

PASSAGES

ISAIAH:

New Beginnings,
New
Hopes,
& Old, Familiar
Challenges

THE PROPHET BY
REMBRANDT



ISAIAH: *Where Are We Going? Are We There Yet?*

Today:
Messianic Themes in
Isaiah

Next Week:
Isaiah in the New
Testament



TODAY'S CLASS:

I. Perspectives on Prophecies: *Double Vision*

II. Advent Redux: *Isaiah 7 & 9*

III. Not Exactly What We Ordered–

The Suffering Servant Songs: Isaiah 42, 49 & 53

PERSPECTIVES on PROPHECY



“FORTH”-teller and “FORE”-teller

A prophet is someone to whom God has given a message to deliver to God's people.

- Mostly -- this is a word about now (e.g. repent, hope)
(prophet as a “forth”-teller)
- Also -- this can be a word about the future (here's what God will surely do) (prophet as a “fore”-teller)

ISAIAH THE PROPHET

Most of Isaiah consists of words to:

- Judah in 740 BC -- "You have stubbornly fallen from God's God's ways -- punishment is coming." (*1st Isaiah*)
- Judah in 540 BC -- "God is acting (through Cyrus) to save His people and return them joyfully to Jerusalem because their punishment is over." (*2nd Isaiah*)

FIRST POINT

We will misunderstand Biblical prophecy if we interpret it *PRIMARILY* as words about a much later time.



SECOND POINT:

PROPHECY
POINTS
BOTH
NEAR
AND
FAR

SECOND POINT @ PROPHECY



Christians (& Jews), as people of faith, often see "double references" in prophecy -- a near event and a future event.

Genesis 12:1-3

SECOND POINT (Con.'t)

As we look at Isaiah's prophecies:

- 1st question: What is the contemporary reference?
(in Isaiah's time)
- 2nd question: Is there also a Christ-centered reference?

THIRD POINT

The early Christians were all *completely surprised by the Jesus thing* (who he was, how he ministered, that he was crucified and resurrected)

But they 100% believed Jesus was *in continuity* with God's actions and promises in the Scripture (OT)

On the road to Emmaus ... (Luke 24)

²⁵ Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷ *Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.*

Reading the
Old Testament
with *Christ-*
colored
glasses

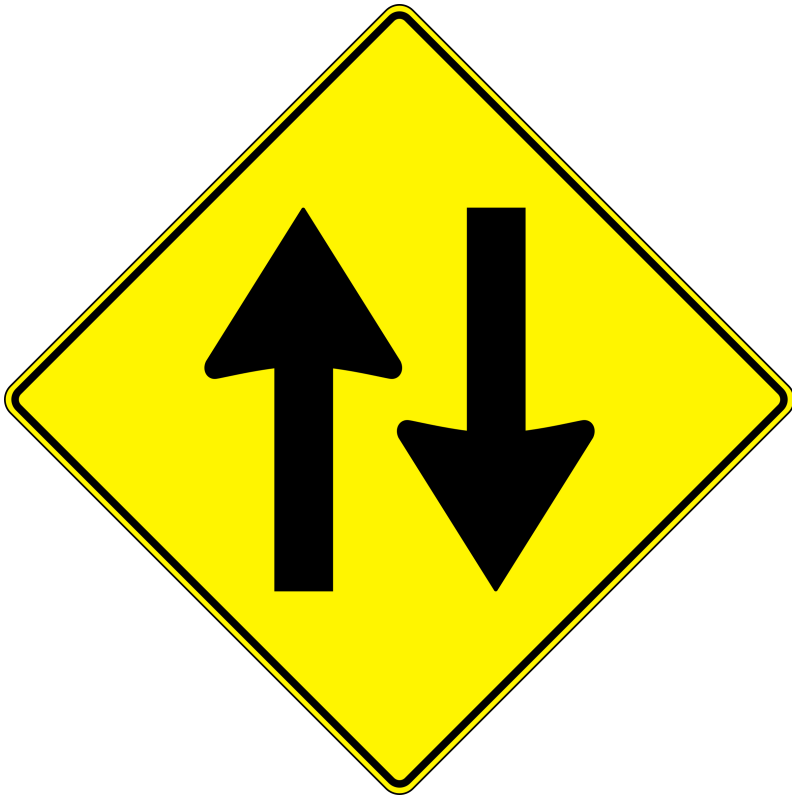




- QUESTIONS?
- COMMENTS?
- CONFUSIONS?



