luk 2:31.
Virgin conception is the only means to have a child born sin-free, and to unite the divine and human nature in one man.
2. There must be virgin birth—Mat 1:24–25.
As a vessel, Mary was to be kept pure from conception to birth of the Savior. This does not suggest that sex in marriage is “dirty,” but only that Mary had a special purpose which was not to be intruded on in any way (Joseph “*did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son,*” Mat 1:25).
3. This results in His identity as the “*only begotten*”—Mat 1:23; Joh 3:16.
Jesus is “*the Son of God.*” Believers are “*sons of God,*” but not in the same sense. He alone is the “*only begotten*” God-man. Our understanding of the words “*only begotten*” can be explained, theologically, as “uniquely born One.” We have been “*born [begotten] again to a living hope*” (1Pe 1:3) by faith in Him.

Compare this with Jer 31:22, “*For the LORD has created a new thing in the earth—a woman shall encompass a man [Hero].*”

It is important to note that the word interpreted “*virgin*” in Isa 7:14 is the Hebrew *almah*, which means “young woman.” The actual Hebrew word meaning “virgin” is *betulah*. In Mat 1:23, the word is *parthenos*, from the Septuagint, which can only mean “*virgin.*” The reason for this is that the prophecy in Isaiah has a typical two-fold fulfillment. The “near” fulfillment has to do with Isaiah’s wife (Isa 8:1–4) and their son, Maher-Shalal-Hash-baz (“speed the spoil, hasten the prey”). The “far” fulfillment is of Mary and the Christ-child. The name “*Immanuel*” anticipates His deity, as in the next prophecy.

B. Son of God and Son of Man—Isa 9:6

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Note that the “*Child is born*” (His humanity), but the “*Son is given*” (His deity). This is the same “*Son*” as in Psa 2:7, Psa 2:12, and Pro 30:4. “*Son*” is the eternal designation of the second member of the Godhead. In Eph 3:14–15, Paul speaks of the concept of “family” as coming from the Godhead: Father, Son, and Spirit.

In the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, we find “undiminished deity and perfect humanity united together in one Person forever.” Theologically, we call this the Hypostatic Union—literally, the substance of the God-man. This is a critical teaching in both Testaments.

C. The Only Mediator—Isaiah 49

“The Lord has called Me from the womb, from the matrix of My Mother He has made mention of My name ... in the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me ... Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him.” Isa 49:1–2, Isa 49:5

Note: In Isa 49:3, the word “*glorified*” is *pa-ar*, meaning “to flash forth,” which is also found in Joh 1:1–4, Joh 1:7–9, Joh 1:14, and Heb 1:1–3, which describe Jesus as “*that Light*” and the “*brightness of His glory*.”

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” 1Ti 2:5

The word “*mediator*” is *mesites*, and implies “one equal to both parties, one who has the interest of both at heart.” Remember that Job in his afflictions lamented, “*Nor is there any mediator between us who may lay his hand on us both*” (Job 9:33). This passage captures perfectly the idea of the interest, concern, and compassion of a true mediator.

Isaiah 49 is actually a conversation between the Father and the Son. In Isa 49:6, Isaiah anticipates the Church, even though he doesn’t understand it fully.

Prophetic/Historical Note

The place of Messiah’s birth was known from Ancient times. Though Mic 5:2 is the best known reference today, and was even in Jesus’ time, as shown by the Scribes’ answer to Herod (Mat 2:5–6), the precise place of His birth was marked out in the time of Abraham (Gen 35:21). The “*tower of Eder*,” meaning “tower of the flock” was just outside of Bethlehem, and was likely raised by Melchizedek.

*“[Just] one mile from Bethlehem is a little plain, in which, under a grove of olives, stands the bare and neglected chapel known by the name of ‘the Angel to the Shepherds’ ... in fields where Ruth, their Saviour’s ancestress, had gleaned, sick at heart, amid the alien corn, and David, the despised and youngest son of a numerous family, had followed the ewes great with young (Psa 78:70–71). Near this spot once stood a tower called Migdal Eder, or ‘Tower of the Flock’ ... The prophet Micah (Mic 4:8; Mic 5:2) had looked to Migdal Eder with Messianic hopes; and St Jerome (wrote) ‘that by its very name it fore-signified by a sort of prophecy the shepherds at the birth of the Lord.’” F.W. Farrar, *The Life of Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 1–2.*

Doctrine: Why is the Virgin Conception/Birth so Crucial?

1. Because of the curse of Adam’s sin, Rom 5:12, by which death entered into the human race. A Savior would have to be born untouched by sin.
2. Because this “sin nature” is passed on by the man, Gen 5:3.

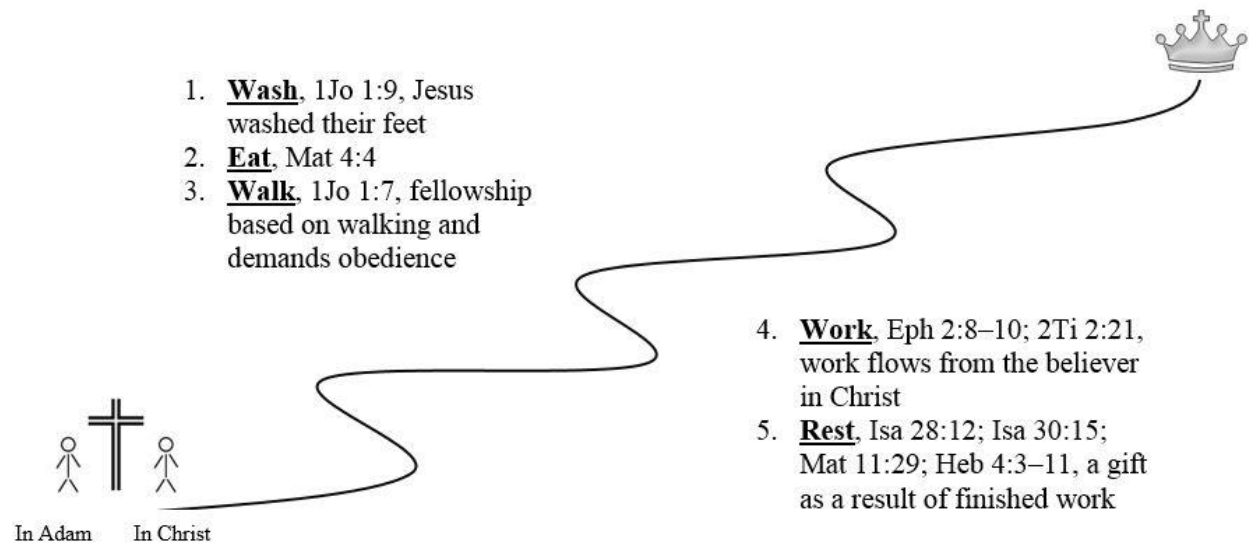
3. To have a sinless Savior, we must have a Son without a human Father, “*The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You,’*” Psa 2:7 (see also Act 13:33).
4. For deity to be united with humanity, we must have a sinless man. Jesus is the only human being born into the world untouched by sin.
5. The term “Son of God” indicates His divine nature; “Son of Man” emphasizes His union with mankind, minus a sin nature.
6. Thus; it was prophesied that He would be called “*Immanuel,*” meaning “God with us,” Isa 7:14; Mat 1:23.
7. Thus, Christ as the “*only begotten Son*” (Joh 3:16) is the only One who could be the sacrificial lamb for mankind’s sin.

