

## Pre-Isaiah - The Fifth Gospel – Part 2

### Why Isaiah is the Most Important Prophetic Book for the New Testament

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#### INTRODUCTION / REVIEW

In Lesson 1, we traced the historical plan of God from Genesis to Malachi. We saw the promise of the "Seed" (*zera*): a specific singular Deliverer who would come through the line of Abraham, Judah, and David to crush the head of the serpent and establish an eternal Kingdom.

- The history provided the lineage (the "Who").
- The prophecy provides the identification and explanation (the "How" and "Why").

Now we cross the bridge from the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek New Testament. Before we analyze specific texts in Isaiah, we must understand how the New Testament authors utilized this book. They did not use it as a book of proverbial virtues or allegories; they used it as evidence.

#### 1. The Prominence of Isaiah (The Statistical Argument)

When we open the New Testament, we are immediately confronted with the massive influence of Isaiah. It is often called "The Fifth Gospel" because its content is so central to the message of Jesus and the apostles.

- Isaiah is quoted or alluded to over 60 times directly, with broader allusions bringing the total to nearly 85 usages.
- Isaiah is quoted in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Hebrews, 1 Peter, and Revelation.

Why does this matter? This volume of usage tells us that for the apostles, Isaiah was the primary source text for Christology. When Paul or Peter wanted to explain *who* Jesus was or *what* He accomplished, they compared Jesus to the text of Isaiah.

The apostles' goal was to convince the Jews (and later Gentiles) of the truth about the identity and function of the Messiah. The sheer volume of Isaiah quotes demonstrates that the apostles believed the most effective way to *convince* a person that Jesus is the Messiah was to show them the correspondence between Isaiah's prophecy and Jesus' life.

#### 2. The Variety of Usage (The Strategic Argument)

The New Testament authors did not use Isaiah in a monotone fashion. They employed the text in specific categories to construct a complete theology of the Messiah. We can categorize their usage into four distinct logical arguments.

## Pre-Isaiah - The Fifth Gospel – Part 2

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---

#### A. The Apologetic Usage (Identifying the Person)

The primary use of Isaiah in the Gospels is identification. The authors use Isaiah to prove that Jesus matches the prophetic picture of the Messiah given centuries earlier.

- The Virgin Birth: Matthew 1:23 quotes Isaiah 7:14. The sign of the "Seed" is that He is born of a virgin. This identifies His origin as supernatural.
- The Forerunner: All four Gospels (Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4, John 1:23) quote Isaiah 40:3 regarding John the Baptist. You cannot have the King without the herald. The presence of the "voice in the wilderness" was proof that YHWH was arriving.
- The Galilee Ministry: Matthew 4:15-16 quotes Isaiah 9:1-2. Why did Jesus spend so much time in the Gentile, rural region of Galilee/Zebulun instead of Jerusalem? Because Isaiah predicted the light would dawn *there*.

They are objective markers intended to persuade the observer that Jesus is the One.

#### B. The Soteriological Usage (Explaining the Work)

While the Gospels use Isaiah to identify the person, the Epistles (and Acts) heavily use Isaiah to explain the work, specifically the atonement.

- The Substitution: In Acts 8:32-33, the Ethiopian eunuch is reading Isaiah 53:7-8. Philip uses this text to preach about Jesus. The concept that the Messiah must *die* (be "cut off") was foreign to first-century Jewish expectation, which anticipated a conquering King. Isaiah 53 provides the necessary theology: He is a King who first comes as a priest/sacrifice.
- The Justification: 1 Peter 2:24-25 draws heavily on Isaiah 53:5-6 ("by His stripes we are healed"). The mechanism of salvation is identified as substitutionary; He took our penalty.
- The Free Gift: Romans 10:16-17 quotes Isaiah 53:1 ("Lord, who has believed our report?"). Paul argues that salvation comes by *hearing* and *believing* the report. This supports the fact that salvation is by grace through faith.

#### C. The Eschatological Usage (Israel's Future)

A critical question in the New Testament is: *"If Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, why did the Jewish nation reject Him?"* Did God's plan for Israel fail? The apostles use Isaiah to answer "No."

