

## Lesson 1 Introduction to Isaiah

**Memory verse:** “Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other” (Is 45:22 NKJV).

Sir Winston Churchill was once asked to give the qualifications a person needed in order to succeed in politics, and he replied: “It is the ability to foretell what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month, and next year. And to have the ability afterwards to explain why it didn’t happen.”

Because God’s prophets were correct all of the time, they didn’t have to explain away their mistakes. “If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true,” wrote Moses, “that is a message the Lord has not spoken” (Deut. 18:22 NIV). “To the law and to the testimony,” wrote Isaiah, “If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (8:20). Isaiah was a man who had God’s light, and he was not afraid to let it shine.

“Isaiah is great for two reasons,” wrote William Stanford LaSor in his fascinating book “Great Personalities of the Old Testament (Revell, p. 136): “He lived in momentous days, in critical days of international upheaval, and he wrote what many consider to be the greatest book in the Old Testament.”

“We see Isaiah move with fearless dignity through the chaos of his day,” wrote E.M. Blaiklock, “firm in his quiet faith, sure in his God” (Handbook of Bible People, Scripture Union, p. 329)

At a time when empires were rising and falling and his nation was in peril, it was Isaiah who wrote, “In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength” (30:15, NKJV), And when a new generation faced the arduous task of rebuilding a ruined nation, it was the words of Isaiah the prophet that gave them courage: “But those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall not mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” (40:31, NKJV).

Isaiah is the prophet we need to hear today as he cries out God’s message above the din of world upheaval, “Comfort, yes, comfort My people! (40:1 NKJV). The English word “comfort” comes from two Latin words that together means “with strength,” When Isaiah says to us, “Be comforted!” it is not a word of pity but of power. God’s comfort does not weaken us; it strengthens us. God is not indulging us but empowering us. “In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”

As we study Isaiah’s book, we shall meet not only this outstanding prophet, but also some mighty kings and rulers; and we shall witness the rise and fall of magnificent kingdoms. We shall see God’s people chastened and then restored. But above all else, we shall see the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s “Suffering Servant”, as He does the will of God and suffers and dies for the sins of the world. Discover God’s prophetic plan for the nations of the world and don’t miss his emphasis on the personal message of God’s forgiveness.

How can “the Holy One of Israel,” a just and righteous God, forgive our sins and remember them no more?

Things to learn: 1) The prophet and monarchs 2) The Message 3) The Messiah

### Discussion Questions:

1) Discuss what you have found about the prophet Isaiah and the monarchs of his time, “Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah” (Is1:1) in the scriptures. (use the following references: the prophet refer to Is. 1:1; 2:1; 13:1; 20:2; 37:2, 21; 38:1;8:3;7:3; 8:1-4,18;6:1. Monarchs:- Uzziah: 2 Kings 14:17–22; 15:1–7; 2 Chron. 26:1–16. Jotham: 2 Kings 15:32–38; 2 Chron. 27. Ahaz: 2 Kings 16; 2 Chron. 28. Hezekiah: 2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chron. 29-32)

2) Have a brief review of the following summary of the book and share what you think impact you most about the Message in Isaiah.

Chapters 1- 6: The personal sins of the people; Chapters 7-12: The national sins of the leaders; Chapters 13-23: The sins of other nations; Chapters 24-27: The songs of hope; Chapters 28-35: The invasion of Judah and Israel; Chapters 36-39: The focus from prophecy to history; Chapters 40-48: The Greatness of God the Father; Chapters 49-57 The grace of God the Son, God’s Suffering Servant; Chapters 58-66 The glory of the future kingdom and God the Holy Spirit.

3) What do you think stands out clearly in the book that is more than the prophet, the nation and empires?