

My Favorite Thing About ISAIAH

Isaiah 9:6-7

June 26, 2021

The first few words in a book often set the tone for the whole book and that is certainly the case with Isaiah. Notice:

- **Isaiah 1:1-3, 21-25** - The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the day of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord has spoken. "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. An ox knows its owner, and a donkey its master's manger, *but* Israel does not know, My people do not understand." See how the faithful city has become a harlot! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her—but now murderers! Your silver has become dross, your choice wine is diluted with water. Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them. Therefore, the Lord God of hosts, The Mighty One of Israel declares, "Ah, I will be relieved of My adversaries, and avenge Myself on My foes. ²⁵ I will also turn My hand against you, and will smelt away your dross as with lye, and will remove all your alloy."

Not the best of starts. However, Isaiah has sometimes been called the "**5th Gospel**" because sprinkled throughout the book are 17 passages that point to God's deliverance of His people.

The importance of these passages cannot be underestimated because they were written at a time of great spiritual apostasy.

Which brings us to **My Favorite Thing About ISAIAH**, whose name literally means "**The Lord Saves**" ---- It is the picture he paints of the coming Redeemer.

Some of the most awe-inspiring words ever written regarding this Redeemer are found within the pages of this book.

The people were prosperous under the leadership of Uzziah. But, as always, God looked beyond the surface to the motivations of the heart and it was not good news. God pleaded with His people to return to Him and be restored, but they refused to listen. They traded the God of the Universe for images of wood and stone and precious metal. They **CHOSE** rebellion and ultimately, they **CHOSE** to return to captivity.

Isaiah's ministry occurred between 740 – 681 BC {approximately}

Israel destroyed by Assyria in 722 BC

Judah destroyed by Babylon in 586 BC

This is why I find the Redeemer passages in Isaiah so remarkable. Despite their rebellion, God **CHOSE** to continue to pursue them and He promised to send a **physical redeemer** in the person of Cyrus the Great:

- **Isaiah 44:28 - 45:6** - *It is I* who says of **Cyrus**, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'" Thus says the LORD to **Cyrus** His anointed, whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him, and to loose the loins of kings; to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: ⁴ "For the sake of Jacob My servant, and Israel My chosen *one*, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor though you have not known Me. ⁵ "I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; ⁶ that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other...
 - **Ezra 1:1-3 {200+ years later}** - In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah {**regarding the length of the captivity – 70 years**}, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: ² "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: "'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. ³ Anyone of his people among you-- may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem.

And a **spiritual and eternal Redeemer** in the person of Jesus:

- **Isaiah 9:1-2** - Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of **Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan** - ² **The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned**
 - **Matthew 4:12-16** - When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. ¹³ Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali -- ¹⁴ **to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:** ¹⁵ "Land of

Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles -- ¹⁶ the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."

- **Isaiah 11:1-10 - A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD --³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. ⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. ⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. ⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.**
 - **Matthew 1:1-6** - The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David.... and Jesse begot David the king.
 - **Matthew 3:16-17** - As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the **Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."**
 - **Romans 15:8-12** - Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* to the fathers, ⁹ and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written: "For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, and sing to Your name." ¹⁰ And again he says: "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!" ¹¹ And again: "Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!" ¹² And again, **Isaiah says: "There shall be a root of Jesse; and He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles shall hope."**

Beginning in Chapter 42, Isaiah begins to elaborate on Yahweh's Servant in a series of poems known as "*The Servant Songs*".

The 1st Song – The Chosen Servant:

- **Isaiah 42:1-9 - Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one 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 raise His voice, nor make His voice heard in the street. ³ A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice. ⁴ He will not be disheartened or crushed, until He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law." ⁵ Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk in it, ⁶ I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, ⁷ to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those who dwell in darkness from the prison. ⁸ I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images. ⁹ Behold, the former things have come to pass, now I declare new things; before they spring forth, I proclaim *them* to you.**
 - **Matthew 11:2-5** - Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent *word* by his disciples, ³ and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" ⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ **the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.**
 - **Matthew 12:15-21** - But Jesus, aware of *this*, withdrew from there. And many followed Him, and He healed them all, ¹⁶ and warned them not to make Him known, ¹⁷ in order that what was spoken through **Isaiah the prophet, might be fulfilled, saying, ¹⁸ "Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well-pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ He will not quarrel, nor cry out; nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. ²⁰ A battered reed He will not break off, and a smoldering wick He will not put out, until He leads justice to victory. ²¹ And in His name the Gentiles will hope."**

The 2nd Song – The Mission of the Servant:

