

Lesson 13

ISAIAH

GOD STATEMENT FOR ISAIAH: THE GOD WHO _____(a)

When it comes to the prophets, many argue that Isaiah is the GOAT (greatest of all time). While some may disagree—personally, I think the GOAT label belongs to Elijah—everyone agrees that Isaiah belongs on the Mount Rushmore of prophets (if there were such a thing).

So where does Isaiah fit on the timeline of Israel’s history? The answer takes us back to 1 & 2 Kings. There we saw how the kingdom of Israel split into two nations—two separate kingdoms—after King Solomon died around 930 B.C. The _____(b) Kingdom retained the name “_____ (c),” and the _____(d) Kingdom began to be called “_____ (e).” We then saw how both kingdoms eventually fell because of their persistent rebellion against God. The end of the line for the Northern Kingdom came at the hands of the Assyrians in 722 B.C. The Southern Kingdom lasted a little longer, but in 586 B.C. they were conquered by the Babylonians.

With that stretch of Israel’s history in mind, God commissioned Isaiah to begin his prophetic ministry about _____(f) B.C., the year King Uzziah of Judah died (Isa 6:1). And as far as the end of his ministry goes, the last datable event in the book of Isaiah is the death of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, in _____(g) B.C. (Isa 37:38). So, Isaiah’s ministry covered about 60 years, during which he witnessed the fall of the Northern Kingdom and the near fall of the Southern Kingdom. Of course, by revelation he saw and announced the eventual fall of Judah.

The book of Isaiah is divided two parts, and it’s easy to remember this basic division and the general content of each part. As you know, there are 66 books in the Bible, and those 66 books are divided into 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books. Well, interestingly enough, there are 66 chapters in the book of Isaiah, and those 66 chapters are divided into a 39-chapter “Part One” and a 27-chapter “Part Two.” And, interestingly enough, it just so happens that Part One (chapters 1-39) basically summarizes the overall message of the Old Testament: *God is _____(h) and must pour out His judgment on sin.* And, interestingly enough, Part Two (chapters 40-66) basically summarizes the overall message of the New Testament: *God is _____(i) and graciously provides a way to _____(j) His holy judgment.*

PART ONE: GOD IS HOLY AND MUST JUDGE SIN (Chapters 1-39)

The first 39 chapters of Isaiah emphasize Israel's _____(k) and unfaithfulness to their _____(l) obligations. Consequently, God announced that they would be overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa 1:10). This part can be further divided into three sections.

Judgment Upon Judah (Chapters 1-12)

The spiritual condition of Israel was beyond dreadful when Isaiah began his ministry. They professed commitment to God, and they still went through the routine and _____(m) of _____(n) (Isa 1:10-15), but it was all just a sham. It was all just empty, mechanical ritual. It was egregious _____(o). The people of Israel were corrupt to the core (Isa 1:15-17). In fact, God compared them to a bad _____(p). God had poured His heart and resources into Israel like a vineyard owner pours his heart and resources into a vineyard. But when God looked for the fruit of justice and righteousness among His people, He found none. So, God announced through Isaiah that He would no longer expend any more effort on them (Isa 5:1-7). Israel was now doomed. God would now drive them from the _____(q) that He had given them as an inheritance.

Judgment Upon the Nations (Chapters 13-27)

In this section, Isaiah turned his attention to other nations—Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Egypt, and Ethiopia, among others. These nations were intensely proud of their power. Their strength filled them with supreme confidence. And they lived in an era when a god's power was measured by the power of a nation. So, since Isaiah lived in a country that was politically and militarily _____(r), the impression was that the God of Israel must be pretty _____(s) and insignificant too. God shattered that theory by shattering those nations. He affirmed through His judgment on them that He alone is sovereign. The kingdoms of Israel and Judah may be weak, but their God isn't.

But there was an even bigger reason for God to demonstrate His sovereignty over these nations. In shattering the powerful nations that surrounded and at times dominated Israel, God was also reminding His people to keep their _____(t) on Him. Too often they had focused their attention on forging relationships with powerful nations to ensure their security and prosperity (Isa 30:1-7; 31:1-5). God was essentially telling them to stop thinking that their survival depended on the help of outsiders. He wants them to never forget that their survival is _____(u) on Him alone. Other nations may make

promises to Israel, but those nations don't have the ability to deliver on their promises. Only _____(v) has the ability to _____(w) on His _____(x).

Judgment and Salvation (Chapters 28-39)

In this section there's a mixture of good news and bad news. First, the good news. In 701 B.C. the Assyrians invaded Judah—remember, about two decades earlier (722 B.C.) they annihilated the Northern Kingdom of Israel—and laid siege to Jerusalem. When Jerusalem's fall appeared certain, Hezekiah never wavered in his _____(y) that God could save the day. And God did (Isa 36-37). It was a clear message to God's people that He'll save them if they'll just _____(z) Him.

And now the bad news. God spelled out the bad news when Hezekiah made a massive blunder not long after God had delivered Jerusalem from the Assyrians. When the king of the up-and-coming state of Babylon sent Hezekiah a "glad you're feeling better" message after Hezekiah had recovered from a severe illness (God had miraculously healed him), Hezekiah was thrilled that someone like the king of Babylon would be thinking of him. So, he showed-off everything Jerusalem had to a Babylonian delegation. It seems he wanted the king of Babylon to know what a great partner he would be. In other words, it seems Hezekiah was setting the foundation for a political alliance to help protect Jerusalem from any more incursions from the Assyrians.

