

The Church of the Servant King

Prophecy Series

(Proph14T_Prophecy in the Prophets_Isaiah_Chps1-39_Part 2)

Introduction – Chapters 1-39 – Part 2

Having completed a more specific introduction to the first half of the book (chps. 1-39) and a study of two prophetic passages in chapters 2 and 7, we will now turn our attention to other passages in the first half of the book of Isaiah that contain eschatological or prophetic references. As I have mentioned in our previous studies of Isaiah and other prophets' writings, there are many occasions in which the prophet interjects or weaves Messianic era references into his message apparently as a means of emphasizing the severity of the more immediate judgment that happened to be at hand. Isaiah is no exception to this tendency and we shall see examples of this style of writing in some of the prophetic passages we will mention in this lesson.

The following list of passages in this first section of the book of Isaiah may not be exhaustive, but they provide a fairly comprehensive view of the extent to which Isaiah deployed prophetic references in his denunciation of God's people and the Gentile nations God had used to discipline His own.

- ✓ 2:1-4 – the future house of God (*See Prior Lesson Notes*)
- ✓ 2:19-21 – comparison of the eschatological “day of the Lord” to the impending judgment (*See Prior Lesson Notes*)
- ✓ 7:14 – a “virgin” birth prophecy as a “sign” (*See Prior Lesson Notes*)
- ✓ 9:1-7 – the government of the Promised Son
- ✓ 11:1-12:6 – the reign of David's descendant and a Hymn of Praise
- ✓ 13:6-13 – the judgment of the “day of the Lord” is interjected in the middle of a pronouncement of judgment against Babylon
- ✓ 18:7 – a prophecy regarding the future homage to the Messiah that will be paid by the inhabitants of Ethiopia (Egypt) interjected after their judgment at the hand of the Lord is described in terms that are not necessarily Messianic
- ✓ 19:18-25 – a description of the Messianic blessings that will be experienced by the inhabitants of Egypt, Assyria and Israel interjected in the context of a description of the judgment these peoples were to experience
- ✓ 24:21-23 – a punishment against the “exalted” kings of the earth is described using eschatological terminology at the end of a chapter where the impending judgment of the earth is depicted in a way so as to provide a larger framework for understanding the previous chapters describing the Lord's case against specific nations
- ✓ 25:1-27:13 – this section of Isaiah contains a song of praise and salvation as well as a description of the restoration of Israel using eschatological references
- ✓ 28:5-6 – a brief description of how the Messiah will be perceived by those who are of the remnant in contrast to the drunkards of Ephraim (Israel) and Jerusalem (Judah)
- ✓ 28:16-22 – the Messiah as a cornerstone in Zion and the certainty of judgment described in eschatological terms and positioned immediately after the “woe” of judgment is pronounced upon Ephraim and Jerusalem
- ✓ 29:17-24 – the spiritual state of God's people in “that day” is described in a manner that will not be attained until the Messianic kingdom and these verses are set in contrast to the then present spiritual blindness among God's own
- ✓ 30:18-26 – the kingdom blessings of those who wait on the Lord are described at the end of a section that details the rebellious nature of His own
- ✓ 32:1-4 – the righteous reign of the King is described
- ✓ 32:16-20 – true peace will characterize God's reign in contrast to the false peace that existed among the people of Judah
- ✓ 33:17-24 – a description of Judah's immediate salvation is merged with allusions to its ultimate deliverance in the kingdom and is set in contrast to a description of impending judgment upon Zion

- ✓ 34:1-17 – a future judgment upon all nations is described in eschatological terms
- ✓ 35:1-10 – the future glory of Zion is described in eschatological terms

Chapter 9:1-7

Isaiah 9:1 completes a thought that began in 8:21-22 where Isaiah describes the result of seeking answers through the occult (8:19). In chapter 8, verses 19-22, Isaiah paints a picture of one of the manifestations of reversionism that was prevalent in Judah (and Israel) at the time. In a reversionistic society or people, it is only a matter of time until dark occult practices become the norm. Isaiah urges his readers to return “to the law and to the testimony” (v. 20). He indicates how easy it is to determine whether the word of a prophet should be heard or not – “If they do not speak according to this word [‘the law and the testimony’], it is because there is no light in them” (v. 20). To reject the word of God which provides light to the soul (Psa 119:105) is tantamount to walking in darkness (Isa 9:2; Eph 4:17-19). Compare this to the teaching of Jesus:

And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God. (Jn 3:19-20)

Isaiah understood these spiritual truths and describes the inevitable result of walking in reversionistic darkness in verses 21-22. Without the light of the Word of God which they have rejected in their frantic search for happiness and answers, they experience only frustration. Rejection of the truth in their frantic search for happiness has a boomerang effect which Isaiah describes using terms such as “trouble,” “darkness,” and “gloom of anguish” so that the seekers will only be driven to greater darkness (v. 22). They will look up to their leaders and curse them and God because things did not turn out as the diviners and false prophets predicted (v. 21). At every turn, there are no answers, only frustration.

