



ISAIAH

Title and Authorship. The superscription in Isaiah 1:1 gives the identity of the seer (Isaiah, son of Amoz), the mode of revelation (vision), the main topic of the book (Judah and Jerusalem), and the approximate time in which the revelations were received.

Date. Isaiah's commission in "the year that King Uzziah died" (Isaiah 6:1) occurred sometime in 740 B.C. The final form of the book may be assigned to the first half of Manasseh's reign.

Backgrounds. Isaiah's commission as prophet coincided with Assyria's rise to sovereignty. It brought disorder, upheavals, and destruction, and it forced the mixing of peoples and their cultural practices. The resultant religious syncretism and lack of faith in the God of their ancestors was especially problematic for Israel and Judah. Isaiah addressed these threats, teaching faith by revealing God's plan for Israel, His elected people, and for Zion-Jerusalem, His elect city.

Theology and Purpose. Against mounting doubts in the Lord's power and will to save His people, the book of Isaiah points to His sovereignty as Creator and Lord of history and of nations and kings. God is the Other, completely different from any human or other part of His creation. Israel's God was intimately connected with Zion, which was His dwelling and resting place, His throne, and His place of worship. In Isaiah, the theological foundation for seeing God as the God of the nations is the "everlasting covenant" between the Creator and human beings, which established the fundamental order of the world of creation. The hope proclaimed by Isaiah was based on God's claim that there is no other god besides Him. God's plan would not fail in spite of the sins of His people because He would preserve for Himself a remnant. Isaiah assigned a distinct value to the preserved, written prophecy as evidence of the power of the word of the Lord. It was to be a preserved record that could be seen and verified by its historical fulfillment.