

Isaiah – Introduction Part 6

Isaiah 30:8-9, 12-13, 15 – Now go, write it on a tablet before them And inscribe it on a scroll, That it may serve in the time to come As a witness forever. For this is a rebellious people, false sons, Sons who refuse to listen To the instruction of the LORD; ... Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel, "Since you have rejected this word And have put your trust in oppression and guile, and have relied on them, Therefore this iniquity will be to you Like a breach about to fall, A bulge in a high wall, Whose collapse comes suddenly in an instant, ... For thus the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said, "In repentance and rest you will be saved, In quietness and trust is your strength." But you were not willing,

REVIEW

In part 1 of our introduction, we looked at Isaiah the man.

In part 2, we looked at the intended audience and how Isaiah has impacted Israel across the eras.

Part 3 was about the direct audience, the Nation of Israel from 800-685 BC. Then we discussed themes: judgment, holiness, remnant, Messiah, and restoration

In part 4, we put together an outline of the book, and then we saw that Isaiah's authenticity is verified by manuscript evidence, extra-biblical testimony, and by Jesus and the apostles as they attribute every section of the book they quote to Isaiah.

In part 5, we looked at three threads through the book of Isaiah: the Messianic hope, the motif of the city, and the Holy One of Israel.

LINGUISTIC FEATURES

We have talked about this before, but we need to reiterate that Isaiah does not write linearly (like Luke or Acts do). Rather, he writes in what I have called a circular fashion. I read another way of explaining how Isaiah writes, which is known as mosaic. Mosaic is defined as an art form or the resulting artwork where a pattern, picture, or design is created by assembling many small pieces. We can also relate this to a puzzle, where each piece is put together until a clear picture is seen or understood. The difference is that Isaiah is not telling a story; he is developing a message that is difficult to understand in its pieces but is fully revealed in its completeness.

Isaiah writes almost entirely in poetry. That's the first thing you notice when you read it straight through. Only a few sections shift to narrative (like chapters 36-39, which read more like historical reporting from 2 Kings).

The rest is verse, rhythmic and dense, the kind of language that was meant to be heard aloud, memorized, and repeated. Hebrew poetry doesn't rely on rhyme or strict meter the way English does. Isaiah's poetry relies heavily on parallelism, where lines or phrases relate through repetition, contrast, or development. This builds rhythm and reinforces meaning without rhyme.

PARALLELISM

Synonymous parallelism restates an idea in similar words for emphasis. In Isaiah 1:2, we read, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; For the LORD has spoken." Hear parallels give ear, heavens parallels earth, drawing attention to the call for witnesses.

Antithetic parallelism uses contrast. Isaiah 1:18 states, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool." The opposition highlights God's offer of cleansing.

Synthetic parallelism develops or expands an idea. Isaiah 40:31 says, "Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary." Each line builds the picture of renewal.

Emblematic parallelism illustrates with imagery. Isaiah 1:8 notes, "The daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, Like a hut in a garden of cucumbers, Like a besieged city." The literal desolation is pictured through vulnerable, temporary structures.

Climactic parallelism builds incrementally to a peak. Isaiah 9:6 declares, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." The titles accumulate for emphasis.

Eclectic parallelism mixes types within a unit. Isaiah 28:7-8 blends synonymous and antithetic: "And these also reel with wine and stagger from strong drink; The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, They are confused by wine, they stagger from strong drink; They reel while having visions, They totter when rendering judgment. For all the tables are full of filthy vomit, without a single clean place." Repetition of reeling contrasts with the unclean result.

Emphatic parallelism intensifies through repetition. Isaiah 40:1 commands, "Comfort, O comfort My people, says your God." The doubling underscores urgency.

IMAGERY AND METAPHOR

Isaiah draws from life to create vivid pictures. In Isaiah 5:1-7, the vineyard metaphor shows God's care met with wild grapes: "Let me sing now for my well-beloved A song of my beloved concerning His vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. He dug it all around, removed its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in the middle of it And also hewed out a wine vat in it; Then He expected it to produce good grapes, But it produced only worthless ones." The nation is the unproductive vine.

Another is Isaiah 53:6: "All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him." The sheep imagery conveys a people that, despite guidance, tends to drift away from the fold.

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PERSONIFICATION

Isaiah gives human traits to non-human things. Isaiah 24:4 says, "The earth mourns and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away." The earth grieves under judgment.

In Isaiah 55:12, "For you will go out with joy And be led forth with peace; The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, And all the trees of the field will clap their hands." Nature rejoices in redemption.