Principle: Any society or people en masse who have rejected the light of the Truth will inevitably revert to a spiritually darkened state of thinking that is characterized by (among other things) unrealistic expectations from their leaders. [I call this the “*pseudo-messiah expectation delusion*” – the people look for a messiah-like figure who has the answer in government to all of their problems and those vying for the leadership position try to accommodate those unrealistic expectations with vain promises].

Application: Do you see any spiritual thread of connection between the situation in Isaiah’s day and the situation in U.S. and global politics today?

Application; Do you see any spiritual thread of connection between the situation in Isaiah’s day and the situation that will exist when the Anti-christ and the false prophet rise to a position of prominence in the Tribulation?

In 9:1, Isaiah presents the contrast to this frustration that results from seeking false counselors. The contrast is that the residents of Galilee in Israel who would experience the Lord’s chastening (“distressed” and “He lightly esteemed” them) would enjoy an alternative from such gloom. Galilee (included in the tribal allotments to Zebulun and Naphtali) will experience the glory of the Lord during the Messianic period. Isaiah mentions this area first because it was the first area to fall to the Assyrians. Galilee was a home to many Gentiles as well as Jews because the international highway between Mesopotamia and Egypt passed through it. Certainly, a taste of the glory to come was experienced by this region when Jesus lived and ministered in the area of Galilee (Matt 4:13-16), but the greatest glory to be experienced by this region will be during the Messianic era as a fulfillment of this passage.

In contrast to Ahaz who refused to seek a sign from the Lord (7:11), the Lord will raise a faithful king who will be born as a human and at the same time be the Son of God (9:6-7). Light will come to those who have walked in a [spiritually] dark land even though they did not deserve it (9:2).¹ Isaiah was providing them revelation of the future [light] that was sure in contrast to the unreliable predictions [darkness] of the mediums and wizards. God (“You” – 9:3) will lead the people from spiritual darkness into the light (9:2) by sending a child (9:6) with the result that their joy is compared to the joy they experienced with a good harvest (9:3) or with victory in battle and dividing the plunder (9:4-5). In that day, after the Child-Messiah comes, the implements of warfare will be destroyed because of the reign of universal peace will have begun (9:5-7).

In 9:6-7, there are several important points to note and emphasize about this wonderful prophecy:

- ✓ The experience of prosperity and joy in Judah (9:3) and the end of war (9:5) will occur after the coming of a “Child” to be born (9:6).
- ✓ The “Child born” points to His humanity, while the “Son given” points to His deity.
- ✓ God would not defeat Judah’s enemies by using larger and more powerful armies, but through the influence of a Child to be born (emphatic in the Hebrew text).
- ✓ While not explicitly called a king in this passage, He is attributed with characteristics that are only possessed by royalty.
- ✓ The “government will be upon His shoulder” refers to the fact that He will possess ultimate authority and when combined with the other descriptions of His rule, the contrast with Judah’s incompetent leadership is apparent.
- ✓ The phrase “Wonderful Counselor” is literally “wonder of a counselor” and refers to the fact that His judicial actions would transcend mere human wisdom.
- ✓ He would be “Mighty God” and possess all of the power of God (cf. Jn 5:22) and when this description is combined with Isaiah’s descriptions that He would do what no other human has ever done (9:3-5), it is apparent that Isaiah saw this man as both human and divine in some sense – He wasn’t just “God like.”²
- ✓ This “Child” would not be just a father of the nation in the sense that Israel and Judah’s kings had been, rather He would be the “eternal Father” whose reign will last forever (2 Sam 7:16).
- ✓ The title “Prince of Peace” refers to the national and individual reconciliation to be accomplished by this “Child-Messiah.”
- ✓ Most governments increase their base of power through war, but the government headed by this man would increase His base through peace (9:6 cf. 9:7).
- ✓ The eternal rule of the Messiah must now be understood to be inaugurated in the Millennium and continued into eternity; whereas, Isaiah (and other OT prophets) did not make this distinction
- ✓ Isaiah was not aware of the great time gap that would occur between the Messiah’s two advents, but if he in fact distinguished between two advents necessitated by the suffering servant image and the kingly image (9:6-7 cf. Isa 53; Psa 22), then he must have seen them in close proximity to each other (1 Pe 1:10-12).