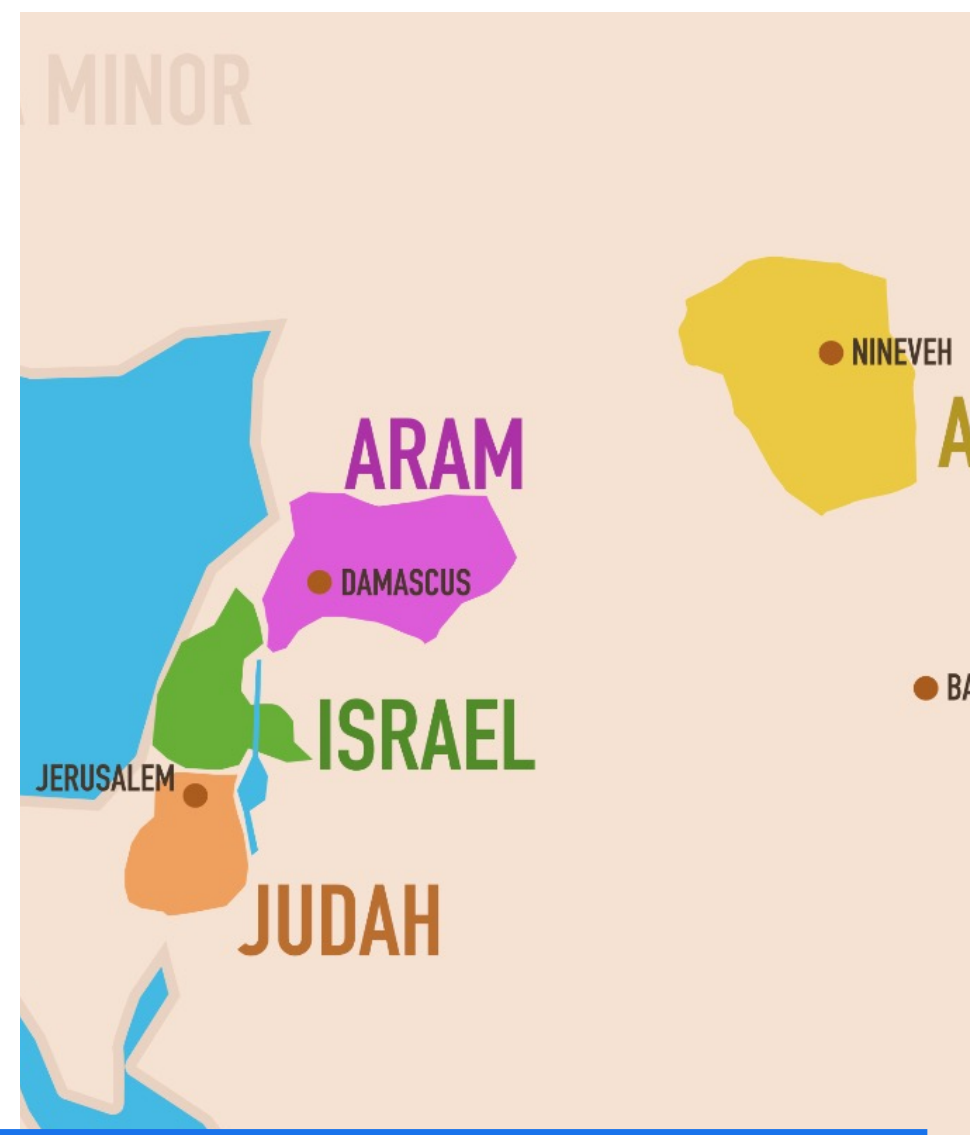
ISAIAH 7



- “Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, ‘Ask a sign of the Lord your God....’
- “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. “

AHAZ & THREATS OF WAR





THREATS of WAR

- "Aram" – Syria
Capital City = Damascus
- "Israel" (10 northern tribes)
("Jacob", "Ephraim")
Capital city = Samaria
- "Judah" (2 southern tribes)
Capital city = Jerusalem (= Zion)



ISAIAH 7:3-4

"...The Lord said to Isaiah, 'Go out to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub... and say to him: Take heed, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands...

