

W255_Isaiah_1_.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book, and it is number one of a series of studies in the prophecy of Isaiah. What is called the canon of the Old Testament scriptures. That is to say, the rule. The word canon means to rule. And that is why a canon of the Church of England has that title. He has something to do with the ruling of affairs. A canon is divided into three parts and was endorsed by Christ. The law, the prophets and the Psalms. And as we've said before, many times, sometimes instead of the law of the prophets and the Psalms, it reads the law, the prophets and the writings. Well, of course they're all writings, that is to say, the law is written. But the writings or the Psalms are those books which are say to do with wisdom like Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Song of Solomon Job, a book of that character. And the Psalms are the books that come at the head. So it gave it its title. We are concerned at the present moment with the profits and without knowing if we were to put down what we thought were the profits. I'm sure we wouldn't put the Book of Kings. I get that comes in the prophets. Because there's a great deal of prophecy in the history of Israel. Their very history itself is a prophecy as well as the prophets that were raised up during the time of those kings to warn them and to instruct them and so on.

[00:01:50] There are three what we call major prophets. Very large ones. And the idea of trying to go through the Prophet Jeremiah in a series of meetings here or the prophet Ezekiel is rather intimidating, I daresay would be intimidating to you as well as to me. It's too vast. We could only hope that at times these books are included in your own private reading. I do remember once at a meeting after I'd been holding out for about an hour and just finished, somebody buttonholed me and said, Could I give them, in one word, the key to the Prophet Ezekiel. And as I've said rather humorously, perhaps just before I passed out, I stammered out the one word cherubim. Well, of course, that's only a suggestion, but it is a key word to Ezekiel. Without this prophet Isaiah. Is best understood when we see its place in the scheme of things. So as an introduction to our study of this evangelical prophet, there's more passages in Isaiah than in any of the prophets that appeal to those who are Christians. And the. The Gospel of God's salvation is very, very clearly expressed in many passages. And I suppose perhaps the one most favoured passage in the whole Bible of the Old Testament is Isaiah 53. Psalm 23 runs it very close. But Isaiah 53 must be one takes a very high place in the affections of God's people. But there are other things in Isaiah.

[00:03:35] There's some terrible denunciations in it too, and all sorts of features that I think we do well to consider. We shall remember that the book is addressed to a people. It has an address on the envelope. It's addressed to the Judah and Jerusalem, and we are permitted to read what God said to them. And then inasmuch as we are all tarred with the same brush and we all need the same saviour, there are many things that we can retranslate for ourselves as long as we understand what we're doing. But first of all, you see in front of you this graph where there has been set out the prophets. Now they form a series of eight in correspondence, one with the other. The last series, The Minor Prophets, contain a whole group of prophecies. The 12 minor prophets. But they're all represented as one scroll. You can understand if you have books on a scroll. Well, there's a lot of elaborate preparation to make a scroll. And then if you only have about three chapters or even one chapter, well, that's foolish. So the minor prophets represent just one book, but they have their own special significance, as I've suggested. Now, the first of these prophecies. First of these prophets, strangely enough, is the book of Joshua. Moses is the one that stands for the five books, The Law. And Joshua is the one that commences these books of the prophets so that we we observe a certain amount of.

[00:05:23] Correspondence between the beginning and the ending for strangely enough, perhaps and yet not strange when we understand the ways of God. Joshua, the captain of the Lord's host, is the dominating figure in the first of books of the Prophets. And when we come to the Prophet Zechariah, as I will turn to it for a moment, we find that that was the title of the High Priest. Zechariah Chapter three. And he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the Angel of the Lord. There's the high priest. He was in a sorry position, but there he was. So here's the first thing to remember and keep well in our mind that there's one name that stands at the beginning of the books, of the prophecy of the Old Testament and the same name at the end, and that is the name which we pronounce Jesus in the new. So that the name Jesus gods save it. Salvation for men is there waiting for us to observe in these two great outstanding characters. Joshua, the leader of God's People into the Land of Promise. Joshua, the high priest, leading them back after the captivity into a semblance of restoration. So it begins and ends on that note. Well, then there are 1 or 2 things that are paralleled. As you will discover, I've got them marked here. Joshua refers to God under this title. Chapter 311. Behold the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of All the Earth.