Wash, Eat, Walk, Work. Rest

Every day, we have an opportunity to be transformed into the likeness of Christ:

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Rom 12:2

For the sake of simplicity, we’ll just use the above verse.



Every day we take care of our bodies. In order to fulfill the command in 2Pe 3:18, we should also take care of our souls daily:

II. The Forerunner, John the Baptist—Isa 40:1–8

Remember that, as pointed out by Pawson, the book of Isaiah is like the Bible in miniature. The first 39 chapters correspond to the 39 books of the Old Testament. As there is a great change of attitude and atmosphere between the Old Testament and the

New Testament, so it is that in Isaiah chapter 40, we begin a whole new outlook on the redemptive plan of God. It is a change of both context and content.

The historical context changes, first from the threat of Assyria, and then Babylon, to the coming of Messiah. The content goes from warning of impending judgment to the promise of future deliverance. This chapter begins with the words, “*Comfort ... My people! ... the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD’*” (Isa 40:1–3). “*Comfort*” comes from two Hebrew words: *com* which mean “together” and *fortis*, which means “to be strong,” so the word means “strengthened together”—a united effort.

A. The Ministry of the Forerunner of Messiah

After 400 years of silence, without any prophecies, the appearance of John the Baptizer would have been like a bolt of lightning from a clear, blue sky. Suddenly he appears, clothed in the rough camel-hair garment of the prophet Elijah, with a message that was equally as disturbing as his appearance. He calls all Israel to a baptism of repentance, in preparation for the coming of the Lord.

Baptism was used at the time for the induction of Gentile proselytes into Judaism. To demand baptism of a Jew was to declare them as unclean as the heathen. This theological slap-in-the-face was reinforced by the demand for repentance, and this from “sons of Abraham.” Since the prophets of old declared the coming of Messiah to be for both judgment and deliverance, this message implied judgment to those who did not respond. And the implication of John’s message was that the Messiah was already among them. No wonder his appearance and message sent shockwaves through the nation!

In the following references we see the work of John, the last and greatest of Old Testament prophets, foretold and fulfilled in amazing detail.

B. John’s Ministry Foretold—Isa 40:1–8

Here we see three things foretold about the ministry of John:

1. The **motive** of John’s ministry, Isa 40:1–2
“*Comfort, yes, comfort My people ...*” John heralded the coming of Him who would “*give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning,*” Isa 61:3.

Note: Simeon, a “*just and devout man,*” speaks of the same things, “*waiting for the Consolation of Israel,*” Luk 2:25.

2. The **mission** of John’s ministry, Isa 40:3–5
“*Prepare the way of the LORD ...*” Isa 40:3
Only the Lord can straighten what is crooked, cf., Ecc 7:13. Note that “*valley ... mountain*” equals the humble vs. proud (Luk 2:34).

3. The **message** of John's ministry, Isa 40:6–8 (cf., 1Pe 1:22–25)
"The word of our God stands forever," cf., Mat 24:35 and 1Pe 1:22–25.

Note: John the Baptist's message to Israel is not over. His message was to Covenant Israel (corporate) to the individual (their need for a Savior). God's message to us today is from the individual's need for a Savior to (corporate) the Church.

C. John's Ministry Fulfilled—Mar 1:1–8

The Gospel of Mark is held by many to be the first of the Gospel records. It is believed that Mark recorded the story as given to him by the Apostle Peter.

1. As **foretold** "in the Prophets," Mar 1:1–3
Mark uses the prophecies of Mal 1:3 and Isa 40:3, which anticipate the ministry of John the Baptizer. His commission was to "prepare the way of the LORD."
2. As **fulfilled** by John, Mar 1:4–6
John came with a demand for repentance on the part of the nation of Israel. The public ritual of baptism was the means of demonstrating one's confession of sins. This was radical for Israel, for they customarily baptized Gentile proselytes to Judaism. All of this was in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. John's austerity was reminiscent of Elijah.
3. As **found** in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, Mar 1:7–11
As the forerunner, John declared the coming of Messiah. Jesus would bring the far greater baptism of the Holy Spirit. When He came to John to be baptized, John was aghast (Mat 3:13–17). However, it was by this means that Jesus was to be fully identified—both to John and to Israel (Joh 1:31–34).