'It shall not stand; it shall not come to pass.'"

ISAIAH 7: 10-13

- Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.”
- But Ahaz said, *“I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.”*
- Then Isaiah said, *“Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also?”*

IMMANUEL: GOD WITH US!

IS. 7:14



Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.

Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him *Immanuel*.

THE YOUNG WOMAN...VIRGIN

- “Young woman” = not literally [but assumes]
“virgin”
- *LXX* (Septuagint) uses “parthenos” = virgin

...IMMANUEL: ORIGINAL MEANING ...

Immanuel could be

- Ahaz's son (Hezekiah)?
- Isaiah's son? Another boy?
 - see 7:3 – Shear-jashub (a remnant shall return)
 - see 8:3-4 – Maher-shalal-hash-baz (the spoil speeds, the prey hastens)

In 7:14 “God is with us” – as protector against political enemies – Fulfilled at that time

IMMANUEL: NOW



- NT: Jesus the Christ
- Only Mention in the N.T.:
"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel' (which means, 'God with us')." Mathew 1: 22-23

JESUS THE IMMANUEL!

- Immanuel – God with us.
- Immanuel – God becomes one of us.
- Immanuel – God partners with us. –BBT
- IMMANUEL: God not as a distant deity but as intimately involved in human – in our – lives.
- “Christ is an incarnate Savior. That’s the beauty of *Immanuel*. He didn’t come as an angel or some spirit manifesting itself from time to time. He took to Himself bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. No other religion can give such comfort and hope.”

GOD WITH US

God is FOR us

God is WITHIN us

God is ABOVE us

God is BEFORE us

God is BENEATH us



- QUESTIONS?
- COMMENTS?
- CONFUSIONS?

ISAIAH 9: A BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT



CONTEXT

Passing of *bad King* Ahaz
and the accession of his son
the *good King* Hezekiah

Hezekiah's reign began c. 727 BC
Hezekiah mentioned in
Matthew's genealogy of Jesus (1:10)



ISAIAH 9:2

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.



ISAIAH 9:3-4

You have multiplied exultation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴ For the yoke of their burden and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

JOY!

Three reasons given for this joy

- v 3: prosperity (the joy of the redeemed)
- v 4: repeal of oppression (the liberation)
- v 6: new ruler (the restoration of the kingdom of David)



WE AIN'T GONNA STUDY WAR NO MORE!

For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

Isaiah 9:5



For a child has been born
for us,

a son given to us



BORN FOR US

- "Birth" = literal birth
- But also: Birth by accession of new king (Ps 2:7) The new king is elevated/adopted as a divine son



For a child has been born for
us,
a son given to us;

authority rests upon his
shoulders, and he is named
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.

THRONE NAMES

- Wonderful Counselor = ability as a wise political guide & leader
- Mighty God = better “divine warrior”, strength of king for battle leadership; “filled with all powers (especially military) that are required”

THRONE NAMES



- Everlasting Father = better "Father forever" -- king's parental concern for the welfare of his people
- Prince of Peace [Shalom] = source of peace, prosperity & well-being of people

ISAIAH 9:7 AUTHORITY

Great will be his authority, and there shall be endless peace

for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness

from this time onward and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

NEW POSSIBILITIES for THIS SMALL NATION

"What we have is an affirmation that Yahweh,
through a human Davidic king,
will create a wondrous new possibility for Judah
that is unqualified and unconditional. "

Frederick Buechner

How and when the Messiah would come was debatable. Theories as to what he would be like multiplied and overlapped: a great warrior king like David, a great priest like Melchizedek, a great prophet like Elijah. Who could possibly say?

But whatever he was, his name would be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," and "of the increase of his government and of peace there would be no end."