[00:07:03] Now, it was only a small people going out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea and through the wilderness and then over Jordan. But Joshua speaks of their God as the Lord of all the earth. And I find when I come to the minor prophets that in this same Zechariah that I was reading just now, we have this title in Chapter six. Let me see where that comes. Chapter five is it? Six? Five? Oh, yes. And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the Earth. Now, it's not a usual title, but you see, it's there at the beginning. And then after that long lapse, it comes back again when Israel are on the verge, as it were, of rebuilding their city and rebuilding their temple and being at least typically restored. We have the Lord of all the earth, for although he's the Lord and God of Israel, the God of Israel is not one of many gods. He's the Lord of all the earth and Israel, his people in the midst of it. And then there's another feature. You notice in Joshua chapter 15, although the land has been divided among the people. Uh, Joshua, 15. I think that looks as though it's 63, but I won't be sure until I look. Looks like it. Yes. Joshua 1563. The land has been divided by lot. The tribes have been distributed.

[00:08:52] The land is possessed. And now it says. As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out. But the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day. So there we have the Canaanite still in possession. And isn't it significant? That they could drive them out of some parts of Palestine. But the city of Jerusalem was still held by them. And to this very day. That's the thorn in the side, isn't it, still of Israel in the land. They've got land. They're cultivating the land. But they have to remember that the holy city, Jerusalem, in their eyes, is divided with barbed wire and soldiers guarding each side. Enemy enemies. And the scripture says that Israel's history is wrapped up with Jerusalem and the time of the Gentiles will go on. And the time of the Gentiles is marked by the treading down of Jerusalem until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled, and then all Israel shall be saved. So God, who knows his plans and purposes. He has said these things and left them to work their way with us. And Chapter 18, while we have Joshua. Verse three. It says in verse. Two. They remained among the children of Israel, seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, how long are ye slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you? Well, when we come to the minor prophets, they speak particularly of the going back to possess once more this city and land only in type, of course.

[00:10:52] And there's also a significant word at the end of Zechariah chapter 14. You remember we found that even though Joshua had led them successfully into the land and had claimed the land, the Canaanite was still there, still there. But that's not going to be the case when the ultimate restoration of Israel takes place. The last two verses of Zechariah 14. In that day, shall there be unto the upon the bells of the horses, His Holiness unto the Lord and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts. And all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them and see therein. And in that day there shall be no more that Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts. At last it will be written. The Lord is there. Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there, and no more Canaanite at long last. And that is prophetic of what God intends, not only for Israel, Jerusalem, Palestine and that people, but a day is coming when all rule and all authority and power must be put down to the last enemy of which the Canaanite is a picture. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. And when all rule and all authority and power is subject unto him, then at long last God shall be all in all.

[00:12:34] So Israel in themselves are a picture, a small picture of the process of restoration. The enemies that attack it, the frailty of the very people that are involved, and ultimately the blessing of God in spite of it all. So there we have then, Joshua, at the beginning of the Prophets and Joshua at the end of the Prophets. The captain, or almost equivalent to a king at the beginning and the high priest at the close. You will see at the very bottom of this chart, if you've got good sight that these minor prophets are just given key words. They're more or less human invention. But Hosea particularly emphasizes the word *lo ami*, which means for a period, Israel will not be God's people, and that's their condition now. There is scattered. They are blinded by one day they shall look upon him and they pierced and be restored. And then we have Joel, where the Lord says, I will restore the years that the caterpillars have eaten. I will restore the restoration. And so we have the Amos speaks of the tabernacle of David, which is to be Re-erected. Obadiah, a very strange small book, emphasizes the kingdom. We have Jonah with a key word *Repent*. You remember about Jonah and the repentance of of the Ninevites. And Micah, which, if he does nothing else, says that though thou be little among the thousands of Judah.

[00:14:12] Yet out of these shall come the governor. That's the birth of Christ at Bethlehem. And then we have Naaman, the prophet of vengeance. And Habakkuk, the prophet of faith that gave the great key text of the epistle to the Romans. The just shall live by faith. And Zephaniah. And Zechariah, where a Zephaniah rather where God is going to gather his people. And Haggai, when he challenged them and said, You're living in your sealed houses and the house of God is still waste. And he speaks about the day when he will shake all nations and the desire of all nations shall come. And then Zechariah challenging the evil one because of Jerusalem, which he hath chosen. And then ultimately Malachi, with the blessed words that mean so much to them and to us. I am the Lord. I change not. And so all through this long series of objections and difficulties and the trying and testing of God's patience and long suffering, we have it emerging. There's the beginning. Taking them into the land. They are taken away. They lose it. They forfeit it. But at long last, God's purpose will be achieved. And it all focuses upon the second coming of Christ as their Messiah. Well, we go back on our steps and we notice that the next book in the series called The Prophets is the Book of judges. The Book of Judges. And. Their failure is very, very evident. There are 13 judges and the 13 is ominous.