Doctrine: The Uniqueness of John

1. Jesus declared John to be the "greatest of those born of women," Mat 11:11; Luk 7:28.
This makes him second only to Christ as history's greatest man.
2. John was a Nazarite for life, Luk 1:15.
3. John identified himself as "the friend of the bridegroom," Joh 3:29. Thus, he distinguishes himself and Israel from the "bride of Christ," the Church.
4. John is a "type" of regenerate Israel in her future relationship to Christ. This is anticipated by Zacharias, the father of John, in Luk 1:76–77, where he refers to Isa 40:3.
5. Malachi (in Mal 4:5–6) declared that Elijah would come before the Messiah. Jesus pointed to John, saying, "And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come," Mat 11:14. His meaning is that John fulfills the prophecy if Israel were to receive Him as King. As they did not, in the future, Elijah will indeed precede the Second Coming.
6. The baptism of John is one of seven in Scripture, and is definitely **not** the same as Christian baptism. The word "baptize" goes back into ancient Greece, and means to "identify with" or to "unite with."

Baptisms without Water

- a. Baptism of Moses, 1Co 10:2
Israel identified/united with God's deliverer. (The Israelites passed through the sea on dry ground.)
- b. Baptism of the cross, Luk 12:50
Jesus is willingly identified/united with the sins of mankind. This makes sense of all the other baptisms.
- c. Baptism of the Spirit, Act 1:5; 1Co 12:13
Believers in Christ identified/united with Him in one Body forever.
- d. Baptism of fire, Mat 3:11
Unbelievers are identified/united with judgment/fire—identification of non-identification.

Baptisms with Water

- a. Baptism of John, Mat 3:11; Mar 1:4–5; Luk 3:1–6; Joh 1:31–33
This is for Jews only (cf., Act 2:38) and shows faith in Messiah. This was a call to a Covenant people—the Nation of Israel.
- b. Baptism of Jesus by John, Mat 3:13–17; Joh 1:29–34
This is unique to Jesus alone, the only Savior, Son of God and was to reveal Jesus as the Promised One.
- c. Baptism of Christians, Mat 28:18–20; 1Co 1:17
This baptism is for believers in Christ only—a picture of Spirit baptism.

Prophecy, Providence, and Personal Destiny

1. *“Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,”* Rev 19:10.
Compare with 1Pe 1:10–11 (emphasis added), *“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, **the Spirit of Christ** who was **in them** was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.”*
2. Prophecy proves that only God knows the end from the beginning, Isa 42:8–9; Isa 46:10; Rev 1:5; Act 15:18.
3. Prophecy is an expression of God's omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, Isa 46:9–11 (emphasis added). *“Indeed **I have spoken it**; I will also **bring it to pass**. I have purposed it; I will also do it.”*
4. Providence is God pro-vision today based on his pre-vision from eternity past, Gen 22:14 (emphasis added), *“The-LORD-will-provide [**Jehovah-Jireh**].”*
5. Providence is provided for all, but is only experienced (becomes a reality) by those who believe, Psa 34:7 (emphasis added), *“The **angel of the LORD** encamps all around **those who fear [believe] Him**.”*
6. God's providence includes His plan and personal guidance to every individual, Jer 1:5; Pro 3:5–6. Most of the time, God guides the humble soul that is not even aware of His

direction as a Shepherd, Counselor, Warrior, Helper. These are just a few examples of the way He leads us.

7. God's plan, provision, and guidance will always lead us to His intended purpose:
 - a. First, salvation, 1Ti 2:3–6.
 - b. Then, growth and service, Heb 12:1–2—running our own race, in growth and service.
 - c. Finally, glory and eternal reward—how much will we lose or gain? Mat 25:21–23; 2Ti 4:7–8.

God is truth; He can only know truth. Ravi Zacharias has stated that truth involves three things:

1. It must be coherent—it makes sense.
2. It must be consistent—cannot contradict itself (cannot be true and false at the same time).
3. It must be correlating—to life as we know it.

III. The Mode of His Ministry—The Quiet, yet Mighty, Redeemer

It is astounding that even the manner in which the Messiah would minister was revealed to the prophet Isaiah. In the following passages, we will see the place of Messiah's origin, His message, and the manner in which He conducts His ministry.

How amazing that Isaiah could speak with such precision regarding the Lord Jesus Christ 800 years before His public appearance on the stage of history. Yet, we must remember that when the prophets spoke, or wrote, it was none other than "*the Spirit of Christ who was in them*" by which they were moved (1Pe 1:11). Thus, the words of Isaiah are, in reality, a record of Jesus Christ speaking concerning Himself!

Consider the following eight details about the ministry of our Lord:

A. His First Public Message—Isa 61:1–2a

"The Spirit of the LORD GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor ..."

1. First, we have an Old Testament statement of the Trinity.
2. The word "*anointed*" is *mashach*, from which we get "Messiah." In the Greek (LXX), we have the root (*chrío*) from which we get "Christ."
3. The "gospel" means "good news," in this case, the salvation message.
4. In Luk 4:16–21, we have the fulfillment of this prophecy, as Jesus gave His first public message in Nazareth. He said, "*Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*" (Luk 4:21). The reaction of the people was indicative of the rejection He would face among His own people. At first it was superficially polite, then quickly turned to murderous hatred. Jesus' message meets the same response today.

B. The Light Shining in Galilee—Isa 9:1b–2

*“... the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali ... in Galilee of the Gentiles.
The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who
dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.”*

Matthew quotes Isaiah in Mat 4:15–16 as being fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus in Galilee. This prophecy is especially interesting in light of the reaction of the Pharisees to Nicodemus, when he spoke in defense of Jesus:

“They answered and said to him, ‘Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.’” Joh 7:52

In saying this, the “scholars” of Judaism reveal their ignorance of the Scriptures, for the following prophets were from the region of Galilee:

1. Jonah, who came from “Gath-hepher,” 2Ki 14:25
2. Elijah, who was of Tisbe, 1Ki 17:1
3. Nahum, who came from Elkosh, Nah 1:1

C. His Offer of Spiritual Rest—Isa 28:12

“To whom He said, ‘This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest.’ And, ‘This is the refreshing’; yet they would not hear.”

If we look carefully at Mat 11:28–29, we find an invitation followed by a command. First, “Come to Me,” then “Take My yoke.” Two distinct offers of rest are given. The first is a gift (salvation rest), which can only be received by faith. The second is a reward for service (the yoke) and study (learn from Me).

