

ISAIAH: Introduction

Welcome to the prophets!

Although Isaiah was not the first prophet chronologically, his book appears first in our Bibles. And for good reason! The book of Isaiah gives readers a beautiful training ground for reading Biblical prophecy.

Isaiah was a prophet in Judah for a period of about 60 years. During this time, the northern kingdom of Israel would fall to Assyria, and Judah would be threatened by growing enemies on the outside and growing sin on the inside. In this time of uncertainty, Isaiah announced to Judah what they could know for sure: Great judgment was coming, but so was great deliverance.

The words of Isaiah do not follow a single narrative throughout the book; they are, however, grouped into two clear sections:

Isaiah 1–39 – Judgment

Isaiah 40–66 – Hope

The first section includes oracles of judgment for Judah but also for the surrounding nations. They have not loved and obeyed God, and they deserve punishment. Exile is coming.

Although there are glimpses of good news throughout the first section, it comes in full force in the second half of the book as Isaiah speaks prophetically to a time in the future when God's people would be restored.

Watch for these ideas as you read:

- Isaiah contains some of the clearest and most beautiful **prophecies about the coming Messiah**, Jesus. Don't miss it!
- Much of Isaiah's view of God is shaped by the **familiar story in chapter 6**. Pay attention to how **God's holiness** is central in the book.