Handel set him to music. On Passover eve to this day an extra cup is placed on the table for Elijah in case he stops in to say the Messiah is here at last. The door is left open.



THEN...

For a child has been born for
us,

a son given to us;

authority rests upon his
shoulders, and he is named
Wonderful Counselor,

Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.



NOW...

—

WHICH SPEAKS MOST
STRONGLY INTO YOUR LIFE
RIGHT NOW?

Wonderful Counselor,

Mighty God,

Everlasting Father,

Prince of Peace.





- QUESTIONS?
- COMMENTS?
- CONFUSIONS?

ISAIAH'S FOUR "SERVANT SONGS"

Isaiah 42:1-4

Isaiah 49:1-6

Isaiah 50:4-9

Isaiah 52:13-53:12



“SERVANT” IN SECOND ISAIAH

"Servant" appears 20 times in Isaiah 40–55 -- 14 of these explicitly refer to the nation Israel

The remaining 6 occur in 42:1–4, 49:1–6, 50:4–9, 52:13–53:12

“SERVANT” IN SECOND ISAIAH

- The servant is an individual, set over against the people, called to a mission to the people
- The servant knows the divine plan which he carries out and persuades the people to obey.
- *WHO IS the servant?* No scholarly consensus

ISAIAH 42:1-2

Here is *my servant*, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
he will bring forth *justice* to the nations.

² He will not cry out or lift up his voice
or make it heard in the street;

ISAIAH 42:3-4

³ a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth *justice*.

⁴ He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established *justice* in the earth,
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

ISAIAH 49:1-5

Listen to me, O coastlands; ... *The LORD called me before I was born ...*

³ And He said to me, *“You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”*

⁵ And now the LORD says, *who formed me in the womb to be his servant,* to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him, for I am honored in the sight of the LORD, and my God has become my strength—

ISAIAH 49:6

⁶ He says,, *“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant* to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel;
I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

NOT EXACTLY WHAT WE ORDERED...

ISAIAH 53:1-12

For the first Christians: *"This is Jesus!"*



ISAIAH 53:1-2

Who has believed what we have heard?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD
been revealed?

² For he grew up before him like a young
plant and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should
look at him,

nothing in his appearance that we should
desire him.

ISAIAH 53:3

³ He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity,
and as one from whom others hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him of no account.

ISAIAH 53:4-5

⁴ Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases,
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.

ISAIAH 53:6

⁶ All we like sheep have
gone astray;

we have all turned to
our own way,
and the LORD has laid on
him the iniquity of us all.



ISAIAH 53:7

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

ISAIAH 53:8-9

⁸ By a perversion of justice he was taken away.

Who could have imagined his future?

For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.

⁹ They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

ISAIAH 53:10

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with affliction.

When you make his life an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring and shall prolong his days;

through him the will of the LORD shall prosper.

ISAIAH 53:11

¹¹ Out of his anguish he shall see;
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.

The righteous one, my servant, shall make many
righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

ISAIAH 53:12

¹² Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out himself to death
and was numbered with the transgressors,
yet he bore the sin of many
and made intercession for the transgressors.

A SUFFERING MESSIAH

- Suffering, weak, rejected, despised (not a heroic figure)
- Wounded for our sin, punished on our behalf, the Lord laid on him all our sin; “by his wounds we are healed”
- Silently oppressed, like a lamb to slaughter
- Put to death though he committed no violence

THE SUFFERING MESSIAH



- This was God's will – to make his life an offering for sin
- My servant shall make many righteous by bearing their sin
- He poured out himself to death, bearing the sin of many

ISAIAH 53 & JESUS

- For the Jews, Isaiah 53:1-12 was NOT a central “messianic” passage
- For the early Christians:
 - 1) Jesus shaped his ministry around this prophecy
 - 2) The 1st Christians told Jesus’ story shaped by this prophecy
 - 3) The 1st Christians understood Jesus’ life, crucifixion and resurrection shaped by this prophecy

1 PETER 2:20-22

If you endure when you do good and suffer for it, this is a commendable thing before God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

²² “He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

1 PETER 2:23-25

²³ When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. ²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.



- QUESTIONS?
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