The first is an invitation to enter into eternal life. The second is a command, to those who believe, to take up the cross of discipleship. The author of Hebrews refers to both.

“For we who have believed do enter that rest ... Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest ...” Heb 4:3, Heb 4:11

Isaiah made it clear that this offer would be rejected (Isa 30:15, Isa 30:18), and this is confirmed by Matthew (Mat 23:37–39).

D. The Voice of God—Isa 50:4–7

“The LORD GOD has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned.”

Three New Testament truths develop out of this passage. First, both John and Jesus declared that what He hears from the Father determines what He speaks (Joh 3:34; Joh 8:26–28, Joh 8:40).

Second, because His message was rejected, He would be persecuted. Compare Isa 50:5–6 with Joh 8:37, Joh 8:40; and Luk 9:51.

Finally, because He brought the message of God to men, He could not be deterred, for as Isaiah predicted, *“I will not be disgraced; therefore I have set My face like a flint.”* (Isa 50:7, compare Luk 9:51).

E. The Tender Shepherd—Isa 40:11

“... He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.”

Look at the context of this verse, and we see that the *“shepherd”* is none other than *“the LORD GOD”* (Isa 40:10), the Creator (Isa 40:12–14), the Sovereign of the universe (Isa 40:21–23). Three great evidences of the heavenly Shepherd are noted in the New Testament:

1. He deals gently with the weak and bruised among men.
“A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench ...”
Isa 42:2–4 with Mat 12:18–21.
2. His strength is a shield and support for the small and vulnerable.
“And He took them [little children] up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them,” Mar 10:16.
3. He brings life to men by laying down His own for us.
“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep”
Joh 10:11.

F. The Heavenly Bridegroom—Isa 25:6–9

“And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well refined wines on the lees ... He will swallow up death forever, and the LORD GOD will wipe away tears from all faces ... We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”

1. Jesus began His earthly ministry with a sacrament/ritual—that of baptism, which looked forward to the cross (Mat 20:22; Luk 12:50). As indicated earlier, the baptism of Jesus is unique to Him, and points to the baptism of the cross, on which all the baptisms depend.

2. Jesus ended His ministry with another sacrament/ritual—that of the Last Supper, which looks forward to the inauguration of His earthly kingdom (Mat 26:29; Luk 22:18, Luk 22:28–30).

Note: This anticipates the wedding supper/kingdom feast. More on this later. See 2Co 11:2; Eph 5:25–27 and Rev 21:1–4 for the Bride.

G. The Humble Nazarene—Isa 11:1–5, Isa 11:10

“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD ... but with righteousness He shall judge the poor ... and faithfulness [shall be] the belt of His waist.”

1. Isa 11:1–5, 10, the branch of Jesse—Mat 2:23, *“which was spoken by the prophets.”* Three great truths contained here:
 - a. He must be of the line of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah. Compare Gen 49:10 and 2Sa 7:12–16.
 - b. He will be called *“the Branch”* (root word *netzer*, from which comes “Nazarene,” see Isa 4:2; Jer 23:6; Jer 33:15–16; Zec 3:8; Zec 6:12). Thus, God gave specific guidance to Joseph to return to Nazareth (Mat 2:19–23).
 - c. The *“Branch”* is identified as *“the LORD”* (Jehovah) in Jer 23:6; Jer 33:16, and as a *“man”* in Zec 6:12.
2. Isa 53:1–3, the *“root out of dry ground.”* He comes of the line of David, which appears to be dead.
3. His identity declared—He is God in the flesh, Isa 43:11, Isa 43:14, Isa 43:25; Isa 44:6; Isa 45:15 with Tit 2:10; Tit 3:4 (God and Savior); Isa 47:4; Isa 48:12 with Rev 1:8; Rev 22:13

H. The “Elect” Servant of God—Isa 42:1

“Behold My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.”

This is a very critical passage and reveals some fundamental truths that are all too often overlooked, resulting in much false teaching:

1. This is the first use of the word *“elect”* in the Bible. Because Jesus Christ is the *“Elect,”* all other references to election imply some relationship between *“the elect”* and *“the Elect.”*

2. The second great point is that election involves a servant relationship. Election has to do with service in the plan of God.
3. Finally, the accomplishment of the “service” intended by election depends on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. In His humanity, Jesus “*emptied Himself*” (Phi 2:7) so as to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit, just as we are to do.
4. God’s plan of election would include not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles. This would be a shock to Judaism!

With these points in mind, we are able to establish the primary facts about the doctrine of election:

1. All election implies some relationship to Jesus Christ, the Elect One.
 - a. The relationship of Israel as a nation is physical and racial. Israel was chosen by God as the means of bringing the Savior into the world.
 - b. Jacob, not Esau, was the chosen vessel for bringing the Messiah into the world (Mal 1:2–3; Rom 9:13). The words, “*Jacob I have loved, Esau I have hated*” do not imply emotion, and could be written “Jacob I have chosen, Esau I have not chosen.” These words mean exactly the same when Jesus said we must hate our husband, wife, or children to be His disciple (Luk 14:26). He is not speaking of emotion, but of choice. We must always choose Him and His will over our natural affections and inclinations.
2. This election is to service (not salvation) relating to His eternal purpose. Israel’s service was to bring both the written and the living Word into the world. This does not imply salvation for all who are of Israel, yet they are collectively called “the elect.”
3. While the relationship of Israel to the Messiah is physical and national, that of the Church is spiritual—based on faith. We are, as Paul says, elect (chosen) “*in Him before the foundation of the world*” (Eph 1:4). When God named the Son as “*the Elect*,” this choice automatically included those who would bring Him into the world (Israel) and all those who would believe in Him (the Church). Thus any Jew, being a member of the elect nation, who rejected Jesus Christ, would become “non-elect” (Rom 2:28–29; Rom 9:26–36). The one point the committed Calvinist never seems to get in Romans 9 is that Israel, declared to be the elect of God at the beginning of the chapter (Rom 9:1–5), has by the end of the chapter become the “non-elect” by their own unbelief (Rom 9:30–32).
4. Election is corporate; the term in the New Testament is always in the plural sense of “a company of chosen ones,” even in 2Jo 1:1 and 2Jo 1:13, where the “*elect lady ... elect sister*” appear to refer to churches. Only when used of Christ (as in 1Pe 2:6) is the singular used. Again, all election relates to Christ! In other words, we are “elect in Him” because He is “*the Elect One*.”

