

Analysis of the Book of Isaiah

George L. Robinson, The Book of Isaiah

The Six General Divisions of the Book

1. Chapters 1–12, prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem, closing with promises of restoration and a psalm of thanksgiving.
2. Chapters 13–23, oracles of judgment and salvation, for the most part concerning those foreign nations whose fortunes affected Judah and Jerusalem.
3. Chapters 24–27, Jehovah's world-judgment, issuing in the redemption of Israel.
4. Chapters 28–35, a cycle of prophetic warnings against alliance with Egypt, closing with a prophecy concerning Edom and a promise of Israel's ransom.
5. Chapters 36–39, history, prophecy and song intermingled; serving both as an appendix to chapters 1-35, and as an introduction to chapters 40–66.
6. Chapters 40–66, prophecies of comfort, salvation, and of the future glory awaiting Israel.

(The student would do well to mark off in some way these six divisions in his Bible; perhaps adding the headings in the margin.)

Chapters 1-12

Prophecies Concerning Judah and Jerusalem

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| Chapter 1. | Jehovah's lament over Israel; an introduction striking the chief notes of the entire book: (1) thoughtlessness, verses 2-9; (2) formalism, verses 10-17; (3) pardon, verses 18-23; (4) redemption, verses 24-31. |
| Chapters 2–4. | Three pictures of Zion: (1) her future exaltation, 2:2-4; (2) her present idolatry, 2:5-4:1; (3) her eventual purification, 4:2-6. |
| Chapter 5. | Isaiah's arraignment of Judah and Jerusalem: (1) parable of the vineyard, verses 1-7; (2) a series of six woes, verses 8-23; (3) first description of the Assyrian invaders, verses 24-30. |
| Chapter 6. | The prophet's inaugural vision and commission. |
| Chapters 7:1–9:7. | The prophecy of Immanuel; history and prediction being intermingled. |
| Chapters 9:8–10:4. | An announcement to North Israel of impending ruin, with a refrain (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4). |
| Chapter 10:5-34. | Assyria, the rod of Jehovah's anger. |
| Chapter 11:1-9. | The Messianic reign of ideal peace. |
| Chapter 11:10-16. | The return of Israel and Judah from exile; no more any rivalry between them. |
| Chapter 12. | A thanksgiving psalm of the redeemed nation. |

(The student should also designate in some way these subdivisions in the text of his Bible.)

Chapters 13-23

Oracles of Judgment and Salvation, for the most part Concerning those Foreign Nations whose Fortunes Affected Judah and Jerusalem

Chapters 13:2–14:23.	The downfall of Babylon: (1) judgment upon the city, 13:2-22; (2) judgment upon the king, 14:1-23.
Chapter 14:24-27.	The certain destruction of the Assyrian.
Chapter 14:28-32.	An oracle concerning Philistia.
Chapters 15-16	An oracle concerning Moab
Chapter 17:1-11.	An oracle concerning Damascus and North Israel.
Chapter 17:12-14.	The annihilation of Judah’s enemies.
Chapter 18.	A prediction concerning Ethiopia.
Chapter 19.	An oracle concerning Egypt.
Chapter 20.	Sargon’s march against Egypt and Ethiopia.
Chapter 21:1-10.	An oracle concerning “the wilderness of the sea” (Babylon).
Chapter 21:11-12.	An oracle concerning Seir (Edom).
Chapter 21:13-17.	An oracle concerning Arabia.
Chapter 22:1-14.	An oracle “of the valley of vision” (Jerusalem).
Chapter 22:15-25.	A philippic against Shebna, the comptroller of the palace.
Chapter 23.	An oracle concerning Tyre.

(The student should continue to designate in his Bible these main subdivisions; also those which follow.)

Chapters 24–27

Jehovah’s World-Judgment, issuing in the Redemption of Israel

Chapter 24:1-13.	Desolation of “the earth” and of “the city” (i.e., Judah and her towns).
Chapter 24:14, 15.	The dawn of a better day.
Chapter 24:16-23.	Premature songs of rejoicing; more judgment is coming.
Chapter 25:1-5.	A hymn of thanksgiving, in which the prophet pleads for his people’s deliverance.
Chapter 25:6-8.	“A feast of fat things” to all nations “in this mountain,” when death and the sorrows of war have passed away.
Chapter 25:9-12.	A second hymn of thanksgiving, looking to the time when Jehovah, the long looked-for deliverer, will come, and Moab’s arrogance shall be laid low.
Chapter 26:1-19.	A third hymn of thanksgiving, because the “strong city” (Jerusalem) has been redeemed, and life has issued from the dead.
Chapters 26:20–27:1.	An exhortation to God’s people to hide themselves till God’s judgment has shattered the world-powers.
Chapter 27:2-6.	A fourth hymn of thanksgiving, because deliverance from the enemy will be followed by national expansion.