- **Isaiah 49:1-13** - Listen to Me, O islands, and pay attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother, He named Me. ² And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me, and He has also made Me a select arrow; He has hidden Me in His quiver. ³ And He said to Me, "You are My Servant, Israel, in Whom I will show My glory." ⁴ But I said, "I have toiled in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely the justice *due* to Me is with the LORD, and My reward with My God." ⁵ And now says the LORD, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, in order that Israel might be gathered to Him (For I am honored in the sight of the LORD, And My God is My strength), ⁶ **He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."** ⁷ Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and its Holy One, To the despised One, To the One abhorred by the nation, To the Servant of rulers, "Kings shall see and arise, Princes shall also bow down; Because of the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You." ⁸ Thus says the LORD, "In a favorable time I have answered You, and in a day of salvation I have helped You; And I will keep You and give You for a covenant of the people, to restore the land, to make *them* inherit the desolate heritages; ⁹ Saying to those who are bound, 'Go forth,' To those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.' Along the roads they will feed, and their pasture will be on all bare heights. ¹⁰ "They will not hunger or thirst, neither will the scorching heat or sun strike them down; For He who has compassion on them will lead them, and will guide them to springs of water. ¹¹ "And I will make all My mountains a road, And My highways will be raised up. ¹² "Behold, these shall come from afar; And lo, these *will come* from the north and from the west, And these from the land of Sinim." ¹³ Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth! Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people, and will have compassion on His afflicted.
 - **Luke 2:25-32** - And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was **Simeon**; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before

he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, ²⁸ then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, ²⁹ "Now Lord, Thou dost let Thy bond-servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; ³⁰ For my eyes have seen Thy salvation, ³¹ Which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² **A light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Thy people Israel.**"

- **John 8:12** - Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, **"I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life."**

The 3rd Song – The Obedient Servant:

- **Isaiah 50:4-11** - The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning; He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple. ⁵ **The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not disobedient, nor did I turn back.** ⁶ **I gave My back to those who strike Me, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.** ⁷ For the Lord God helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have set My face like flint, And I know that I shall not be ashamed. ⁸ He who vindicates Me is near; Who will contend with Me? Let us stand up to each other; Who has a case against Me? Let him draw near to Me. ⁹ Behold, the Lord God helps Me; Who is he who condemns Me? Behold, they will all wear out like a garment; The moth will eat them. ¹⁰ Who is among you that fears the LORD, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God. ¹¹ Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who encircle yourselves with firebrands, walk in the light of your fire and among the brands you have set ablaze. This you will have from My hand; And you will lie down in torment.
 - **Matthew 26:65-68** - Then the high priest tore his robes, saying, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; ⁶⁶ what do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death!" ⁶⁷ **Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him.** ⁶⁸ and said, "Prophecy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?"
 - **Matthew 27:29-31** - And after weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they kneeled down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰ **And they spat on Him, and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head.** ³¹ And after they had mocked Him, they took His robe off and put His garments on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.
 - **Philippians 2:8** - And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**

The climax of these poems is "*The Song of the Suffering Servant*" which has been called the most important text in the Old Testament.

The 4th Song – The Suffering Servant:

- **Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12** - See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. ¹⁴ Just as there were many who were appalled at him--his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness -- ¹⁵ so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand. **Isaiah 53:** Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴ **Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.** ⁵ **But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.** ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ **He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.** ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. ⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. ¹¹ After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, **and was numbered with the transgressors.** For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.
 - **Matthew 8:16-17** - And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill ¹⁷ in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, **"He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases."**
 - **Mark 15:27-28** - And they crucified two robbers with Him, one on His right and one on His left. ²⁸ **And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And He was numbered with transgressors."**
 - **Acts 8:29-35** - And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." ³⁰ And when Philip had run up, he heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³² **Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: "He was led as a sheep to slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He does not open His mouth.** ³³ **"In humiliation His judgment was taken away; Who shall relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth."** ³⁴ **And the eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself, or of someone else?"** ³⁵ **And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.**
 - **1 Peter 2:21-24** - For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, ²² who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; ²³ and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; **while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;** ²⁴ **and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.**

Finally, in Isaiah 61:1-3 we read these words - *"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor...."*

Some 700 years later, at the beginning of His ministry, Jesus walked into His local synagogue on Sabbath morning and stood up to read:

- **Luke 4:17-21** - The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ¹⁸ **"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."** ²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, ²¹ and he began by saying to them, **"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."**

Isaiah is one of the most important books in all Scripture because, amongst all the *"Bad News"* of judgment, he announced the *"Good News"* of a coming Redeemer. Not just any ordinary redeemer, but a Redeemer for the whole world.

Amen and Amen!!