[00:15:58] 13 judges, Some of them stood up for a period and while they remained there and faithful, Israel, in some measure were faithful to then they were again submitted to Gentile rule. And for a period they were just in misery. There it goes, backwards and forwards. And what are the things that he said? If you look at the 21st chapter, just to get that statement, it comes more than once in the book. But in the 21st chapter of judges, we read these words. Verse 25. And in those days there was no king in Israel. Every man did that, which was right in his own eyes. And what a dreadful thing it was when they did that, because what was right in that man's eyes and the right in the other man's eyes was so wrong all the way round. He is chaos. Isn't it wonderful to know that in connection with the Book of Judges, you will always find in the same role, although not reckoned in the Book of prophets, you will find that wonderful little. Book of faithfulness. Ruth. The Book of Ruth. It's a small book and say it all was tacked onto judges. But it's the book of the faithfulness of a moabitess. When the people of Israel were as far from faithfulness as you can expect. And so God has his people and has his remnant and has his ways, even though they may be difficult to see.

[00:17:40] So there's the the book of judges when run the eye down and it's balanced by that strange book, The Book of Ezekiel. Now, the book of Ezekiel, as I said, early, is connected with the Cherubim in the opening chapters, Chapters 1 to 10, we have the Cherubim described. And even though we read the description, we don't know what it means. It's so vast and wonderful, but they are associated with the throne of God and by the and the purposes of God. And we see in those opening chapters of Ezekiel, the glory of God is leaving the temple and going outside, standing on the threshold. It leaves the threshold and goes into the valley. It leaves the valley and goes to the mountain and it goes vanishes. The cherubim go with it. There's Israel losing the presence of God. Then after a long period, the closing chapters of Ezekiel, we see it coming back exactly the same way. And at last the house is filled with his glory. And the closing words, which are quoted or quoted in the wrong context just now are awaiting us at the end of Ezekiel. The Lord is there. That's the title. Perhaps you might like to see just for yourselves. Jehovah Shammah one of the Jehovah titles, you know, they've been collected together. There's the Lord is my Shepherd, Jehovah Rohi and the Lord is my righteousness, Jehovah. Sid Can you? And here we have another one at the close of the, of Ezekiel, the last verse in the last chapter.

[00:19:33] Oh, dear. I think this paper must be rattling in the tape recording like corrugated iron. But I'm sorry. The 40, is it? Oh, yes. The last verse. After describing in detail the land and its subdivision and the ways in which the various tribes are distributed and so on, and the gates of the city, it says verse 35, it was round about 18,000 measures, and the name of the city from that day shall be not Jerusalem, not Shalom, but Jehovah Shammah. The Lord is there as though the whole creation and the whole of Israel's expectations are summed up in the fact that at last he is able to come and sit and rule and reign as Israelite was to be. So there we get Ezekiel and its peculiar teaching ending at last on something we can appreciate and understand. We go back on our story and we see that the book of Samuel, the books of Samuel, the two together they come into the prophets. And of course, Samuel was a prophet, you remember. And there we have two outstanding typical characters in the book of Samuel Saul and David. There are others, but these two dominate it. And you see, Israel manifests the weakness of their position and their faith because they clamoured to be like the nations. The very thing that God said was to be a distinguishing characteristic of Israel by not to dwell among the nations and the people alone.

[00:21:19] They belong to him. They said, Make us a king, that we might be like the nations. And Samuel felt very grieved. And God said to Samuel, They haven't rejected you, Samuel. They rejected me. Now, there's a more than one instance in the Scriptures that sometimes when people ask for something. The answer is tragedy. You remember in the wilderness. They clamored. They asked for a meat. And God sent leanness into their soul. They got so much of it that they died through it. And so we have these people clamoring for a king. And Saul was the answer at first. He stood head and shoulders above all the people. He had all the makings on the surface of a kingly person. But he ended up by suicide. And the scripture says he committed suicide because he'd been given up by God, because he turned to evil spirits. The Witch of Endor and so on. It ended up like that. He's a type of the Antichrist. And it's rather a wonderful thought in Scripture that instead of David coming first, he comes second. Instead of Christ coming first, Antichrist first. It's all the way through the second Time is God's time. Although we might have blurted out at first, Oh, God will always be first. Throughout the scriptures, the pattern is God second. Because he see is dealing not with things but with people. He is dealing with those of us who are moral creatures. And he is giving us the opportunity to demonstrate to ourselves and to angels that the creature cannot stand without God.

