

Handout1: Isaiah Lesson 2

The four Davidic kings of Judah whose reigns overlapped the years of Isaiah's ministry (all dates are approximate and the dates of other sources may differ slightly):

1. Uzziah son of Amaziah (781-740 BC): In the beginning he was a good king, but later he became proud and arrogant. He reigned for 53 years. Isaiah's ministry began the year of Uzziah's death in 740 BC.

2. Jotham son of Uzziah (740-736 BC): Overall he was a good king who was spiritually loyal to Yahweh, but unfortunately his people did not follow his example.

3. Ahaz son of Jotham (736-716 BC): Ahaz was an evil and idolatrous king who promoted Baal worship along with worship of Yahweh. He also reinstated the pagan practice of child sacrifice to Baal/Molech by sacrificing his own son.

4. Hezekiah son of Ahaz (716-687 BC): Unlike his father, Hezekiah was a good king and faithful to Yahweh. He listened to Isaiah and upon assuming the throne he immediately took steps to eradicate idolatry from the land of Judah and promoted devotion to Yahweh in a way the people had not seen in many decades.

The Israelites violated the binding covenant with Yahweh who they swore to obey as their only God and great King at Mt. Sinai in the beginning of their history as a nation (Ex 24:3-7). God's covenant treaty with Israel, that resembles other secular covenant treaties in the ancient Near East, was set down in five parts. Below is the review of the treaty in Moses' last homilies in the Book of Deuteronomy. A covenant law-suit (*riv* in Hebrew) calls into action the judgment Sanctions of the covenant.

1. Preamble: Identifying the lordship of Yahweh the Great King.	Deuteronomy 1:1-5
2. Historical Prologue: Recounting the Great King's previous relationship to his vassal (the Exodus liberation).	Deuteronomy 1:6 – 4: 49
3. Ethical Stipulations: Enumerating the vassal's obligations (the Law of the covenant).	Deuteronomy 5:1 – 26:19
4. Sanctions: Promised blessing for obedience and judgments for disobedience.	Deuteronomy 27:1 -1 30:20
5. Succession Arrangements: Arrangements and provisions for the continuity of the covenant relationship over future generations.	Deuteronomy 31:1 – 34:12

See the document on the website concerning covenant treaties in the ancient Near East and Yahweh's covenant treaty with Israel:
<http://www.agapebiblestudy.com/documents/Covenant%20Treaty%20in%20Scripture.htm>.

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Handout 2: Isaiah Lesson 2

Summary of the importance of the main theme and the five sub-themes in Isaiah:

Main theme: Justice and redemption

Sub themes:

1. The sovereignty of God: This concept appears throughout the book. God is the sovereign Lord of the universe and over every nation and people on the face of the earth. He is actively at work in the events of the world, guiding all human history in accordance with His divine plan.

2. The preservation of the faithful remnant of the covenant people: The Hebrew word *sariyd* (saw-reed) is used in the concept of a “remnant” or “remainder.” The most important is that of the faithful remnant as a group God has chosen and preserved. They are people who are looking to God’s direction in obedience to His divine will working through them (Is 37:4, 32). They return to the Lord and experience the fullness of His salvation when others do not.

3. The Servant of God: The Hebrew word *‘ebed*, “servant/slave”, occurs almost 800 times in the Old Testament and of those occurrences it is found 39 times in Isaiah. The “servant” bows in complete submission of his master’s will. Isaiah uses the term to describe God’s covenant people as a group (Is 41:1; 54:17), but more often as individuals who submit and serve God faithfully (Is 22:20; 42:1; 52:13).

4. The Holy One of Israel: This is Isaiah’s favorite way of referring to God; the title occurs 31 times in the Old Testament and 25 times in the Book of Isaiah. Isaiah uses the title for God in both judgmental and redemptive contexts.

5. The Messiah: The Hebrew word *mashiach* literally means “anointed one” and is translated as “messiah.” Kings, prophets and priests all experienced God’s anointing in being set apart for service (Lev 4:3; 1 Sam 10:1; 2 Kng 9:3). The word *mashiach* (“Messiah”) and the corresponding verbal form *mashach* occur only twice in Isaiah, but the concept of messiahship lies beneath many of the prophetic utterances of the prophet and are recognized by the Church as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

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The main themes of the Book of Isaiah are justice and redemption, and the five most significant sub-themes of the book of Isaiah are: the sovereignty of God, the preservation of the faithful remnant, the Servant of God, the Holy One of Israel, and the Messiah.

1. The sovereignty of God: The concept of the sovereignty of God appears throughout the book, in fact, this concept is assumed on every page of Sacred Scripture. God is the sovereign Lord of the universe and over every nation and people on the face of the earth. He is actively at work in the events of the world, guiding all human history in accordance with His divine plan.

2. The preservation of the faithful remnant of the covenant people: The Hebrew word *sariyd* (saw-reed) is used in the concept of a “remnant” or “remainder” of a group God has chosen and preserved. They are the covenant people who are looking to God’s direction in obedience to His divine will working through them (Is 37:4, 32). They return to the Lord and experience the fullness of His salvation when others do not (Is 10:21-22; Mic 2:12).

3. The Servant of God: The Hebrew word *‘ebed*, “servant/slave”, occurs almost 800 times in the Old Testament and of those occurrences it is found 39 times in Isaiah. The “servant” bows in complete submission of his master’s will. Isaiah uses the term to describe God’s covenant people as a group (Is 41:1; 54:17), but more often as individuals who submit and serve God faithfully (Is 22:20; 42:1; 52:13).

4. The Holy One of Israel: This is Isaiah’s favorite way of referring to God; the title occurs 31 times in the Old Testament and 25 times in the Book of Isaiah. Isaiah uses the title for God in both judgmental and redemptive contexts. Isaiah writes about the Holy One of Israel who has experienced the rejection of His people who have resisted His sovereignty (Is 1:4; 5:19, 24). It is the Holy One of Israel who will judge the nations who oppose Him (Is 37:23). But it is the Holy One of Israel who will act as Israel’s Savior (Is 43:3) and Redeemer (Is 43:14) in delivering His people from exile to establish His Kingdom (Is 60:9, 14).³

5. The Messiah: The Hebrew word *mashiach* literally means “anointed one” and is translated as “messiah.” Kings, prophets and priests all experienced God’s anointing in being set apart for service (Lev 4:3; 1 Sam 10:1; 2 Kng 9:3). The word *mashiach* (“Messiah”) and the corresponding verbal form *mashach* occur twice in Isaiah, but despite the fact that the word only occurs twice, the concept of messiahship lies beneath many of the prophetic utterances of the prophet (Is 7:14; 9:6-7; 11:1-10; 32:1-4; 42:1-4; 52:13-53:12) and are recognized by the Church as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ.