

(S) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series, you will have an opportunity to learn to know the Bible. Today we will study the book of ISAIAH - PART 2. We will learn that the book of Isaiah is a prophetic book. We will consider prophecies that predict the future, the historical point of view of the prophecies, the prophecies that are bound up and sealed and the specific fulfilment of the prophecies in Isaiah.

#### **POINT 4. PROPHECIES PREDICTING THE FUTURE**

The question that caused people to differ with one another about who is the author of the contents in the book Isaiah is, "How can a person prophesy so accurately about events that were literally fulfilled about 150-200 years later?" Especially in chapters 40-66, the prophet speaks of the Babylonian exile, the Persian king Cyrus, his victories over nations, his conquering of Babel and his allowing the Jews to return to Judah to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. The answer given by certain people is that these prophecies were written *after* these events happened.

However, the Bible consistently teaches that *the prophets were supernaturally and divinely inspired to predict events that would happen hundreds of years later*. The writer deliberately says that he is prophesying in the sense of predicting future events. In Isaiah 41:22-29, the prophet Isaiah *challenged the idols* to foretell what would happen in the future, but they could not (45:21)(42:8-9). Then he says that the Lord was the first to foretell through his prophet Isaiah that a mighty king Cyrus would come from the east and the north to conquer nations. In Isaiah 43:9-13, the prophet says that the Lord *challenged all the nations* to proclaim what would happen in the future, but also they could not. Only the nation Israel could witness that what the Lord had prophesied in the past had actually happened. In Isaiah 44:6-8, the prophet says that the Lord *challenged anyone in the universe or in history* to foretell what would happen in the future, but there was no one like the Lord! In Isaiah 44:28-45:4, the prophet says that the Lord would summon king Cyrus, who himself does not know the Lord, to accomplish what the Lord has decided would happen in history. The Lord would command this king Cyrus to subdue many nations, including the nation that would oppress Israel in exile, and let Jerusalem and its temple be rebuilt. The Lord mentions this Cyrus by name for the sake of the believing remnant of Israel, so that they may know that only the God of the Bible is God and that he has chosen the believing remnant to be his people. In Isaiah 46:10-11, the Lord says through his prophet, "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. ... What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do'." And in Isaiah 48:3 and 6, the Lord says through his prophet that he foretold the things that have already happened in the past and that he is now foretelling them new things that no one can know and that will certainly happen in the future.

#### **POINT 5. PROPHECIES AND THEIR HISTORICAL POINT OF VIEW**

But how do we explain the fact certain prophecies *seem* to have been spoken after Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, that is, that these prophecies *seem* to have been spoken *during* the exile? For example, Isaiah 51:3 and 52:9 speak of Jerusalem as a place of ruins and desolation. Isaiah 42:22,24 speak of Israel as a people plundered, looted, trapped and imprisoned, or as a people who are captives, with no one to rescue them or send them back to their own country. Thus, it speaks of Israel as already living in exile. Isaiah 43:14 says that the Lord would send Cyrus to conquer Babylon (46:1). Isaiah 66:8,20 speaks of Israelites returning to Jerusalem and of the rebirth of the nation Israel. And Isaiah 44:26-28 says that the towns of Judah, Jerusalem and the temple would again be rebuilt and inhabited.

The answer that some people give is that another prophet, called *Isaiah 2*, wrote these prophecies during the exile. However, the best answer is to regard these prophecies as prophecies of our own prophet Isaiah. Remember, the prophets in the Bible were inspired by God himself and as we have seen, God himself made the far away future known through his prophets. *Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the prophet Isaiah sees with his spiritual eyes the historical reality as it will be in the future! He speaks as if these future events have already taken place in order to emphasise the absolute certainty that these events will happen!* The Holy Spirit transfers the prophet to the time of the exile, gives him insight into the conditions of the exiles, makes him feel both angry with the sin of the exiles and makes him feel empathy with the exiles. The Holy Spirit gives the prophet the ability to identify himself with the exiles in the future and make new revelations that pertain to their rescue from exile. Thus, the Babylonian prophecies take their *historical point of view*, not in the time the prophet himself lives, but in the time of the future Babylonian exile.

#### **POINT 6. PROPHECIES THAT ARE BOUND UP AND SEALED**

In Isaiah 8:16, the Lord says to his prophet Isaiah, "Bind up the testimony and seal up the law among my disciples." The context is the contrast between the mass of people in Israel who have hardened their hearts against the Lord and Isaiah together with a small group of believers who have grouped themselves around him. The *testimony* is the solemn announcement of future revelations and the *law* is the instruction of how to live in the light of these future revelations, which is to trust, revere and obey the Lord. *Binding together and sealing* these future revelations and practical instructions means *to gather them together in a written record and to engrave their contents in the hearts of his*

*disciples*. These *disciples* are those in Israel whom Isaiah calls *the remnant*, those who remain faithful to the Lord and who, according to Romans 9:6, are *the true Israel*. Isaiah records his prophecies especially for this remnant of Israel. God's prophecies regarding the future of Israel and his promises made to Israel are *not to the natural nation of Israel*, but are to this *faithful believing remnant in Israel*. Isaiah undoubtedly proclaimed God's words to all the people of the nation Israel, but according to Isaiah 6:9-10, he knew that God's words would have no effect on the great mass of people in the nation Israel. In Isaiah 8:17-18, the prophet says, "I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob. Here am I, and the children the Lord has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord Almighty." Isaiah says that the faithful remnant in Israel, which included his wife and two sons, are in a sense *a type* during the Old Testament time of Jesus Christ and the Church, as Hebrews 2:13 clearly teaches. Thus, it is quite possible, that during his life-time, Isaiah recorded his prophecies, but did not speak all his prophecies in public. It is quite possible that a great part of Isaiah's prophecies were known only to his circle of disciples, to the faithful remnant in Israel, who also kept these records safe for later generations.

## **POINT 7. PROPHECIES THAT ARE FULFILLED IN HISTORY**

When God's judgements as punishment and his subsequent redemption is solemnly announced by special revelation long before the actual occurrence of the fulfilment, then it proves that the Lord is the only true and sovereign God.

### **First. Fulfillments of prophecies within a few years of prediction.**

Isaiah 37:21-35 prophesies Jerusalem's deliverance from the power of king Sennacherib of Assyria by supernatural means. Three years later an angel of the Lord put to death 185 000 soldiers within the Assyrian camp within one night. And the Assyrian army returned to Assyria. This prophecy was literally fulfilled!

### **Second. Fulfillments of prophecies long after Isaiah's death.**

All his prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the exile to Babylon, the acts of king Cyrus as God's instrument of punishment and rescue, the return of the exiles to Judah and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple belong to such prophecies. All these prophecies were literally fulfilled! King Manasseh promoted idolatry and tried to annihilate the service of the Lord. The purpose of the extensive and precise prophecies concerning Babylon was to confirm in later generations that the prophet Isaiah's message was indeed the message of the living God. Their purpose was to show that God is sovereign over all the affairs of man. Their purpose was to prove that what was happening in history to all the nations as well as to Judah, was not due to the power of mighty nations like Babylon, but was due to the decree of the Sovereign God. God purposed to punish his covenant people, Israel and Judah, by exile. He also purposed to rescue the faithful believing remnant by means of king Cyrus. It is quite impossible for any keen political analyst or anyone else to predict precisely events 150 to 200 years before their occurrence! Fulfilled prophecies prove that only the God of the Bible *is God* and that he is the *sovereign* God!

### **Third. Fulfillments of the Messianic prophecies.**

All Isaiah's prophecies concerning the first coming of the Messiah were literally fulfilled! This gives great assurance to the faithful today that also Isaiah's prophecies concerning the second coming of Christ will be literally fulfilled!

## **POINT 8. PROPHECIES CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH**

### **First. Prophecies concerning the first and the second coming of Jesus Christ.**

Isaiah made several very important prophecies about the coming Messiah. As a prophet in the Old Testament, he saw the two comings of Jesus Christ in the future as one looks through a telescope at mountain ranges. He could only see mountain ranges one behind the other, but he could not see the distance between these mountain ranges. Likewise, Isaiah saw the coming of Jesus Christ, but he *could not see that there were two comings* of Jesus Christ and he *could also not see the long period of time between* the first and second coming of Christ.

### **Second. Specific prophecies about Jesus Christ in the book of Isaiah.**

#### **Prophecies concerning Christ's birth.**

Isaiah 9:6 says that a child would be born. Isaiah 7:14 says that a virgin would give birth to a son and call his name Immanuel, which means *God with us*. The fulfilment is described in Matthew 1:21.

#### **Prophecy concerning Christ's family.**

Isaiah 11:1 says that Christ would be born in the family of king David (son of Jesse). The fulfilment is described in Matthew 1:1.

#### **Prophecies concerning Christ's anointing.**

Isaiah 11:2 says that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on Christ. And it would be a Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge and the fear of the Lord. The fulfilment is described in Matthew 3:16-17. Isaiah 61:1-2 says

that because of this anointing with the Spirit, Christ would preach the good news, bind up the broken-hearted and proclaim a time of God's favour and grace. The fulfilment began in Luke 4:14-21.

#### Prophecies concerning Christ's attributes.

Isaiah 9:6 says that the government would be on Christ's shoulders and that Christ would be called "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

One. The government would be on his shoulders: Matthew 28:18 says that all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Christ. And Matthew 8 describes how he had authority over every sickness, over every evil spirit and over the forces of nature.

Two. He would be the Wonderful Counsellor. Matthew 7:29 says that Jesus Christ taught as one who had authority and not as the teachers of the law. And Matthew 22:46 says that Christ gave such good counsel that no one could say a word in reply and no one dared to ask him any more questions that tried to trap him.

Three. He would be the Mighty God. In Colossians 1:15, Paul says that Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. And in Colossians 2:9, he says that all the fullness of God dwells in Christ even in his bodily form.

Four. He would be the Everlasting Father. In John 10:30 Christ says that he and the Father are one. And in John 14:7-10 Christ says that whoever knows Jesus Christ also knows God the Father. Whoever has seen Jesus Christ has seen God the Father. Jesus Christ is in God the Father and God the Father is in Jesus Christ.

Five. He would be the Prince of Peace. In Romans 5:1, Paul says that people who have been justified by faith in Christ, have peace with God. And in Ephesians 2:12-14, he says that Christ is also the only One who can make peace between people who are enemies.

#### Prophecy concerning Christ's settling in Capernaum:

Isaiah 9:1-2 says that in the future the Lord would honour Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan. The people walking in darkness, that is, the Gentiles would see a great light. Matthew 4:12-17 says that when Jesus went to live in Capernaum, this prophecy was literally fulfilled.

#### Prophecy concerning Christ's gentleness:

Isaiah 42:1-4 says that the Messiah would be a servant, he would not shout in the street, he would not get discouraged by the persecutions he suffers, he would not discourage the sick and broken people in the world, he would bring justice to the nations and the nations would put their hope on him. All this has been fulfilled: Mark 10:45 says that Jesus came not to be served but to serve. Matthew 12:14-21 says that he did not fight for his rights, but was also not stopped to do what was right in God's eyes: He helped the sick and helpless people and he preached the good news to them.

#### Prophecies concerning Christ's suffering, death and resurrection.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 says that Jesus Christ would be despised and rejected, that he would be pierced on the cross for our transgressions and punished for our sins, that he would be buried in a grave of a rich man, that after death he would see the light of life and would justify very many people, and that he would be lifted up and highly exalted, where he would intercede for sinners. The Gospels and the letters of Paul teach how all this was literally fulfilled.

#### Prophecies concerning Christ's glorious reign.

Isaiah 11:10 and 65:1 say that people from all nations would rally to Christ. Isaiah 11:3-5 and 32:1-2 say that Christ would reign in righteousness, that he would certainly slay the wicked and that he would do justice to the oppressed, and that his people would be part of the solution instead of part of the problem. Isaiah 11:6-9 and 65:17 describe the new heaven and new earth, that is, the kingdom of God in its final manifestation.

### **Third. Prophecies concerning the servant of the Lord.**

Modern Jews identify *the servant of the Lord* with the natural nation of Israel. This view cannot be maintained, because a nation cannot suffer vicariously for its own sins, cannot be crucified on a cross or buried with a certain rich man. The only satisfactory explanation of all these prophecies is to explain the concept of *the servant of the Lord* separately in each context. In some passages, the concept represents the nation of Israel as a whole; in others passages it represents only the faithful remnant of believers in Israel and finally in other passages it represents only the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### One. The nation of Israel as God's servant.

The word '*servant*' is in the singular. Isaiah 41:8-9 relates that in contrast to people serving idols, Israel is called God's chosen *servant* to serve the living God. Isaiah 43:10 says that Israel is reminded that their calling and task is to be God's witnesses on earth. However, Isaiah 42:19 relates that Israel is accused of being blind to God's works and deaf to God's words and therefore would be sent into exile. Isaiah 45:1-4 promises that king Cyrus would be summoned to save Israel from their captivity in Babylon (48:20). And according to Isaiah 44:1-5, after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on people in Israel, people from the Gentiles would also join themselves to the true God of Israel and take on the name of "Israel". This is a prophecy concerning Gentile proselytes joining the nation of Israel as well as a prophecy concerning Pentecost and Gentiles joining God's new people called the Church, which is "the Israel of God" (Gal 6:16).

#### Two. The remnant of genuine believers in Israel as God's servants.

The word '*servants*' is in the plural. In Isaiah 44:26 God's *servants* are collectively the prophets. In Isaiah 54:16-17 the *servants* are the individual members of Israel. Whatever happens to them is determined by God and not by their attackers or accusers. In Isaiah 63:16-17 the *servants* are those who acknowledge God as Father. In Isaiah 65:8-10 the *servants* are the faithful chosen remnant of Israel in contrast to the obstinate and idolatrous Israelites. They are the holy seed that are left as a tree stump (6:13), but would later flourish (66:14).

Three. The Lord Jesus Christ as the servant of the Lord.

Isaiah 49:3 teaches that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, would be the true *Israel*. Only in him would God display his splendour and fulfil his eternal plan of salvation. Isaiah 42:6 and 49:8 teaches that Jesus Christ would be *the covenant* for Israel. *This means that God's covenant with Israel is completely bound up in Jesus Christ. All the promises and blessings made to Israel could only be realised and experienced in relationship with Jesus Christ* (2 Cor 1:20). Jesus Christ would be filled with the Holy Spirit and bring justice to the nations in the world (42:1-7) and God's light and salvation to the ends of the earth (49:1-7). Nations would despise and abhor him, but eventually all the kings and rulers on earth would bow down before him. In Isaiah 50:4-11 the Messiah himself speaks of the suffering he would bear: people would beat him on his back, pull out his beard, mock him and spit him in his face. Nevertheless, he would not give in to them, because God himself would vindicate him. Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12 says that the Messiah would be despised and rejected, pierced on the cross for our transgressions, buried in a grave of a rich man, resurrected from the dead, exalted in heaven from where he would intercede for many and justify many people.

**ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. During the next week, read Jeremiah 1-26. Next week we will introduce the book of Jeremiah - part 1.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and preach God's Kingdom" and Internet on [www.dota.net](http://www.dota.net)

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".