¹ In the Synoptic Gospel accounts, Matthew indicates that Jesus fulfilled this passage during His Galilean ministry (cf. Matt 4:12-17) which He launched after the death of John the Baptist. While this is true, Jesus was not able to complete the fulfillment of this passage during His first Advent due to the Jewish rejection.

² John A. Martin, “Isaiah,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary – Old Testament*, John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, editors (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1983), 1053 and Thomas L. Constable, “Isaiah,” *Expository Notes* – on compact disc, (August 2003 edition).

Chapter 11:1-16 – The Reign of David’s Descendant

This passage provides the positive side associated with the coming deliverance of God’s people in contrast to the negative side (10:5-34). Even though God would remove the yoke or burden (10:27) of Assyria from Judah’s neck with a temporal deliverance, the Messiah-King would provide Judah the eternal security for which she longed. “The messianic hope introduced at various points earlier in this major section (chs. 7-12) [*the choice between trusting Yahweh or Assyria*] comes to full flower in chapter 11 (cf. 7:14; 8:23-9:6). Having promised Him, Isaiah now presented Messiah as ruling.”³

Isaiah’s Description of the Messiah’s Person and Reign (vv. 1-5)

The words “Rod” and “Branch” in **11:1** are figurative terms used in reference to the Messiah descendant of the household of David – the seed of the woman promised in Genesis 3:15 and the descendant of David promised in 2 Samuel 7:12 (see also Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:12).

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that I will raise to David a **Branch of righteousness**; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.” (Jer 23:5)

In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David a **Branch of righteousness**; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. (Jer 33:15)

Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you, for they are a wondrous sign; for behold, I am bringing forth **My Servant the Branch**. (Zech 3:8)

Then speak to him, saying, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: ‘**Behold, the Man whose name is the Branch!** From His place he shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the Lord.’” (Zech 6:12)

The prophet had just described Assyria as being cut down like a forest of trees (10:15-19, 33-34). In like manner, Israel (and eventually Judah) would have only a remnant left after God completed His judgment of her (10:20-23 cf. 6:11-13). In **11:1**, Isaiah builds upon the imagery in 4:2; 6:11-13 and 10:20-23 and pictures a shoot that sprouts from one of the stumps that remain after His judgment upon Israel (cf. 53:2).

In that day the **Branch of the Lord** shall be beautiful and glorious; and the **fruit** of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped. (Isa 4:2)

Then I said, “Lord, how long?” And He answered: “Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, the houses are without a man, the land is utterly desolate, the Lord has removed me far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. But yet a tenth will be in it, and will return and be for consuming, as a terebinth tree or as an oak, whose stump remains when it is cut down. So **the holy seed shall be its stump**.” (Isa 6:11-13)

And it shall come to pass in that day that the **remnant** of Israel, and such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, will never again depend on him who defeated them [*Assyria*], but **will depend on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel**,

³ Constable, “Isaiah” – *Expository Notes*, on compact disc.

in truth. The **remnant** will return, the **remnant** of Jacob, to the Mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, a **remnant** of them will return; the destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness for the Lord God of hosts will make a determined end in the midst of all the land. (10:20-23)

For He shall grow up before Him as a **tender plant**, and as a **root** out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him; there is no beauty that we should desire Him. (Isa 53:2)

Isaiah references David's father, Jesse, instead of David in order to emphasize God's grace in providing a deliverer from a lowly family. By Isaiah's time, when people thought of David, they recalled the expansion of the united kingdom to a glorious position among the nations and not David's humble beginnings. The reference to Jesse, David's father, emphasized David's humble origins and his promotion at God's hand rather than David's achievements. Even though those achievements were the result of God's blessing in David's life, the Jews of Isaiah's day were so reversionistic they would have seen only Israel's glory brought about by a great leader. They would have overlooked the spiritual source of David's greatness – the Lord. Thus, Isaiah's need to mention Jesse in order to remind his hearers of the source of David's humble origins.

In **11:2**, Isaiah clearly depicts this "Branch" or "Rod of Jesse" as a Person. What is especially interesting is the fact that Isaiah shows this Man to be divine (9:6), yet at the same time presents Him as dependant upon the Holy Spirit. This is a combination of characteristics that require the Incarnation for an explanation. Also, what is interesting is Isaiah's blurring of the distinction between the characteristics of the Messiah in His 1st Advent and in His 2nd Advent – enabled by the Spirit (1st Advent) and the "government will be upon His shoulder" (2nd Advent). This is most likely due to the distant panoramic perspective that Isaiah possessed so that the distance between the Messiah's 1st Advent and His 2nd Advent could be compared to one's view of two separate mountain peaks from afar as we've previously discussed in this series.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting father, Prince of Peace. (Isa 9:6)

