Reading Isaiah

Lesson One: The Years of Peace

I. What is the book of Isaiah?

1. Look at Isaiah 1:1, 2:1, and 13:1. What do these verses indicate about the book as a whole?

2. Look at the table of contents. What are the major divisions of Isaiah?

3. Two phrases characterize most of the material in the Isaiah:

a. "Thus says the LORD."

b. "In that day…"

II. Historical Setting of chapters 2-5:

1. Skim 2 Chronicles 26. What was life like during Uzziah's reign?

2. Skim 2 Chronicles 27. What was life like during Jotham's reign?

III. Isaiah's Prophecy During the Reigns of Uzziah and Jotham

1. Read Isaiah 2:6-11. Why has the Lord abandoned his people?

2. Read Isaiah 3:1-7. What was the Lord about to do to his people?

3. Do you think most people would have taken this seriously at that time?

4. Read Isaiah 3:13-14. What is the Lord's case against the leaders of the people?

5. Read Isaiah 3:16-4:1. How will the Lord turn the tables on the women of Jerusalem?

6. What does the long list of clothing and accessories tell us about life at this time?

IV. Isaiah 4:2-6: The LORD restores Zion

1. Read through this section one verse at a time. How will the LORD restore Zion?

2. Verse 5 contains an allusion to Israelite history. Do you notice it?

3. How was/is this prophecy fulfilled?

V. Isaiah 5:1-7: The Lord's Vineyard

1. Who is singing, who is the vineyard, and who is the owner?

2. Why is the owner upset with his vineyard? What will he do to it?

VI. Woe!

1. Read Isaiah 5:9-17. What wicked activities were the people engaged in?

2. What punishments did the LORD pronounce?

3. Does this contain any warnings for us?

4. Read Isaiah 5:20-21. Does this remind you of anything in our day?

VII. Isaiah 6: Judah's Last Chance (740 BC)

1. Read verses 1-8. What happened in the year King Uzziah died?

2. Read verses 9-10. What was Isaiah's message?

3. Were these his literal words?

4. Read verses 11-13. How long would Isaiah have to prophesy with no visible effect?

After nearly a century of relative peace and prosperity, Judah was about to enter several decades of intermittent warfare. Because the people had rejected the LORD, he took away their prosperity and reduced them to almost nothing. First, during the time of King Ahaz, Syria and Ephraim joined forces to attack Judah in 735 BC. Isaiah predicted that the LORD would rescue Judah, but that he still punish the people if they did not repent. Then in 701 BC King Sennacherib of Assyria destroyed nearly all the towns of Judah. This was the final blow that brought the people to a temporary repentance, led by King Hezekiah. But soon after Hezekiah's death, the people returned to their wicked ways, which eventually led to the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity in 586 BC.