- The self-hardening of Israel: Matthew 13, John 12, Acts 28, and Romans 11 all quote Isaiah 6:9-10 ("Keep on hearing, but do not understand"). Isaiah predicted

## Pre-Isaiah - The Fifth Gospel – Part 2

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that the nation *as a whole* would be judicially blinded for a season because of their rejection.

- The Remnant: Romans 9:27 quotes Isaiah 10:22 ("Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved"). The promise was never that *every* ethnic Israelite would be saved, but that the true line of faith would be preserved.
- The Future Restoration: Romans 11:26-27 quotes Isaiah 59:20-21 ("The Deliverer will come from Zion"). Paul uses Isaiah to prove that this hardening is temporary. There is a future (premillennial) restoration where national Israel will recognize their King.

#### D. The Polemic Usage (Correction)

Finally, Jesus uses Isaiah to dismantle false religious systems that rely on human tradition rather than God's Word.

- Matthew 15:7-9 quotes Isaiah 29:13 ("This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me"). Jesus defines hypocrisy using Isaiah: it is teaching the "precepts of men" as doctrines. This is a direct attack on any system (Pharisaical or modern) that adds human works or rituals to God's truth and grace.

#### 3. The Method of Usage (The Hermeneutical Argument)

How did the apostles treat the text? Did they "spiritualize" it? No. They treated the text using the Literary-Normative Method.

1. Contextual Respect: When Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14, he expects the reader to know the context of the House of David being under attack.
2. Literal Fulfillment: When Isaiah said, "Zebulun and Naphtali" (Isa 9:1), Jesus literally went to those geographic locations. He did not "allegorize" the text into spreading the news to anyone.
3. Authorial Intent: Peter (1 Peter 1:10-11) tells us that the prophets themselves (like Isaiah) were inquiring about the "person and time" the Spirit was indicating. The apostles believed Isaiah consciously wrote about a future Messiah, even if he didn't know the name "Jesus" or when He would come.

## Pre-Isaiah - The Fifth Gospel – Part 2

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#### **The Centrality of Isaiah in the New Testament**

The apostles relied most heavily on the book of Isaiah—the most frequently cited prophet in the New Testament—to establish their argument with undeniable clarity.

The purpose of this emphasis is to demonstrate that Jesus is not a recent addition or a secondary plan. He is the brilliant center toward which the entire Old Testament always pointed.

Isaiah is therefore not minor or supplemental; it is the essential foundation of the gospel message. Every New Testament author considers Isaiah crucial, treating it as the vital link connecting promise to fulfillment, prophecy to reality, and the Hebrew Scriptures to the inclusion of all the nations.

Using Isaiah, the apostles confidently proved that:

- Apologetical: Jesus is the long-awaited promised Messiah.
- Soteriological: His crucifixion and resurrection are the precise method of atonement.
- Eschatological: Historical events are moving rapidly toward the restoration of all creation through Him.
- Polemically: Even the refusal to believe (unbelief) was predicted, showing that Israel's rejection ultimately contributes to God's greater plan of mercy for all nations.

In summary, without Isaiah, the description of Jesus is inadequate. With Isaiah, the portrayal is compelling, profound, and logically certain.

The Old Testament maintains its significance on its own. However, the New Testament requires the Old, and specifically requires Isaiah, to be fully comprehensible. Jesus did not come to discard the prophets; He came as their powerful affirmation.

## The Use of Isaiah in the New Testament

1. Apologetical - (proving Jesus is the Messiah, fulfilling prophecy in his identity/ministry, or justifying the Gentile mission as scriptural)

- Isaiah 7:14 (Matthew 1:23)
- Isaiah 9:1–2 (Matthew 4:15–16)
- Isaiah 11:10 (Romans 15:12)
- Isaiah 40:3–5 (Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4–6; John 1:23)
- Isaiah 42:1–4 (Matthew 12:18–21)
- Isaiah 42:6 (Luke 2:32; cf. Acts 13:47)
- Isaiah 49:6 (Acts 13:47; cf. Luke 2:32)
- Isaiah 49:8 (2 Corinthians 6:2)
- Isaiah 52:7 (Romans 10:15)
- Isaiah 52:15 (Romans 15:21)
- Isaiah 55:3 (Acts 13:34)
- Isaiah 61:1–2 (Luke 4:18–19)
- Isaiah 65:1 (Romans 10:20)

