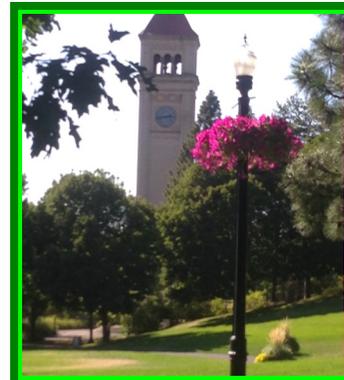


March 2016



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## The Far Seeing Prophet

This month I would like to share from a daily devotional that I recently read. The author is Ray Stedman.

“Some of the most beautiful language in human literature is found in the great prophecy of Isaiah. Truly he was a superb master of language. He was also a farseeing prophet who recorded some remarkable prophecies centering on the coming of God's Messiah. The 53rd chapter of his prophecy is such a clear picture of Christ that this book is often called The gospel according to Isaiah. God's plan of redemption and his work of redemption are central in this prophecy. That is even suggested in the name of the prophet himself—Isaiah, which means God saves.

The book of Isaiah, as a matter of fact, could be considered a miniature Bible. There are 66 books of the Bible, and Isaiah has 66 chapters. The Bible divides between the Old and the New Testaments, and Isaiah divides into two halves. The Old Testament has 39 books, and the first division of Isaiah has 39 chapters. The New Testament has 27 books, and the second half of Isaiah has 27 chapters. The opening chapter of the second division of Isaiah, Chapter 40, describes the ministry of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Messiah, the voice crying in the

wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord. In the New Testament likewise, the first figure introduced is John the Baptist, crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord. The closing chapter of Isaiah deals with the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. Revelation, the last book in the New Testament, deals with the same subject—the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. This great prophecy of Isaiah, therefore, captures not only the theme of all Scripture and its central focus on the Savior of mankind himself, but also it reflects the divisions of the Bible itself.

The opening verse of the book gives a very brief introduction to the prophet. The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. (Isaiah 1:1) In that historical note we learn that Isaiah carried on his ministry through the reigning of four kings. (He actually was put to death during the reign of the son of Hezekiah, Manasseh, one of the most evil kings of Judah, just before the Southern Kingdom was carried away to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.) So Isaiah lived during a time of great

unrest. Israel was surrounded by enemies and crisscrossed with invading armies. It was a time of threat, danger and desolation. This was the time when the prophet was sent to declare to this people the cause of their misery.

The Jewish people are often referred to as the chosen people. The Jews were not so called because they were superior to other peoples, however. The Bible is careful to point out that God chose them, not because they were smarter, richer or greater than others, but as a sample nation, a picture of how God deals with the nations of earth. He also chose them, of course, as the channel through which the Messiah would come. Speaking to the Samaritan woman, Jesus himself repeated the statement of the Old Testament, Salvation is of the Jews. Some would ask, why bother with this ancient history about a people who lived thousands of years ago, a history that cannot possibly have any bearing upon us today? To that, the Apostle Paul in the New Testament says that all these things happened to Israel as types for our edification, (1 Corinthians 10:11). In the Old Testament we see ourselves portrayed. The problems it pictures are the same problems we face today.”

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The text used in our newsletter this month is:  
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Thank you

*Chaplain Rob Hill*