

These stylistic differences should not be exaggerated, however. There are many words and phrases peculiar to Isaiah which are found either only in this prophet or rarely in the rest of the Old Testament. The most famous of these, the phrase "the holy one of Israel", occurs twelve times in Isaiah 39:1-39, thirteen in 40-66, and only five times in the rest of the Bible. This problem is complex and a good Bible dictionary or encyclopedia will provide a starting place for further study. It is most probably that Isaiah wrote all of this book between the time of his call (739 BC) and sometime during the reign of Manasseh (c. 685 BC?). He may have had an assistant, like Jeremiah, who edited the book after his death, but, if so, we have no record of his existence, nor any way of objectively proving it.

Isaiah consists mainly of poetry with some prose sections (especially 6-7, 36-39).

A very simple outline for Isaiah is this:

- I. Prophecies Concerning Isaiah's Lifetime 1-35
- II. Historical interlude: Isaiah and Hezekiah 36-39
- III. Prophecies presupposing the Exile 40-55
- IV. Miscellaneous prophecies 56-66

In the history of redemption Isaiah holds an important place with the main emphases of judgment (1-39) and salvation (40-66). These spring from his concept of the holiness of God, instilled during his inaugural vision (6). Because God is holy, he judges sin; because he is holy, he keeps his word to Israel.

There are many important themes in Isaiah out of this line. Some highlights include one of the most explicit references to the resurrection in the Old Testament (26:19), God's universal sovereignty over men and nations (40:6-26), the realization of the goal of this universalism (45:22-24), and a well-developed argument for the uniqueness of the Lord over and against the "gods" of the heathen (40:18-20; 41:21-29, etc.).

But the most important development is his teaching about the Servant of the Lord in the Servant Songs (42:1-7; 49:1-16; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). These passages complete the earlier Old Testament teachings about sacrifice: in Genesis one, one animal dies for one person; in Exodus 12, it is one animal for a family; in Leviticus 16, one animal for a nation. Isaiah expands this teaching by writing that one person can die for an entire nation (53:4-6, 8). There is also a development within these passages of the dual themes of Israel as his servant and the Servant who is yet to come.

Isaiah, for his hope of salvation and prophecies of the coming Messiah, is often called the "Evangelist of the Old Testament." It is a title richly deserved.

Some Questions that arise--of special interest--are these:

Did Isaiah prophesy before his call (6)? Why is it recorded in 6 and not at the beginning of the book (cf. Jer. 1, Ezek. 1)? How do the promises of Isaiah given to Israel apply to believers today? How could Isaiah comfort the nation for a disaster a century in the future? How could the birth of a child 800 years later be a sign to Ahaz as he faced Rezin and Pekah? Did Isaiah understand any connection between the future King (11) and the Servant of the Lord (42:1-7, etc.)

Regarding archaeology many statements in Isaiah have been corroborated or illuminated by archaeologists. Ugaritic texts from Ras Shamra