2. Soteriological - (explaining the mechanism of salvation, atonement, healing, resurrection life)

- Isaiah 25:8 (1 Corinthians 15:54; cf. Revelation 7:17; 21:4)
- Isaiah 53:1 (John 12:38; Romans 10:16)
- Isaiah 53:4 (Matthew 8:17; 1 Peter 2:24)
- Isaiah 53:5–6 (1 Peter 2:24–25)
- Isaiah 53:7–9 (Acts 8:32–33; 1 Peter 2:22)
- Isaiah 53:12 (Luke 22:37)
- Isaiah 54:1 (Galatians 4:27)

3. Eschatological - (future hope, final judgment, resurrection, new creation)

- Isaiah 13:10 (Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24)
- Isaiah 25:8 (1 Corinthians 15:54; cf. Revelation 21:4)
- Isaiah 26:19 (allusion in Matthew 11:5; Luke 7:22; broader resurrection hope)
- Isaiah 34:4 (Matthew 24:29; Revelation 6:13–14)
- Isaiah 64:4 (1 Corinthians 2:9)
- Isaiah 65:17 (Revelation 21:1; 2 Peter 3:13)
- Isaiah 66:22 (Revelation 21:1; 2 Peter 3:13)

4. Polemic - (explaining or confronting unbelief/hardness/hypocrisy in Israel, stumbling over Christ, divine judgment on disobedience)

- Isaiah 1:9 (Romans 9:29)
- Isaiah 6:9–10 (Matthew 13:14–15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26–27)
- Isaiah 8:14 (Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:8)
- Isaiah 10:22–23 (Romans 9:27–28)
- Isaiah 28:11–12 (1 Corinthians 14:21)
- Isaiah 28:16 (Romans 9:33; 10:11; 1 Peter 2:6)
- Isaiah 29:10 (Romans 11:8)
- Isaiah 29:13 (Matthew 15:8–9; Mark 7:6–7)
- Isaiah 29:14 (1 Corinthians 1:19)
- Isaiah 29:16 (Romans 9:20)
- Isaiah 40:13 (Romans 11:34; 1 Corinthians 2:16)
- Isaiah 45:23 (Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10–11)
- Isaiah 52:5 (Romans 2:24)
- Isaiah 56:7 (Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46)
- Isaiah 59:7–8 (Romans 3:15–17)
- Isaiah 59:20–21 (Romans 11:26–27)
- Isaiah 65:2 (Romans 10:21)
- Isaiah 66:1–2 (Acts 7:49–50)

## The Use of Isaiah in the New Testament

### Direct Quotations and Key Uses

The list is organized by the New Testament book where the quotation appears.

New Testament Reference	Isaiah Passage Quoted (LXX or MT)
<b>Matthew 1:23</b>	<b>Isaiah 7:14</b> (The virgin shall be with child)
<b>Matthew 3:3</b>	<b>Isaiah 40:3</b> (The voice of one crying in the wilderness)
<b>Matthew 4:15-16</b>	<b>Isaiah 9:1-2</b> (The land of Zebulun... a great light)
<b>Matthew 8:17</b>	<b>Isaiah 53:4</b> (He Himself took our infirmities)
<b>Matthew 12:18-21</b>	<b>Isaiah 42:1-4</b> (Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen)
<b>Matthew 13:14-15</b>	<b>Isaiah 6:9-10</b> (Hearing you will hear... their eyes they have closed)
<b>Matthew 15:8-9</b>	<b>Isaiah 29:13</b> (This people honors Me with their lips)
<b>Matthew 21:13</b>	<b>Isaiah 56:7</b> (My house shall be called a house of prayer)
<b>Mark 1:3</b>	<b>Isaiah 40:3</b> (The voice of one crying in the wilderness)
<b>Mark 4:12</b>	<b>Isaiah 6:9-10</b> (That seeing they may see...)
<b>Mark 7:6-7</b>	<b>Isaiah 29:13</b> (This people honors Me with their lips)
<b>Mark 9:48</b>	<b>Isaiah 66:24</b> (Where their worm does not die)
<b>Mark 11:17</b>	<b>Isaiah 56:7</b> (My house shall be called a house of prayer)
<b>Mark 15:28</b>	<b>Isaiah 53:12</b> (He was numbered with transgressors)
<b>Luke 3:4-6</b>	<b>Isaiah 40:3-5</b> (The voice of one crying... all flesh shall see the salvation)
<b>Luke 4:18-19</b>	<b>Isaiah 61:1-2</b> (The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me)
<b>Luke 8:10</b>	<b>Isaiah 6:9</b> (That seeing they may not see)
<b>Luke 19:46</b>	<b>Isaiah 56:7</b> (My house shall be a house of prayer)

