

# **INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ISAIAH**

**“The book of Isaiah is like a mighty oratorio whereby Israel sings its story of faith. In this oratorio, a primary theme is the predominant and constant character of Yahweh, who looms over the telling in holy sovereignty and in the faithful gentleness of a comforting nursemaid,” states Walter Brueggemann in his commentary on this first section of Isaiah. It is written for a people in the midst of the imperial powers of Assyria in chapters 1-39 and Babylon and Persia in chapters 40-55. Chapters 56-66 walk with God’s people out of exile to reshape their community. As you read this book, I invite you to use the Outline below as a guide to help see the themes before you.**

**This is an important reading for our time. *It is news about what God has decided, decreed, and is doing that makes a decisive difference in the world. It is a summons to FAITH that insists that Yahweh be relied upon in every circumstance of life. It is the offer of comfort in the midst of every crisis. May you find comfort and hope in your reading.***

## **Outline of FIRST ISAIAH – Chapters 1-39**

### **Chapter 1-12-“Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts”**

- 1:1-2:4-An Overture of the Main Themes
- 2:5-4:6-Yet again, Massive Judgment and Resilient Hope
- 5:1-10:4-Anger not yet turned
- 10:5-34-Faith required in the midst of Global threat
- 11:1-16-Beginning yet again
- 12:1-6 – Praise and thanks beyond Wrath

### **Chapter 13-23-Yahweh’s Rule in World Perspective**

- 13:1-22-A Day of Harsh Sovereignty
- 14:1-2-Inversion, Compassion, Homecoming
- 14:3-23-Welcome to Death!
- 14:24-27-The Lord of Hosts Has Planned
- 14:28-32-Do Not Rejoice but Wail
- 15:1-16:14-He Will not Prevail
- 17:1-3-Yet another Heap of Ruins
- 17:4-14-From Glory to Grief-and Back again
- 18:1-7-Look, Listen!
- 19:1-25-Egypt Devastated and Blessed
- 20:1-6-How Shall we Escape?
- 21:1-17-“I bring to an End”
- 22:1-14-Planned Long Ago
- 22:1-25-Bad Steward, Good Steward
- 23:1-18-“Your Fortress Is Destroyed”

**Chapter 24-27-Yahweh's Judgment on the Power of Evil**

- 24:1-23 "The Lord of Hosts Will Reign"
- 25:1-12 – A Swallowing That Permits Life
- 26:1-21-Trust in the God Who Gives Life
- 27:1-13 –Beyond Wrath

**Chapter 28-33-"The King in His Beauty"**

- 28:1-19-Fresh Phrasings of Trouble
- 29:1-24-A City "Visited"
- 30:1-33-A Choice between Two Plans
- 31:1-9-Ture and False Help
- 32:1-20- The New Age: Its Threat and Its Promise
- 33:1-24-The Coming Kingdom of God

**Chapter 34-35-The New Governance of Harshness and Joy**

- 34: 1-17-A Day of Vengeance
- 35:1-10-Vengeance as Homecoming Jubilation

**Chapter 36-39-The Career of the Good King**

- 36:1-37:20-Israel Taunted for Faith
- 37:21-38-I Planned from the Days of Old
- 38:-1-22-Faithful King, Faithful God
- 39:1-8-An Anticipated Ending

*From commentary on Isaiah 1-39 by Walter Brueggemann*