[00:23:10] But if he'd never given us the opportunity, we would have been nursing the thought throughout eternity. I suppose that if we'd been given the chance, we'd show them. Well, God says all right all ways. I'll wait. So, Saul, you asked for a king. You say you want him. Well, now you learn what it is to be under a king, which is not God's choice. Well, then Samuel was told to go to Bethlehem. We are told it's little among the thousands of Judah. Very little and insignificant place. Go down there and I'll show you my chosen king. And so he goes. And you know how the Sons of Jesse were brought before Samuel, one after the other. And he looked at them and he said, No, the Lord's anointed not here. And he got any more. He said, Oh, there's only young David. Oh, yes. That's the way they treat the Lord's anointed, the chosen young David out there. Bring him in. The moment he saw him, he said, This is the Lord's anointed and he was anointed king. But David didn't sit upon the throne immediately. He soon began to feel the pressure of Saul, and he was hunted and lived in the wilderness. And those who were very much of his same character assembled at the Cave of Adullam. And there he was until Saul died. And then David was, first of all, King over Judah.

[00:24:41] And then all Israel gathered and he became king over all Israel again, a type of what might be expected in the last days as this gathering takes place. So we have. So all the type of Antichrist. David A type of Christ. Well, when we come to the parallel prophet, we have Jeremiah. Now he gives a great place to. Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. The passage in Jeremiah dealing with Babylon chapters 5051 are more or less the background of what we read in the book of the Revelation, and Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned there very much. I think we will look at the second book of Kings, which bears upon this story of Nebuchadnezzar as it's picked up by Jeremiah, the second Book of Kings, Chapter 24. And 25. The first verse reads in these. In his days, Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon came up and Jehoiakim became his servant. Three years. Now here you have the king of Israel, God's people becoming a servant to this gentile Nebuchadnezzar. And then he turned and rebelled against him and the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldeans and so on. Then we read further in verse three. Surely the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah to remove them out of his sight for the sins of A.I.. According to all that he did, they were to be removed out of his sight. And so they were. And then in the 11th verse onwards for a little bit and Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon came against the city and his servants did besiege it.

[00:26:51] And Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, went out to the King of Babylon. He and his mother and his servants and his princes and his officers all picture this retinue, will you? Not going out as a sort of a wonderful festival, but going out a little bit reticent. The mother and the servants and the princes and the officers and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign, and he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the King's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold, which Solomon King of Israel had made in the Temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said. And He carried away all Jerusalem and all the princes and all the mighty men of valor, even 10,000 captives and all the craftsmen and smiths, none remain, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. And he carried away Jehoiakim to Babylon and the King's mother and the king's wives and his officers and the mighty of land those carried into captivity from Jerusalem. And all the men of might. Even 7000 and craftsmen and smiths, a thousand all that were strong and apt for war. Even then, the King of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. That's Israel. What an end of the people of God. Well, it's not an end, but it was a desperate position to be in Chapter 25, verse 8 to 10.

[00:28:29] And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the 19th year of King Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon came Nebuzaradan, captain of the Guard, a servant of the King of Babylon unto Jerusalem. And he burnt the house of the Lord and the King's house and all the houses of Jerusalem. And every great man's house burnt. He with fire and all the army of the Chaldeans that were with the captain of the guard break down the walls of Jerusalem round about. There is the destruction of this city by this Nebuchadnezzar, the first of the Gentile line, and then chapter 25, verse 27. And it came to pass in the seven and 30th year of the captivity of Jehoiachin King of Judah in the 12th month on the seventh and 20th day of the month, that Evil-merodach King of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, did lift up the head of Jehoiakim King of Judah out of prison, and he spake kindly to him and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon and changed his prison garments. And he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life. Now, that ends up with a certain amount of kindness, doesn't it? But it's a kindness that's got a sting in it.

[00:29:53] This man owed even his daily bread to this evil Meredith, the King of Babylon. That's Israel. Oh, what a position to be in. And one day they're going to be released from those bonds. One day they're going to look upon him, whom they pierced, and the nations shall be born in the day. But what a change that will be from all this position. Well, that's what is incipient in the books of Samuel and the books of kings. A decline in Australia, a removal from the land. And the last page of the Old Testament is not the Prophet Malachi as it is in our book. But the last page of the Old Testament is the last chapter of Two Chronicles, and in two Chronicles we read these words, Put them there. Chapter 36, verse 16. No remedy. As the last word on the last page of the Hebrew Bible. No remedy. And you turn the page and you read, This is the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. And the word save involves the word healing. There's God's remedy. Old Testament ends no remedy. No remedy. Only pointing on to the only one who could ever be a prince and a savior in the full sense. So you see, there's a sadness about Old Testament prophecy, as well as gladness.