5. Apart from a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, election means nothing. **God does not choose some to believe, while rejecting others.** Faith is the way of salvation which is open to every member of the human race, Joh 3:16; Rom 4:3, 23–24; Gal 3:8–9; 1Ti 2:3–6; 2Pe 3:9; 1Jo 2:2.

Conclusion: In the case of Israel, we have a nation that was “chosen” in Abraham who, only by choosing not to believe, could lose the privileges given to them (Rom 9:1–5). In the case of the Gentiles, we have the nations that were “hated” (i.e., not “chosen”), who—only by choosing to believe—could enter into the company of “the elect in Christ.” This is the great point made in Hos 1:10 and Rom 9:24–26.

IV. His Passion/Crucifixion—Isa 52:13–53:12, God Suffers for Men

When I was a Bible college student, I had an acquaintance who worked at a Jewish high school. Each day, they read a portion of the Old Testament over the intercom. My friend was asked to read one day and read Isaiah 53. He was fired from his job, for trying to present Christianity to the students!

Beginning in Isa 52:13, we have a song of sorrow and triumph. The prophet Isaiah could be called “the singing prophet.” Earlier, in Isaiah 5, he sang a song to his “*well-beloved*” and His vineyard (see also Isaiah 27, a song of victory). Here, beginning in Isa 52:13, we have a song of the suffering Savior. It is given in five stanzas as follows.

A. The Victorious Conquering Servant—Isa 52:13–15

The nations will be astonished, when they see the Servant, who was rejected and disfigured, exalted to the position of “King of kings.” He will be exalted and “*given ... [a] name which is above every name,*” and before Him every knee **will** bow and every tongue **will** confess that He is Lord (Phi 2:9–11). This passage declares that He will bear all the scars of His scourging and crucifixion forever, as does Zec 12:10.

B. The Rejected “Man of Sorrows”—Isa 53:1–3

In the eyes of God, this world is a spiritual desert. Yet out of this “*dry ground*” there comes a “*tender plant*” which is beautiful in God’s estimate. Yet, to sinful men “*there is no beauty that we should desire Him,*” because “*man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart*” (1Sa 16:7). Jesus, the “*Man of sorrows*” found no place of esteem among men, but was rather despised. In the scars of Christ, we see the love of God.

C. The Stricken Substitute—Isa 53:4–6

Here, we see the reason for God’s love for Him, and also man’s disdain. He was indeed a “*stricken*” man, “*smitten by God and afflicted.*” But it was “*for our iniquities ... our transgressions ... for our peace.*” The price of reconciliation to God was His voluntary substitution as our sacrificial Lamb. The grief He bore throughout

His life, the affliction and the wounding—both of soul and body—was rightfully ours. Our healing required His death. So that, *“having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Rom 5:1).

Note: God’s worst judgment on us is when He allows us to reap what we have sown. His judgment on Christ was that Jesus had to reap what He did not sow.

D. The Silent Lamb of God—Isa 53:7–9

The Bible is very clear on the silence of Jesus through His sufferings, both during the interrogation and through the scourging and crucifixion. This is important because, not until our sins were poured out on Him did He scream in agony (Psa 22:1; Mat 27:45–46). Isaiah makes it clear that *“for the transgressions of My people He was stricken ...”* and that *“He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.”* Thus, at the cross, Jesus fulfilled the typical significance of every lamb slain in sacrifice since the foundation of the world—the innocent dying for the guilty.

E. The Exalted Mediator—Isa 53:10–12

Now the reason is given for why *“He was stricken [of God]”* and why *“it pleased the LORD to bruise Him.”* Here, the heavenly Father is said to join with the Son in *“the joy ... set before Him”* (Heb 12:2). When any man, woman, or child will *“make His soul an offering for sin,”* by faith, the Father *“shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.”*

In these passages, we have the great Doctrine of Propitiation (see also 1Jo 2:2)—the satisfaction of all of God’s righteous demands for the penalty of sin, paid in full by Jesus on the cross. Because of His sacrifice, *“My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.”* He will gain a kingdom as *“a portion with the great,”* and *“He shall divide the spoil with the strong.”* Isaiah not only foretells of Christ’s work of redemption to those who believe, but goes beyond into eternity, to His work of rewarding those who grow and serve Him by faith.

What is the outcome of our Savior’s agony on the cross? As Isaiah said in Isa 12:2–3:

“Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation. Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”

This is the hope, the help, and the heritage of the child of God!

Doctrine: What are the Chief Undertakings of the Cross?

On the cross, Jesus Christ was judged for sin, broke the power of Satan, and provided a way of salvation for all men:

1. **Substitution**—1Co 15:3; 2Co 5:21; 1Pe 2:24; 2Pe 3:8; 2Pe 4:1
On the cross, Christ took our place and paid our debt for sins.
2. **Redemption**—Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; 1Pe 1:8
The spiritual debt of sins for the world was paid in full. We claim the benefit of this payment by simple faith alone, in Christ alone.
3. **Propitiation**—Rom 3:25; 1Jo 2:2; 1Jo 4:10
God the Father was satisfied with the work of the Son on our behalf. He requires nothing more from us but faith in His Son.
4. **Expiation**—Col 2:13–14; Joh 3:17–19
The charges against us, enunciated by the Law, have been blotted out forever. This is true to the extent that even the lost are condemned—not on the basis of their sins, but because of their unbelief.
5. **Imputation**—Rom 5:12–21; 2Co 5:21; Rom 4:3, Rom 4:11, Rom 4:23–24
Our sins were judicially imputed to Jesus Christ by the Father, so that His righteousness might be imputed to those who believe.
6. **Justification**—Rom 3:24, Rom 3:28; Gal 2:16; Gal 3:8
Believers are therefore declared righteous based on the merits of Christ. Justification is not “just as if I never sinned”—a superficial ditty. Rather, it is “just as if I were as righteous as Jesus Christ, and I am!”
7. **Reconciliation**—Rom 5:10; 2Co 5:18, 2Co 5:20; Col 1:21
We who were enemies are now made beloved sons. This reconciliation has strong ramifications of spiritual responsibility for the daily life of the believer; we are to “*walk worthy,*” Eph 4:1.
8. **Glorification**—Joh 7:39; Joh 12:16, Joh 12:23; Joh 13:31; Joh 17:1, Joh 17:5; Rom 8:30
As surely as we are justified, we shall yet be glorified forever. We should not assume, however, that we will all be “equal” in rank or status, as the next point clarifies.
9. **Eternal reward**—Mat 19:29–30; Mar 10:29–31; 2Ti 2:12; 2Ti 4:7–8
Eternal rewards are offered to believers for faithful living. There are rewards for one-time acts (Mat 10:41–42). There are greater rewards for sacrificial living (Mat 19:29). The greatest rewards, called “crowns,” are given for a lifetime of steady growth, service, and faithfulness (1Co 9:18–27; 2Ti 4:7–8; Jam 1:12; Rev 2:10).

V. **Universal Invitation—Isa 55:1**
Formation of the Church—Isa 65:1–16; Isa 66:18–23; Rom 10:20–21

We know that the existence of the company called the Church, and the dispensation “*of the grace of God,*” is included in what Paul calls “*the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God*” (Eph 3:9). But, while the specifics about the Church, and her spiritual identity “in Christ” was not made known, there are hints and general indications which are given. This is why Paul is able to argue—even with the learned Pharisees—from the Old Testament, regarding the new work of God following the cross (Romans 9–11 is the most extensive passage: Rom 9:27–29, Rom 9:33; Rom 10:11, Rom 10:15, Rom 10:20–21; Rom 11:8, Rom 11:26–27, Rom 11:34).

The following are seven facts regarding the present dispensation anticipated by Isaiah:

A. The Outcast Savior—Isa 65:1–2; Rom 10:20–21, see also Jer 14:8–9

“I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me ... I have stretched out My hands all day long to a rebellious people ...”

Jesus, having been rejected by His own people (Joh 1:11) would be welcomed and received by the Gentiles. Those who were “not My people” would, in fact, become “*the people of God*” (Hos 1:10; Rom 9:25).

Again, what this means is that those initially called “the elect” became non-elect by unbelief, and the non-elect Gentiles became “the elect” by faith.

B. The Last Supper—Isa 25:6–9; Isa 65:13–16

“And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees [long preserved] ... Behold, My servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, My servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, My servants shall rejoice, but you shall be ashamed ... [and He shall] call His servants by another name ...”
Isa 25:6, with Isa 65:13–15

Consider what a shock this prophecy would be to the typical Jew of Jesus’ time. The rabbis taught Israel that a great feast, at which the Messiah would be host, would inaugurate His kingdom. It was believed that Psa 23:5 pointed to this feast. In fact, according to Edersheim, the rabbis taught that David would give thanks at that feast, based on Psa 112:9–10 and Psa 116:12–15.

Yet, surely Jesus must have had the above prophecies in mind, when He told the Jews, “*And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,*” Mat 8:11–12, cf., Mat 26:28–29 and especially Luk 22:28–30. Also, see Edersheim on Mat 8:11–12, Vol. I, pp. 549–551. “*Sons of the kingdom*” was a rabbinical term in use in Jesus’ day by the Jews for themselves, as recipients of the covenant of Moses.

In their theology, all of Israel were “*sons of the kingdom,*” and all Gentiles were “*children of Ghinnom,*” the place of “*outer darkness.*” It was taught by the rabbis that no Gentile could attend the feast.

Consider Edersheim’s comment ...

“Never, surely, could the Judaism of His hearers have received more a rude shock than by this inversion of all their cherished beliefs. There was a feast of Messianic fellowship, recognition on the part of the King of all His faithful subjects, a joyous festive gathering with the fathers of the faith. But this

fellowship was not of outward, but of spiritual kinship. There were 'children of the Kingdom,' and there was an 'outer darkness' with its anguish and despair. But this child-ship was of the Kingdom, such as He had opened it to all believers; and that outer darkness theirs, who had only outward claims to present," Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Vol. I, pg. 551.

Note: Jesus began His ministry with the ritual of baptism by John, and ended it with the ritual of the Lord's Table. Both spoke of His death. The first showed His identification with sinners, the second of believing sinners' spiritual identification with Him!

C. The Unmistakable Sign—Isa 28:11–12

"For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, to whom He said, 'This is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest,' and 'This is the refreshing'; yet they would not hear."

Here, we have what is clearly a prophecy of tongues, even as Paul quotes it as such in 1Co 14:21–22. He goes on to say that tongues was a sign to unbelieving Israel, which is precisely Isaiah's point. Because Israel fell over the stumbling-stone (Psa 118:22–24), they would *"fall backward, and be broken and snared and caught"* (Isa 28:13), a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. But to those who believe, the "stumbling-stone" becomes *"a precious cornerstone"* (compare Isa 28:16 with 1Pe 2:6–8). The gift of tongues would pass away, along with the revelation gifts according to 1Co 3:9–1Co 14:39.

D. The Great Commission—Isa 52:7–10 with Mat 28:18–20; Rom 10:14–20

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him who brings good news ... Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations ... and how shall they preach unless they are sent?"

Isa 52:7, with Mat 28:19 and Rom 10:15

As Edersheim points out, the beautiful feet Isaiah speaks of belong to Jesus Christ. And in Luk 7:36–38, we see one who recognized the beauty of those feet! (*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Vol. I, pp. 562–569.) Mary of Bethany's world was changed as she acknowledged those beautiful feet!

It is also worth taking note that as this message of the good news of His mighty redemption spreads, first through His ministry, and then through His followers, the ultimate victory is anticipated.