## The Use of Isaiah in the New Testament

<b>New Testament Reference</b>	<b>Isaiah Passage Quoted (LXX or MT)</b>
<b>Luke 22:37</b>	<b>Isaiah 53:12</b> (He was numbered with transgressors)
<b>John 1:23</b>	<b>Isaiah 40:3</b> (I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness)
<b>John 6:45</b>	<b>Isaiah 54:13</b> (They shall all be taught of God)
<b>John 12:38</b>	<b>Isaiah 53:1</b> (Lord, who has believed our report?)
<b>John 12:40</b>	<b>Isaiah 6:10</b> (He has blinded their eyes)
<b>John 12:41</b>	<b>Isaiah 6:1</b> (These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory)
<b>Acts 7:49-50</b>	<b>Isaiah 66:1-2</b> (Heaven is My throne)
<b>Acts 8:32-33</b>	<b>Isaiah 53:7-8</b> (He was led as a sheep to slaughter)
<b>Acts 13:34</b>	<b>Isaiah 55:3</b> (The sure mercies of David)
<b>Acts 13:47</b>	<b>Isaiah 49:6</b> (I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles)
<b>Acts 28:26-27</b>	<b>Isaiah 6:9-10</b> (Go to this people and say, 'You will keep on hearing...')
<b>Romans 2:24</b>	<b>Isaiah 52:5</b> (The name of God is blasphemed)
<b>Romans 3:15-17</b>	<b>Isaiah 59:7-8</b> (Their feet are swift to shed blood)
<b>Romans 8:36</b>	<b>Isaiah 53:7</b> (We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered)
<b>Romans 9:20-21</b>	<b>Isaiah 29:16; 45:9</b> (The thing molded will not say...)
<b>Romans 9:27-28</b>	<b>Isaiah 10:22-23</b> (Though the number of Israel be... only a remnant)
<b>Romans 9:29</b>	<b>Isaiah 1:9</b> (Had not left us a seed... like Sodom)
<b>Romans 9:33</b>	<b>Isaiah 8:14; 28:16</b> (A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense)
<b>Romans 10:11</b>	<b>Isaiah 28:16</b> (Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed)



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<b>New Testament Reference</b>	<b>Isaiah Passage Quoted (LXX or MT)</b>
<b>Romans 10:15</b>	<b>Isaiah 52:7</b> (How beautiful are the feet)
<b>Romans 10:16</b>	<b>Isaiah 53:1</b> (Lord, who has believed our report?)
<b>Romans 10:20</b>	<b>Isaiah 65:1</b> (I was found by those who did not seek Me)
<b>Romans 10:21</b>	<b>Isaiah 65:2</b> (All the day long I have stretched out My hands)
<b>Romans 11:8</b>	<b>Isaiah 29:10</b> (God gave them a spirit of stupor)
<b>Romans 11:26-27</b>	<b>Isaiah 59:20-21; 27:9</b> (The Deliverer will come from Zion)
<b>Romans 11:34</b>	<b>Isaiah 40:13</b> (Who has known the mind of the Lord?)
<b>Romans 14:11</b>	<b>Isaiah 45:23</b> (As I live... every knee shall bow)
<b>Romans 15:12</b>	<b>Isaiah 11:10</b> (The Root of Jesse... Him shall the Gentiles seek)
<b>Romans 15:21</b>	<b>Isaiah 52:15</b> (They who had no news of Him shall see)
<b>1 Corinthians 1:19</b>	<b>Isaiah 29:14</b> (I will destroy the wisdom of the wise)
<b>1 Corinthians 2:9</b>	<b>Isaiah 64:4</b> (Eye has not seen, nor ear heard...)
<b>1 Corinthians 2:16</b>	<b>Isaiah 40:13</b> (Who has known the mind of the Lord?)
<b>1 Corinthians 14:21</b>	<b>Isaiah 28:11-12</b> (By men of strange tongues...)
<b>1 Corinthians 15:32</b>	<b>Isaiah 22:13</b> (Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die)
<b>1 Corinthians 15:54</b>	<b>Isaiah 25:8</b> (Death is swallowed up in victory)
<b>2 Corinthians 6:2</b>	<b>Isaiah 49:8</b> (At the acceptable time I listened to you)
<b>2 Corinthians 6:17</b>	<b>Isaiah 52:11</b> (Come out from their midst)
<b>Galatians 4:27</b>	<b>Isaiah 54:1</b> (Rejoice, O barren woman)
<b>Ephesians 4:8</b>	<b>Isaiah 68:18 (Psalm)</b> (When He ascended... He gave gifts)