The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (Isa 11:2)

As in the case of David (1 Sam 16:13), the Messiah would be empowered by the Holy Spirit (42:1; 48:16; 59:21; 61:1; Lu 3:22), the Agent for establishing God's kingdom (Ge 1:1, 2; Judg 3:10; 6:34; 1 Sam 10:6).⁴

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the **Spirit of the Lord** came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah. (1 Sam 16:13)

⁴ See footnotes to Isaiah 11:2 in Earl D. Radmacher, *The Nelson Study Bible* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 1132. Also, it is important to note that believers in the Age of Israel (and earlier eras) prior to Jesus' clear teaching of a distinction between the members of the Triune Godhead (e.g. John 15:26-27; 16:5-15) may have considered the term "Spirit" just another description of Yahweh's presence rather than a distinct 3rd Person of the Godhead. Even in one of the clearest passages in the Old Testament where the Spirit is referenced (i.e. David's request to God – "Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" – Psa 51:11), there is no clear indication that David perceived this to be a distinct Person as opposed to God's presence as we see in Jesus' teaching.

Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put **My Spirit** upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. (Isa 42:1)

Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord God and **His Spirit** have sent Me. (Isa 48:16)

“As for Me,” says the Lord, “this is My covenant with them: **My Spirit** who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants’ descendants,” says the Lord from this time and forevermore.” (Isa 59:21)

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn. (Isa 61:1-2)

And the **Holy Spirit** descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, “You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.” (Lu 3:22)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the **Spirit of God** was hovering over the face of the waters. (Ge 1:1-2)

The **Spirit of the Lord** came upon him [Othniel], and he judged Israel. (Judg 3:10a)

But the **Spirit of the Lord** came upon Gideon. (Judg 6:34a)

Then the **Spirit of the Lord** will come upon you [Saul], and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. (1 Sam 10:6)

Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours? (1 Kin 3:9)

So I [Moses] took the heads of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men, and made them heads over you, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of tens, and officers for your tribes. Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, “Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the stranger who is with him. You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man’s presence, for the judgment is God’s. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it. (Deut 1:15-17)

Solomon prayed for wisdom and understanding (1 Kin 3:9) – the administrative skills that would allow him to govern righteously and justly (Deut 1:15-17). The Messiah would and will be the very embodiment of these attributes. He will be the ideal King. Isaiah obviously intended for the contrast between this “Branch” and the Davidic kings to that point in Israel and Judah’s history to be stark and dramatic. This future ruler (the Messiah) would be divinely enabled in His humanity and at the same time be the divine Son of God. He would rule righteously and in justice – a far cry from the kings of Israel and Judah (**11:3-5**).

In **11:3-5**, Isaiah describes the characteristics of the Messiah's rule and reign. The Messiah's basis for judgment is not built upon human viewpoint, but divine wisdom. Note that the "poor" and the "meek" will be "judged" based upon righteous standards, not based upon political motives or expediency. He will not exploit the poor for personal gain nor will He use the poor as a pawn in a political game.

Characteristics of the Earth During the Messiah's Reign (vv. 6-9)

During the Messiah's reign, nature will be dramatically changed. Carnivores will become herbivores and natural enemies will become companions. See Isaiah 65:17-25. The knowledge of the Lord will no longer be limited, but in the Messianic reign, there will be no limit to access to divine Truth. Amillennial interpreters do not believe that there will be a future, literal reign of Christ on the earth for a millennium. Instead they believe that the conditions that Isaiah described here are either figurative descriptions of the peace that Christ has brought to humanity through His saving work or this is a description of heaven.⁵

All Nations (Gentiles) Will Seek Him (vv. 10-16)

The phrase "Root of Jesse" focuses upon the Messiah as the source of the Davidic line from which the God-Man Messiah would come, not just the product of that line. He will draw all nations to Himself as He rules from Jerusalem. He will also regather the remnant of believing Jews from all over the world to include the land of Israel's former enemies. The rebellion of one Davidic king – Ahaz in Judah – would result in the dispersion of the people; however, under the Messiah, the dispersed would be regathered. The second regathering (v. 11) would occur under Zerubbabel, Nehemiah and Ezra. God will defeat Israel and Judah's ancient enemies (vv. 13-15). His judgments upon the enemies will involve the drying up of major barriers, i.e. the Euphrates and the Red Sea – supernatural acts of the Lord that are reminiscent of Israel's flight from Egypt.⁶ Breaking the Euphrates into seven [number of completion] streams may connote a perfect and complete recreation by God.

⁵ Constable, *Expository Notes*.

⁶ Martin, "Isaiah" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1054