"... to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath."

Isa 45:23, compare Phi 2:10–11

E. The Gentile Harvest—Isa 65:1–5; Isa 66:18–21

“I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, ‘Here I am, here I am,’ to a nation that was not called by My name. I have stretched out My hands all day to a rebellious people ...” Isa 65:1–2

“It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory ... and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles ... other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring ... and there will be one flock and one shepherd.” Isa 66:18–19, with Joh 10:16

These are but some of many passages in the prophets that anticipate the ingathering of the Gentile believers. The Jews of Jesus’ day may have anticipated this, as Gentile proselytes. But they could never have imagined what would become, primarily through Paul’s labors, the predominantly Gentile Church.

F. The Armor of God—Isa 59:15–21

“For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance ... But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh ... Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand ...”
Isa 59:17, with Rom 13:14; Eph 6:11

When we put on the armor of God, we are putting on the garments and weapons of salvation. In essence, we “*put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness*” (Eph 4:24). This involves the conscious laying aside of all that pertains to the “old man,” and the taking up, by faith, of all that is of Christ. The very life of Christ, which He lived in the Spirit, is ours by that same Spirit who indwells us. Therefore, even though we live in a mortal (dying) body, He imparts His life to us through the Spirit (Rom 6:11–12; Rom 8:11). Jesus was the first Person to wear the armor—He is the Armor of God! Satan cannot defeat the armor of God because it belongs to Jesus and he cannot defeat Jesus Christ.

This is the real nature of the spiritual warfare we are to fight.

G. The Rapture of the Church—Isa 60:1, Isa 60:8

“Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you ... Who are these who fly like a cloud, and like doves to their roosts?”

While there is no specific reference to the Rapture of the Church in the Old Testament, this passage was used by Tertullian in his debate against Marcion. He

used it to support the idea of the Rapture. Paul makes it very clear, except to those who are willingly blind, that the Church must be removed before God continues His final work in Israel (Rom 11:25–29).

VI. The Regathering of Israel, Tribulation, Second Advent—Isa 63:1–10; Mat 24:29–44

“Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? ... I have trodden the winepress alone ...”

Isa 63:1–3, compare Mat 24:29–30 and Rev 14:14–20

The restoration of Israel as a regenerate nation is absolutely essential to the plan of God. He has promised that He would do it, and He will keep His word. Those who suggest that all of God’s promises to Israel have been transferred to the Church simply do not understand either the character of God or His prophetic plan. If God does not keep His word to Israel, how can we be sure He will keep His promises to the Church?

A. The Divine Conversation—Isaiah 49

In this amazing passage, we have a conversation that goes back and forth between the Son and the Father. Though the Son expresses that His labor over Israel is *“in vain ... for nothing”* (Isa 49:4), the Father assures Him:

1. His work will bring Jacob back to God, Isa 49:5.
2. That He will *“raise up the tribes of Jacob, and ... restore the preserved ones of Israel”* (Isa 49:6).
3. That although Christ is *“a light to the Gentiles”* (Isa 42:6), yet He is also *“the Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One”* (Isa 49:7).
4. In despair, even Zion says, *“the LORD has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me”* (Isa 49:14).
5. God’s response is, *“can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? ... I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands”* (Isa 49:15–16).

No one could ever read and believe these passages and think that God has forsaken or forgotten Israel!

B. Israel Regathered—Isa 11:11–12

“It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left.”

Isaiah predicted the Babylonian captivity (Isaiah 39), and Jeremiah anticipated the return from it (Jer 29:10). That was the first time Israel was regathered to their land. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and subsequent scattering of the nation,

brought the need for a second regathering. This is in the process of being accomplished even now.

Israel became a nation “*again*” in 1948 after 2,000 years of dispersion. Israel is back in the land, but in unbelief. However, their spiritual awakening will come soon.

“Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once?” Isa 66:8

This is what happened for Israel. On May 14, 1948, a nation, not in existence for 2,000 years, came back with the same religion, the same language, and the same currency. Such things do not happen apart from the power of God.

C. The Day of the Lord—Isaiah 13

“Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty ... Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger; to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it.” Isa 13:6, Isa 13:9

The day of the Lord is a common theme throughout the prophets. We will not look at all the passages, for there are many, but consider these five things from this chapter:

1. It will be the final judgment on Babylon, Isa 13:1, Isa 13:19–22, cf., Revelation 17–18.
2. It will be a time of great spiritual warfare, Isa 13:3–5, cf., Revelation 9.
3. All sinners will be devoured by it, Isa 13:6–9, Isa 13:15–16, cf., Rev 14:17–20.
4. The sun, moon, and stars will be darkened, Isa 13:10–13; cf., Mat 24:29.
5. It will be the time of Israel’s deliverance, Isa 14:1–2.

Note: The Church has **not** been appointed to wrath, 1Th 1:10; 1Th 5:9.

D. The Coming of Antichrist—Isaiah 14

It was Zane Hodges, I believe, in a book entitled, *Power to Make War*, who first introduced me to the idea of the “*Assyrian*” in the prophets. As I recall, there were six major passages he referred to. We will take note of just a couple:

“That I will break the Assyrian in My land, and on My mountains tread him underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, and his burden removed from their shoulders.” Isa 14:25

1. Interestingly, this occurs in the passage about the fall of Lucifer, Isa 14:13–15.
2. Yet, he is identified as “*the man who made the earth tremble ... who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners,*” Isa 14:16–17.

3. Both Babylon and Assyria are empires used by Satan to persecute Israel, and permitted by God to discipline them.
4. Mic 5:5–6 says, *“When the Assyrian comes into our land, and when he treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princely men ... thus He shall deliver us from the Assyrian, when he comes into our land ...”*
5. This is obviously a Tribulational passage, and the Assyrian could only be Antichrist.