Well, Isaiah confronted Hezekiah and told him that, as a consequence of his foolish move to show the Babylonians all he had, one day the king of _____(aa) would take everything that the Babylonian visitors had been shown (Isa 39:5-6). The fall of Jerusalem was now imminent and would be severe. The survivors would be banished from their homeland and led into _____(bb) in the strange land of Babylon. *But that would not be the end of the story.*

PART TWO: GOD IS LOVE AND PROVIDES A WAY OF ESCAPE FROM HIS JUDGMENT (Chapters 40-66)

After 39 chapters dominated by a vision of God's holy character and His coming judgment upon Israel, the emphasis in Part Two shifts to a better _____(cc) . . . an unimaginably glorious future. It's not that there aren't any rays of hope for this better future in Part One, because there are some (Isa 4:1-6; 9:1-7; 11:1-16; 26:1-27:13; 32:1-21). It's just that this future hope isn't the main theme of Part One. Judgment is the main theme there. In Part Two, however, judgment recedes to the background and _____(dd) for the _____(ee) takes center stage.

As Part Two begins, the hope of a better things explodes right out the gate with these words: “*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned . . .*” (Isa 40:1). And how is God going to pull off this fabulous future? He’s going to do it through the work of a special _____ (ff) that He would send.

That special servant will enter the world as a _____ (gg), and “his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty _____ (hh), Everlasting _____ (ii), Prince of Peace” (Isa 9:6). He will be filled with God’s _____ (jj) (Isa 42:1; 61:1-2), and He’ll be incapable of _____ (kk) (Isa 42:1-4). He will be “a light to the nations” (Isa 42:6), and the _____ (ll) that he’ll bring will endure _____ (mm) (Isa 51:6, 8).

God’s servant—who will be a descendent of _____ (nn) (Isa 9:7)—will accomplish His saving mission by _____ (oo) (Isa 53). He’ll die humbly (Isa 53:7). He’ll die unfairly (Isa 53:8). He’ll die in poverty (Isa 53:9). His death will be vicarious. That is, He will die as a _____ (pp) for others (Isa 53:4-6, 12). In other words, He will be a _____ (qq) offering for others (Isa 53:10). And the benefits of this dying work will be offered to the entire world. “Come,” says the Lord, “everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Isa 55:1).

This special servant, of course, is _____ (rr). Not only did the New Testament writers affirm this, but Jesus Himself affirmed it when He stood and read aloud Isaiah 61:10-12 in the _____ (ss) in His hometown and then sat down and declared that He was the fulfillment of that promise (Luke 4:16-21).

This promise of God—to send a special servant who would die for others—is a promise to deliver something that exceeds anything that Isaiah or the people of his day could have ever imagined. It would ultimately result in world that’s nothing less than a _____ (tt) _____ (uu). It would be a world so perfect that it could only be described as a _____ (vv) _____ (ww) (Isa 65:17-25), and it would last _____ (xx) (Isa 66:22).

THE LESSONS OF ISAIAH

- Keep _____ (yy) even if no one responds. When God commissioned Isaiah, He told him that the nation as a whole would not listen to his preaching (Isa 6:8-13).

- God is not interested in our _____(zz) if we don't reflect His character and will in our lives (Isa 1:11-17). God isn't interested in empty, mechanical worship.
- Keep your _____(aaa) on _____(bbb) because only He has the _____(ccc) to _____(ddd) on His _____(eee). God told Hezekiah, "I will defend this city and save it" (Isa 37:35). And He did.
- Be at _____(fff) because God _____(ggg), _____(hhh) and _____(iii) history. Powerful nations are His pawns. They are powerless over Him. Let God's sovereignty sustain you.
- God's word cannot _____(jjj) Every promise God made came to pass. His promises of judgment came to pass. His promises of deliverance came to pass. And the reason His word cannot fail is because He _____(kkk) the future.
- God always keeps His _____(lll). Don't ever doubt what God says. Don't ever doubt His promised blessings for faithful obedience and commitment. And don't ever doubt His promised consequences for those who rebel against Him.
- _____(mmm) observance is not a satisfactory substitute for heartfelt _____(nnn) and commitment.

KEY PASSAGES IN ISAIAH

- Isaiah 1:18-20
- Isaiah 2:1-5
- Isaiah 9:1-7
- Isaiah 11:1-9
- Isaiah 40:1-5
- Isaiah 42:1-4
- Isaiah 53:1-12
- Isaiah 55:6-13
- Isaiah 61:1-2
- Isaiah 65:17-25

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ANSWER KEY:

[a] SAVES	[ss] synagogue
[b] Northern	[tt] perfect
[c] Israel	[uu] paradise
[d] Southern	[vv] new
[e] Judah	[ww] creation
[f] 740	[xx] forever
[g] 681	[yy] preaching
[h] holy	[zz] worship
[i] love	[aaa] focus
[j] escape	[bbb] God
[k] corruption	[ccc] power
[l] covenant	[ddd] deliver
[m] rituals	[eee] promises
[n] worship	[fff] peace
[o] hypocrisy	[ggg] begins
[p] vineyard	[hhh] controls
[q] land	[iii] ends
[r] insignificant	[jjj] fail
[s] weak	[kkk] knows
[t] focus	[lll] promises
[u] dependent	[mmm] Ritual
[v] God	[nnn] obedience
[w] deliver	
[x] promises	
[y] faith	
[z] trust	
[aa] Babylon	
[bb] exile	
[cc] future	
[dd] hope	
[ee] future	
[ff] servant	
[gg] child	
[hh] God	
[ii] Father	
[jj] Spirit	
[kk] failure	
[ll] salvation	
[mm] forever	
[nn] David	
[oo] dying	
[pp] substitute	
[qq] sin	
[rr] Jesus	