

Isaiah: The Fifth Gospel — Week 1: Orientation to Reading Isaiah

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- Why read Isaiah?
 - It's God's Word! The struggle to read it is part of the reward, and leads to greater reward
 - NT reliance on Isaiah. Isaiah shapes books such as Mark, Luke, Romans, 1 Peter; heavily influences others. Examples:
 - Matt 3:1-3 – Isa 40:3
 - Lk 4:16-21 – Isa 61:1-2
 - Acts 28:23-28 – Isa 6:9-10
 - Rom 9:27-29 – Isa 10:22-23; Isa 1:9
 - Rom 10:20-21 – Isa 65:1-2
 - 1 Cor 14:21-22 – Isa 28:11
 - Mark 1:10 – Isa 64:1 (MT 63:19b)
 - 1 Peter 2:21-25 – Isa 53
 - Mark 12:1 – Isa 5:1-2
 - Eph 6:14-17 – Isa 11:5; 59:17; 52:7
 - Rev 4:8 – Isa 6:2
 - Spans a large swathe of OT history, straddles the exile (formative event)
 - Law/Psalms → Isaiah → NT; teaches us to read the Bible (Scripture interpreting Scripture)
 - It's beautiful and influential literature!
 - Events for which we have extrabiblical evidence/accounts – interesting
- What makes the book of Isaiah intimidating? — Low-shelf vs. high-shelf cookies
 - Length and scope
 - Prophecy
 - Poetry
 - New Testament reliance on Isaiah
- Six hermeneutical lenses for reading the Old Testament (HT: Poythress).
 - **Exemplary reading.** + Identifies with people. Direct, forceful application. – Human-centered. Moralistic; no gospel. No Christ.
 - **Prediction and Fulfillment.** How is this direct prediction fulfilled in history? + Demonstrates God's sovereignty. Unity of salvation plan. – Most texts are not predictive in the strict sense, including prophetic texts. May distract from typological fulfillment. May neglect application.
 - **Typology.** How does this point ahead to Christ (or the church)? + Thoroughly Christ-centered. Underlines unity of salvation. Preaches the gospel. – May sublimate the earlier story. May neglect original context. May neglect application.
 - **Allegory.** Indirect connection between the text and a moral or spiritual ideal. (Contrast: *typology* sees an organic spiritual connection between type and antitype.) +/- : similar to that of typology—but not even as tethered to the original historical context as good typological readings should be.
- **God's-Character approach** (Systematic-theological). What does this passage reveal about God, humanity, the world? + Thoroughly God-centered. Underlines truth holding now. – May eliminate history. May remain remote from human struggle. Lecture on doctrine and not application. Not wholly Christ-centered.
- **Preparation approach** (Redemptive-historical). How did God work history forward? + Unrepeatable events. Text in its historical context. God-centered. – Loses sense of commonality. Lecture without application. Not always wholly Christ-centered.
- Read Isaiah 7:1–17 (10–14). **Prediction and Fulfillment.** Fulfilled in Isaiah's own son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, Isa 8? Or Hezekiah? Or Jesus? Problem: Hebrew says *'almah*, "young woman," not *betulah*, "virgin"; one Greek version says *parthenos*, "virgin." Matt 1:23 quotes "virgin." What does he mean, "this was to fulfill"? Was Matthew wrong? **Typology.** Definitely Jesus. Sign-child, demonstrates God's presence with his people through crisis, coming salvation.
- Context(s)
 - Chronology of Isaiah ben-Amoz
 - Isaiah likely knew the work of earlier prophets such as Amos and Micah
 - 745: Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria rises to power
 - 740/39: Death of Uzziah (Azariah) of Judah (Isa 6:1)
 - 735: Syro-Ephraim crisis. Syria and NK try to recruit Ahaz to fight with them against Assyria (Isa 7–10)
 - 722: Fall of NK to Assyria
 - 705: Death of Sargon II of Assyria
 - 701: Hezekiah rebels, but Sennacherib invades all Judah except Jerusalem (Isa 36–37)
 - Later relevant dates
 - 612–609: Defeat of Assyria by Babylon
 - 598: Babylon prevails in Judah
 - 587: Zedekiah rebels, temple destroyed, exile to Babylon
 - 539: Cyrus II (the Great) of Persia defeats Babylon (Isa 44–45)
 - c. 520–515: Second Temple built
 - 332: Alexander the Great conquers Persian Empire

The Book of Isaiah — Speaking Into Various Contexts

Part I c. 740-680	Isaiah 1-12	Alternating Condemnation and Hope (1-5) Commissioning (6) Syro-Ephraimite Crisis; Assyria on the Rise (7-10)
	Isaiah 13-27	Oracles Concerning the Nations
	Isaiah 28-35	Syro-Ephraimite Crisis Assyria on the Rise
	Isaiah 36-39 // 2 Kings 18-20	c. 715-701 Sennacherib (Assyria) Crisis
Babylonian Period (598-539)		
Part II c. 550-540	Isaiah 40-55	Babylonian conquest has already happened; New Exodus on the horizon Audacious hope in YHWH Cyrus of Persia rising (45) Inclusion of the Gentiles
Part III c. 530-500	Isaiah 56-66	Return from exile is disappointing Hopes fully “eschatologized” Inclusion of the Gentiles