E. Israel Restored (Back to God in Faith)—Isa 28:5–6; Isa 35:10; Isa 61:2–3; Revelation 7

“In that day the LORD of hosts will be for a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people.” Isa 28:5

“And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads ...” Isa 35:10

“He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted ... to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ...” Isa 61:1b, 3

In Mat 21:18–22, Jesus cursed the fig tree—a symbol of the curse coming on Israel. In the context, He made it clear that the issue was faith versus unbelief. Later, He spoke again of the fig tree as a parable (Mat 24:32–35)—a picture of the coming destruction of Jerusalem within that very generation. The nation of Israel has been under that curse for 2,000 years. However, the joyous day is coming when Israel will be delivered from that curse, by their faith, and by His soon return.

The beginning of their awakening will be the opening of the eyes and the sealing of 144,000 Jewish evangelists (this is like 144,000 Apostle Pauls), who will carry the message of Christ to a Tribulation-darkened world (Rev 7:1–8).

F. The Second Coming/Advent—Isa 34:4; Isa 63:1–14; Mat 24:29–35

“All the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll ...” Isa 34:4
Compare Mat 24:29:30 and Rev 6:12–17

“Who is this who comes from Edom ... why is Your apparel red ... like one who treads in the winepress?” Isa 63:1–2

There are several great truths brought out in these passages:

1. The second coming will bring vengeance on the earth for unbelief, Isa 34:1–3, Isa 34:5–6.
2. This vengeance will begin with Edom (Arabia), Isa 34:5–6—Isa 63:1.

3. This vengeance will be for Israel, who is hated by the nations, *“in all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them ... but they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit,”* Isa 63:9–10.
4. None of these prophecies shall fail, Isa 34:16; Mat 24:35.

G. The Millennial Kingdom—Isa 11:1–10; Isa 59:20–21; Isa 60:1–7; Isa 61:1–11; Isa 62:1–12

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat ... For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” Isa 11:6–9

“‘As for Me,’ says the LORD, ‘this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from your descendants’ descendants,’ says the LORD, ‘from this time and forevermore.’” Isa 59:21

Read all of Isa 11:1–10; Isa 50:20–60:3; Isa 61:1–4; and Isa 62:1–12. These are amazing promises to the nation of Israel!

H. The Tale of Three Kings

Throughout the book of Isaiah, three kings are mentioned repeatedly: the king of Assyria (the threat in Isaiah’s day, and a “type” of Antichrist), the king of Babylon (future—time of Jeremiah) and the coming King of Israel (Messiah).

Isaiah wrote when the kingdom of Babylon did not exist (he lived in the time of Sennacherib of Assyria, Isa 36:1). Yet, he warned of Babylon, which would not come for over 100 years. He even spoke of Cyrus of Persia (Isa 44:28; Isa 45:1–4, Isa 45:13), 150 years before his birth (See Ezr 1:1, Ezr 1:7). Note that in 1Ki 13:2, there is a similar example, naming Josiah 300 years before his birth.

Yet the burden of Isaiah, and the theme running through the book, is the King of righteousness is coming, and every soul must choose either to stand with Him, by faith, or stand alone in unbelief.

Why God Must Judge—Isaiah 65:1–19

1. Because He invites everyone to come and to take His life freely, Isa 65:1
2. Because there are some who will not believe under any circumstances, Isa 65:2, Isa 65:5
3. Because we must reap what we have sown, Isa 65:13–15
4. Because Heaven has no place for sin, Isa 65:17–19

VII. The Eternal Kingdom—Isa 60:19–22; Isa 65:17–25; Rev 21:1–8, Rev 21:22–27

In many passages of Isaiah, it is difficult to separate Millennial from eternal references. Often, there is a mixture of Tribulational/Millennial or Millennial/eternal figures. This is because, from the prophet’s perspective, “the Kingdom” goes right on from time into eternity.

A. Eternal Light, Eternal Joy—Isa 60:19–21

It is good to note that with “*everlasting light*,” there is everlasting righteousness. God is the glory of His people, but they are “*the work of My hands*.” The picture is one of great mutual delight.

B. New Heavens and Earth—Isa 65:17–19

Again, the theme and central thought is eternal joy—both on the part of God, and of His people. God rejoices in His people, and they rejoice in Him. He says, “*Be glad and rejoice forever in what I create ...*” In this world, with its mix of joys and sorrows, the concept of eternal, perpetual, unending joy is difficult to grasp. However, it is good to hold fast to these promises in painful and difficult times.

C. Eternal Worship or Eternal Doom?—Isa 66:22–24, cf., Mal 4:6b

Isaiah ends with promise and warning. It is like the question we put on the little coin, “*Where will you spend eternity?*” This is the most critical question a soul can contemplate, and each individual must give an answer.

The figure of the worm is used also in Isa 14:11 for Lucifer’s end. Some have suggested the “*worm*” is the continual eating of the conscience of the unbeliever.

It is also a figure Jesus emphasized three times in Mar 9:44–48. Today, hell is rarely spoken of, yet Jesus warned of the consequence of death apart from faith in Him. Again, each and every soul stands accountable for the choice of where they will spend eternity.

It is interesting that the Old Testament Canon ends with a similar warning in Mal 4:2, Mal 4:6b, “*But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings ... lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.*” The vital question of every book of the Bible is always this:

- faith or unbelief?
- righteousness or unrighteousness?
- life or death?
- eternal joy or eternal grief?

Take note of the difference of the ending of the New Testament in Rev 22:20–21:

“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”

What a difference faith makes! It makes all the difference in the world—and in all of eternity. It is my prayer that this study will challenge every soul to choose wisely, to choose faith in Jesus Christ, and to build on that foundation a life that is worthy of His name.

Conclusions: Three Things Isaiah Has to Say to the U.S.A. Today

1. The judgment of God upon a nation that turns away from Him is terrible beyond words.
2. The hope, security, and blessings of God are available to all who will first trust in Jesus Christ, and then grow in wisdom, obedience, and service.
3. As sure as the prophecies of Christ’s first coming have proved to be, so will be those of His second coming, and all related events.

Three Things to Believers

1. Do your part to make Him known: Pray, Tell, Give!
2. Do not grow weary in serving/waiting for His return—redeem the time!
3. Strengthen others—be vigilant, Isa 35:3–4; Heb 12:12.