[00:31:29] Gladness to look beyond the type and the shadow sadness to have to wait so long. And in that gives us one more book to put into its place. And we have at last arrived at the subject which we are supposed to be considering. So now we've got the Prophet Isaiah, the only hope of Israel, the only hope. And there he comes before us as as the suffering and the glorified Messiah, the only hope of Israel. I'd like to turn to just four passages in the prophet of Isaiah before we bring this introductory study to a close, just to show you the relationship between the Lord himself and his people in this sense. Isaiah 41, verse five, I think it is Isaiah 41, verse five. Uh, no, no. Verse eight. Isaiah 41, verse eight. But thou Israel are my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen. The seed of Abraham, my friend. That was one of the titles given to Israel. Thou art my servant. But if you look at. Say Chapter 55, I think. You'll see that there has to be applied now, particularly to Christ himself. Although Israel were appointed to be God's servant, they didn't live up to it. They couldn't fulfill it fully. Oh, this is the one. I'm sorry. This is the one which has to do with a witness. Chapter 55, verse four. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

[00:33:32] We will get the others. There is a witness mentioned in chapter 43, I think verse ten. Yes. The Lord speaks to to Israel. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord and my servant whom I have chosen. So there is repeated. Israel were to be both witness and servant to the Lord. But Christ is pointed out as witness and servant in the fuller, richer sense. Isaiah 42, verse one. Isaiah 42, verse one, Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up his, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break. And the smoking flax, shall he not quench? He shall bring forth judgement unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth. For the isles shall wait for his Lord. In the New Testament quotation, He shall bring forth judgment unto victory. And it change. But what a strange victor, isn't he? What a strange conqueror. Instead of riding roughshod and leaving smoking ruins behind him and taking captive people. A bruised reed. Shall he not break? Isn't that remarkable? The conqueror. The victor. The bruised reed. Shall he not break and smoking flax, Shall he not quench until he brings it forth to victory? Now we're going to see some of the story in the prophet Isaiah of that conqueror.

[00:35:24] Who through death by dying slowly, he stooped to conquer. And as many a person. Christian person who's never learned that lesson. They hired Mighty in their attitude, but he stooped to conquer. It's the suffering Messiah in Isaiah who is the glorious, triumphant Victor. Ultimately. So there'll be lessons for us all the way along. I trust that we can learn just as surely as Israel should. And yet there will be some features in it, of course, which we shall have to remember belong particularly to that people and God's purpose in them. So I'm trusting that we shall have a profitable and happy time. Now, there are 66 chapters in the Prophecy of Isaiah, and there's about three, at least three great subjects in each chapter. So three times 66 is more than I can reckon up in my head. But it sounds as though if we're going to be giving Sunday afternoons to that, we're here for about 3 or 4 years. Well, you see, that's not practicable, so I'll have to ask you to be patient with me and I may have to miss out any amount of features that you want. Thought about. What I want to do is to take rather large strides through this prophecy in the hope that then you'll say, Well, I'm not satisfied with that. That will give me a start. I'm going to look into it in detail, and may the Lord be with you as you do this wonderful digging.

[00:36:50] That's all I can hope to promise at the moment. So when we meet together next time, we shall leave the sweep of the prophecies from beginning to end and concentrate our attention upon the Prophet Isaiah. But it's very possible I may have to spend a good deal of our next time together in this vexed question that often comes up in books. Were their two eyes. Eyes? Well, they used to be satisfied with two eyes. Eyes. Then somebody found three eyes. Eyes and, you know, all the critical world was on expectation when the scrolls were found at the Dead Sea and they found the prophet Isaiah. And they were all waiting for the news to be rushed to the newspapers for eyes. Eyes proved or something. But they only prove one Isaiah. So nobody bothered about it. It's like the man said, What was news? What he says, If a dog bites a man, that's not news. But if a man bites a dog, that is all. They would have splashed it all over the newspapers if there have been 2 or 3 eyes. Eyes. But inasmuch as the students who studied it said, Well, it's for all intents and purposes what you've got in the authorized version, nobody bothered. But isn't it good for us to know that in spite of all the critical attack upon the book, it stands the test and we shall have to give that a little hearing before we go into the chapters and verses that await us.