

Isaiah and Ezekiel

01 Where do we start?

Two long, ancient, unfamiliar, mazelike books of Scripture—We know that this is God’s Word, so it’s profitable, but how do we even start a study? Our goal is to benefit from God through these books; God has given us these two books “for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16–17). Though they were written to ancient Israel, they are written for our warning (1 Cor 10:11) and encouragement (Rom 15:4). So how do we start benefiting from what these books have to offer?

1. We start by acknowledging that God reached down to us before we reached up to him.
 - 1.1. We trust the Bible because it is God’s Word (2 Tim 3:16).
 - 1.2. We ask for help because God is for us (Psalm 119:18).
2. We work to use the tools he has given us—history, grammar, and theology (2 Tim 2:7).
 - 2.1. God helps us as we reflect on what he has said.
 - 2.1.1. We must reflect.
 - 2.1.2. We must prioritize what has been said.
 - 2.1.3. We must rely on God’s help.
 - 2.2. God speaks to us through human beings like Paul.
 - 2.2.1. Paul, Ezekiel, Isaiah and Moses lived at a certain time different from our own.
 - 2.2.2. Paul, Ezekiel, Isaiah and Moses spoke and thought in languages different from our own.

- 2.2.3. Paul, Ezekiel, Isaiah and Moses had styles and topics different from one another.
- 2.2.4. Paul, Ezekiel, Isaiah and Moses nevertheless all spoke from the one God who cannot lie.
 - 2.2.4.1. Emphases may differ.
 - 2.2.4.2. But the core message must hang together.

3. We approach Isaiah and Ezekiel with certain expectations.

- 3.1. We will remember that the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel are the self-revelation of the triune God in written human language.
- 3.2. We will presuppose the clarity of Scripture.
 - 3.2.1. Not every part is equally clear.
 - 3.2.2. The meaning of no part may be unlocked apart from “due use of ordinary means” (i.e., grammar, history, and theology).
- 3.3. We will thus consider four phases of interpretation.
 - 3.3.1. **Text:** We will read the entirety of the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel during the course.
 - 3.3.1.1. Use a modern translation of your choice. My recommendation would be to read something different from your usual translation if you generally stick to one.
 - 3.3.1.2. This is about 8 hours of reading aloud. Of course you may read some sections multiple times (please do!), but this should give you a general idea of the time commitment.

3.3.2. **Them/Then:** We will consider how the meaning of the text would have been understood in its historical context. As we work through each section, we will see to answer,

3.3.2.1. “What was the prophet seeking to do as he communicated God’s Word to his audience?”

3.3.2.2. And, “What person or time [was] the Spirit of Christ within them...indicating when he testified beforehand about the sufferings appointed for Christ and his subsequent glory?” (1 Pet 1:11, NET).

3.3.2.2.1. Some prophecies were fulfilled in the near future for the prophet (e.g., the destruction of Jerusalem in Ezekiel).

3.3.2.2.2. Some prophecies were fulfilled during the first coming of the Messiah.

3.3.2.2.3. Some prophecies are yet to be fulfilled at the time of his second coming.

3.3.3. **Theology:** We will consider how the passage fits into the grand scheme of God’s self-revelation. We will seek to answer,

3.3.3.1. “How does this section fit into God’s story of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation?”

3.3.3.2. More specifically, we’ll frequently consider, “How does this section reflect God’s plan for Christ’s incarnation, substitution, resurrection, ascension, and return?”

3.3.4. **Today:** Since these Scriptures are for us, we must consider how we may know and submit to God through them. This brings us back to 2 Timothy 3:16–17.