- Chapter 27:7-11. Jehovah's discipline of Jacob has been for his good; the nations, on the contrary, have been punished and destroyed.
- Chapter 27:12, 13. The children of Israel shall be gathered from Assyria and from Egypt to worship Jehovah in Jerusalem.

Chapters 28-35

A Cycle of Prophetic Warnings against Alliance with Egypt, closing with a Prophecy Concerning Edom and a Promise of Israel's Ransom

- Chapter 28:1-6. The warning from Samaria.
- Chapter 28:7-22. The fate of the scoffing, dissolute politicians of Jerusalem.
- Chapter 28:23-29. A parable of comfort; God's judgments always proportionate to man's offense.
- Chapter 29:1-8. Jerusalem's humiliation and subsequent deliverance.
- Chapter 29:9-14. The people's spiritual stupidity.
- Chapter 29:15-24. Exposure of a conspiracy with Egypt, followed by a graphic prediction of the ideal future.
- Chapter 30:1-17. An emphatic denunciation of the alliance with Egypt.
- Chapter 30:18-26. A brilliant picture of the Messianic age.
- Chapter 30:27-33. Jehovah's vengeance upon the Assyrian.
- Chapter 31. The folly of relying on Egypt; Jehovah will protect Jerusalem and utterly destroy the Assyrian.
- Chapter 32:1-8. Another vivid picture of the Messianic age.
- Chapter 32:9-14. A rebuke to the women of Jerusalem.
- Chapter 32:15-20. The blessedness of the Messianic future.
- Chapter 33. A woe pronounced upon an unnamed invader, followed by a promise of deliverance and the perfection of the kingdom of God.
- Chapter 34. Jehovah's indignation against all nations, specially Edom.
- Chapter 35. The future blessedness of the ransomed exiles.

Chapters 36-39

History, Prophecy and Song Intermingled; serving both as an Appendix to Chapters 1-35 and as an Introduction to Chapters 40-66

- Chapter 36:1
(2 Kings 18:13). Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and capture of all her fortified cities.
- Chapters 36:2-37:8
(2 Kings 18:17-19:8). Sennacherib sends Rabshakeh from Lachish against Hezekiah; Rabshakeh makes a defiant threat, but is unable to take Jerusalem.
- Chapter 37:9-38
(2 Kings 19:9-37). Sennacherib suddenly threatened by Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, sends messengers from Libnah to Hezekiah with a letter, peremptorily demanding the surrender of Jerusalem (vs. 9-13); Hezekiah spreads the letter before Jehovah in the temple and prays to be saved from the king of Assyria (vs. 14-20); Isaiah addresses to Hezekiah

a prophecy predicting deliverance (vs. 21-35); Sennacherib's army is mysteriously destroyed, whereupon he returns to Nineveh and is subsequently assassinated by his sons (vs. 36-38).

- Chapter 38:1-8. Hezekiah's sickness, with the sign and promise of his recovery.
 Chapter 38:9-20. Hezekiah's song of thanksgiving.
 Chapter 38:21, 22. The means by which Hezekiah's cure is brought about.
 Chapter 39. The embassy of Merodach-Baladan to Hezekiah.

Chapters 40-66

Prophecies of Comfort, Salvation and the Future Glory awaiting Israel

- Chapters 40-48. Deliverance from captivity through Cyrus, promised by the infinite and incomparable Jehovah.
 Chapters 49-57. The sufferings of the Servant of Jehovah; this section ending like the former with the refrain, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (57:21; cf. 48:22).
 Chapters 58-66. The abolition of all national distinctions and the future glory of the people of God. Chapter 60 is the characteristic chapter of this section, as chapter 53 is of the second, and chapter 40 of the first.

The Great Texts of Isaiah

1:3, 18; 2:4; 6:3, 8; 7:14; 9:6; 11:6, 9; 12:3; 21:11, 12; 26:3; 28:10, 16, 20; 32:2; 33:14, 17; 35:1, 10; 38:1, 15, 16; 40:1, 3, 8, 31; 42:3, 21; 43:25; 45:22; 52:7; 53:5; 54:10; 55:1, 6, 7; 59:1; 60:1, 8; 61:1-3; 63:1, 16; 65:17; 66:13.