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<b>New Testament Reference</b>	<b>Isaiah Passage Quoted (LXX or MT)</b>
<b>Philippians 2:10-11</b>	<b>Isaiah 45:23</b> (That every knee should bow)
<b>Hebrews 2:13</b>	<b>Isaiah 8:17-18</b> (I will put my trust in Him... Behold, I and the children)
<b>Hebrews 12:12</b>	<b>Isaiah 35:3</b> (Lift up the hands which hang down)
<b>1 Peter 1:24-25</b>	<b>Isaiah 40:6-8</b> (All flesh is like grass...)
<b>1 Peter 2:6</b>	<b>Isaiah 28:16</b> (Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone)
<b>1 Peter 2:8</b>	<b>Isaiah 8:14</b> (A stone of stumbling)
<b>1 Peter 2:22</b>	<b>Isaiah 53:9</b> (He committed no sin)
<b>1 Peter 2:24-25</b>	<b>Isaiah 53:5-6</b> (By His stripes you were healed... like sheep)
<b>1 Peter 3:14-15</b>	<b>Isaiah 8:12-13</b> (Do not fear their intimidation)
<b>Revelation 1:17</b>	<b>Isaiah 41:4; 44:6</b> (I am the first and the last)
<b>Revelation 2:27</b>	<b>Isaiah 30:14 (Psalm 2:9)</b> (He shall rule them with a rod of iron)
<b>Revelation 3:7</b>	<b>Isaiah 22:22</b> (The key of David)
<b>Revelation 7:16</b>	<b>Isaiah 49:10</b> (They will hunger no more)
<b>Revelation 21:1</b>	<b>Isaiah 65:17</b> (A new heaven and a new earth)
<b>Revelation 21:4</b>	<b>Isaiah 25:8</b> (He will wipe away every tear)
<b>Revelation 22:13</b>	<b>Isaiah 44:6; 48:12</b> (I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last)

### Broader Allusions

This category includes passages where the New Testament author clearly has an Isaiah text in mind, even if not quoting it directly.

- **The Servant Songs (Isaiah 42, 49, 50, 52-53):** The entire concept of the "Suffering Servant" is arguably the most significant theological allusion. Beyond the direct quotes above, the very framework of Christ's passion and substitutionary work (e.g., **1 Corinthians 15:3**, "Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*") is dependent on Isaiah 53.
- **The Armor of God (Ephesians 6:14-17):** Paul's description of the Christian's armor (breastplate of righteousness, helmet of salvation) is a conceptual allusion to YHWH's own armor in **Isaiah 59:17**.
- **The Branch (Romans 15:12):** While this is a direct quote of Isaiah 11:10 (the "Root"), it also taps into the broader Messianic theme of "the Branch" from **Isaiah 4:2** and **Isaiah 11:1**.
- **New Heavens & New Earth (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1):** This foundational eschatological concept is a direct quote from **Isaiah 65:17** and **Isaiah 66:22**.
- **Light to the Gentiles (Luke 2:32):** Simeon's song, "A light for revelation to the Gentiles," is a direct allusion to Isaiah's Servant prophecies, specifically **Isaiah 42:6** and **Isaiah 49:6**.