

## ISAIAH - INTRODUCTION

- I. The historical situation that existed at the time of Isaiah's ministry.
  - A. Kings of Judah (Southern Kingdom) traced their ancestry to David. 2 Sam 7:1-17 (esp. vs. 16) The Northern Kingdom (10 tribes) had a succession of dynasties.
  - B. At Sinai, Israel agreed to be Yahweh's people and to obey His law. Ex. 24:1-8 (esp. vs. 7)
  - C. Judah interpreted 2 Sam. 7:14-16 to mean that a son of David would be punished if he sinned, but under no circumstances would God allow his people to fall before their enemies or would He allow Jerusalem or His house, the temple, to fall. Isaiah, along with the other prophet to Judah from this period, Micah (Amos and Hosea prophesied to the Northern Kingdom at this time) had to contend with this popular assumption.
  - D. Uzziah (Azariah 2 Kings 15:1-7), king of Judah, reigned over a prosperous nation (791-740 B.C.) at the same time that Jeroboam 2 reigned over the Northern Kingdom (782-753 B.C.). Material prosperity and spiritual bankruptcy characterized the Northern Kingdom and Uzziah was greatly influenced by Jeroboam 2. Uzziah's kingdom attained a degree of strength and prosperity which she had not enjoyed since the days of Solomon. He:
    1. Developed a large standing army.
    2. Built walls, towers, and fortifications for defense.
    3. Dismantled the Philistine strongholds of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod
    4. Built cities among the Philistines.
    5. Made the Ammonites and Edomites vassals.
    6. Commerce through the port at Ezion-geber brought the products of Africa and India into the markets of Jerusalem and Judea.
  - E. In the death year of Uzziah (740 B.C.), Isaiah began his prophetic ministry (Isa. 6:1-13). He lived to see the siege of Samaria and the end of the Northern Kingdom. He did not see the fall of Jerusalem, but he did see it approaching the precipice.
  - F. Temple revenues were at an all time high, but Isaiah saw this as paying service to God. Religious externals were the people's focus and God was filled up with them (Isa. 1:11-15).

- G. Ahaz replaced Jotham as king, of whom nothing is recorded in Isaiah. During his reign, Rezin, the king of Aram and Pekah, king of Israel (2 Kings 16:27-31), joined together to war against Jerusalem. Ahaz sent for Assyrian aid to help him defeat this coalition. Isaiah challenged the king of Judah to trust in God, but to no avail (Isa. 7:1-25).

Note: A prophet's ministry was not constant as an apostle or pastor teacher's was and is. The Word of the Lord came to the prophet only when God desired to communicate through him. It is also true that not everything that was said and done by the prophet was intended for God's permanent record, the Bible.

- H. In 701 B.C., the armies of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against Jerusalem when Hezekiah was king (Isa. 36:1-22). Isaiah again admonishes the king of Judah to trust in His God and Hezekiah responds with faithfulness. God destroys the threatening army of 185,000 (Isa. 37:1-38). The last historical event recorded by Isaiah is the death of Sennacherib, king of Assyria (Isa. 37:37-38). This death occurred in 680 B.C.
- I. Isaiah ministered from the year of Uzziah's death to at least the year of Sennacherib's death (740-680 B.C.). He lived during the reigns of Uzziah (Azariah), Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. 2 Chron. 32:32 may indicate that Isaiah's ministry ran past Hezekiah's death.
- J. Collateral passages describing the historical events of the time:
- 2 Kings 14:23 – 20:21 (Judah and Israel only)
  - 2 Chron. 26:1 – 32:33 (Judah only)
  - Micah (ministered to Judah)
  - Amos (ministered to Israel)
  - Hosea (ministered to Israel)

Post Script --

Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, took the throne at the age of 12 and ruled for 55 years. 2 Kings 21:1-18 and 2 Chron. 33:1-20.

Manasseh's son, Amon, was worse than his father. 2 Chron. 33:21-25.

Tradition teaches that Manasseh had Isaiah killed by having him "sawn in two." Heb. 11:37