REPETITION

Beyond line-level, repetition ties themes. The phrase *Holy One of Israel* appears twenty-five times in the book, as in Isaiah 1:4: "Alas, sinful nation, People weighed down with iniquity, Offspring of evildoers, Sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, They have despised the Holy One of Israel, They have turned away from Him."

Isaiah 2:10-11 repeats "Enter the rock and hide in the dust From the terror of the LORD and from the splendor of His majesty. The proud look of man will be abased And the loftiness of man will be humbled, And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day." It emphasizes coming humility.

ANAPHORA AND EPIPHORA

Anaphora repeats the way each sentence in a section starts. Isaiah 5:8-22 has woes beginning each: "Woe to those who add house to house..."

Epiphora repeats ends, less common but seen in repetitive refrains like in Isaiah 9:12, 17, 21, 10:4: "Yet for all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is still stretched out."

WORDPLAY AND SOUND PATTERNS

Alliteration and assonance use sounds for effect. In Isaiah 5:7, *mishpat* (justice) versus *mispach* (bloodshed), *tsedaqah* (righteousness) versus *tse'aqah* (cry): "For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel And the men of Judah His delightful plant. Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress."

Isaiah 24:17 has *terror*, *pit*, and *snare* with similar harsh sounds: "Terror and pit and snare Confront you, O inhabitant of the earth." In Hebrew, it's פַּחַד וּפְחַח וּפְחָח (pachad va-phachat va-phach), which repeats the guttural "pach" root three times with slight variations.

RHETORICAL QUESTIONS, DIALOGUE, AND DIRECT ADDRESS

These engage directly. Isaiah 40:21 asks, "Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?"

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In Isaiah 41:2, God questions, "Who has aroused one from the east Whom He calls in righteousness to His feet? He delivers up nations before him And subdues kings. He makes them like dust with his sword, As the wind-driven chaff with his bow."

God dialogues in Isaiah 43:1: "But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel, 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!'"

Isaiah 1:10 addresses: "Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah."

MOCKING DIRGE

These mock enemies. Isaiah 14:4-5 taunts Babylon's king: "...that you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon, and say, 'How the oppressor has ceased, And how fury has ceased! The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, The scepter of rulers.'"

Isaiah 47:1 derides Babylon: "Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no longer be called tender and delicate."

CHIASMUS

This inverts the structure. Isaiah 6:10 chiastically centers on heart: "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Lest they see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."

Isaiah 11:1-5 has a chiastic flow around the spiritual nature of the Messiah.

A – The origin of the king: a shoot from the stump of Jesse (v. 1a)

B – A branch from His roots will bear fruit (v. 1b)

C – The Spirit of the LORD rests upon Him (v. 2a)

D – The sixfold endowment of the Spirit (v. 2b-3a)

- Spirit of wisdom
- Spirit of understanding
- Spirit of counsel
- Spirit of might
- Spirit of knowledge
- Spirit of the fear of the LORD

C' – His delight is in the fear of the LORD (v. 3a)

B' – His righteous judgment (v. 3b-5a)

- He will not judge by what His eyes see
- He will not decide by what His ears hear
- He will judge the poor with righteousness
- He will decide with equity for the afflicted of the earth

A' – The means of his judgment: righteousness and faithfulness as His belt (v. 5)

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INCLUSIO

This bookends sections. Isaiah 1 opens and closes with rebellion and potential restoration. Isaiah 40-55 starts with comfort and ends with an invitation to it.

IRONY AND SARCASM

Isaiah 44:15-17 sarcastically describes idol-making: "Then it becomes something for a man to burn, so he takes one of them and warms himself; he also makes a fire to bake bread. He also makes a god and worships it; he makes it a graven image and falls down before it. Half of it he burns in the fire; over this half he eats meat as he roasts a roast and is satisfied. He also warms himself and says, 'Aha! I am warm, I have seen the fire.' But the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image. He falls down before it and worships; he also prays to it and says, 'Deliver me, for you are my god.'"

HYPERBOLE AND EXAGGERATION

Isaiah 34:4 exaggerates: "And all the host of heaven will wear away, And the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; All their hosts will also wither away As a leaf withers from the vine, Or as one withers from the fig tree."

EXTENDED DOUBLET

This retells themes twice from different angles. In Isaiah 7-8, the crisis with Ahaz is presented first as a sign of assurance (7:14, Immanuel), then retold with focus on consequences and remnant (8:1-4, Maher-shalal-hash-baz). The sequence of threat, divine response, and hope repeats but shifts emphasis.

CONCLUSION

These features show Isaiah's skill in using language to reveal God's heart. They make the book not just a message but a masterful work that draws us in.