

SCHOOL OF THE WORD
PROPHETS
Kieran J. O'Mahony, OSA
www.tarsus.ie

Prophets 4

Programme

- What's a "prophet"? Oct 11
- Amos: Justice (i) Oct 18
- Amos: Justice (ii) Oct 25
- **Who is/are Isaiah?** **Nov 8**
- Isaiah and justice Nov 15
- Isaiah and liberation Nov 22
- Isaiah and hope Nov 29
- Isaiah: New Testament Dec 6

Sequence

- Experience
- *Three* Isaiahs
- First Isaiah
- Isaiah 6-7
- Work: Isaiah 1:1-20

Experience

A (Matthew)	B (Mark)	C (Luke)
27	21	18

Advent, Christmas, Holy Week
 Easter Vigil, Ordinary Time
I.e. never in Lent and Eastertide

	2017	2018	2019	
Palm Sunday	Monday Holy Week	Tuesday Holy Week	Wednesday Wednesday	Good Friday
Isaiah 50:4-7	Isaiah 42:1-7	Isaiah 49:1-6	Isaiah 50:4-9	Isaiah 52:13- 53:12
Philippians 2:6- 11	—	—	—	Hebrews 4:14- 16, 5:7-9
Matthew (Passion)	John 12:1-11	John 13:21-33, 36-38	Matthew 26:14-25	John (Passion)

Three "Isaiah"

- Isaiah 1-39 — Uzziah, Ahaz and Hezekiah, in the Assyrian period
- Isaiah 40-55 — Cyrus, in the Babylonian period
- Isaiah 56-66 — in the Persian period, after the Exile
- Of course things are not so simple!

Isaiah of Jerusalem

- Ahaz 735-715
- Syro-Ephraimite War 735-734
- Hezekiah 715-868
- Hezekiah's rebellion 705
- Attack of Sennacherib 701

Isa 1:1 Here is the message about Judah and Jerusalem that was revealed to Isaiah son of Amoz during the time when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah reigned over Judah.

Isa 36:1 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, King Sennacherib of Assyria marched up against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.

Politics

- Israel (until 722 BC)
- Judah (until 587 BC)
- In the meantime...

Second Isaiah

- Isaiah 40-55
- Cyrus of Persia is mentioned in Isa 44:28–45:1; 45:13
- A message of consolation and hope
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- Many of the Wisdom Books
- Ezra and Nehemiah
- Possibly Jonah
- The Pentateuch came into its final form
- In the mid-6 cent. BC, Media and Persia were united under the rule of Cyrus the Great,
- Cyrus defeated Babylon in 539 BC
- Persia's inheritance of areas controlled by Babylon made it the largest empire to date.
- The period lasts for roughly 200 years until Alexander the Great's defeat of the Persians under Darius III in 334–330 BC.

Isa 45:1 This is what the LORD says to his chosen one,
to Cyrus, whose right hand I hold
in order to subdue nations before him,
and disarm kings,
to open doors before him,
so gates remain unclosed:
2 "I will go before you
and level mountains.
Bronze doors I will shatter
and iron bars I will hack through.
3 I will give you hidden treasures,
riches stashed away in secret places,
so you may recognise that I am the LORD,
the one who calls you by name, the God of Israel.

Third Isaiah

- After the return from Exile
- After 539 BC — around the 400s
- A time of reconstruction and frustration
- In the time of Ezra and Nehemiah

Not so simple...

- Isaiah 1–12: Announcements of Condemnation and Salvation for Judah and Jerusalem; Zion and the Davidic King; Assyria as the Lord's Instrument
- Isaiah 13–23: Oracles concerning Foreign Nations
- Isaiah 24–27: Judgment on the Entire World
- Isaiah 28–33: Judah and Jerusalem in Confrontation with Assyria and Egypt
- Isaiah 34–35: Salvation for Judah and Doom for Her Enemies
- Isaiah 36–39: Historical Accounts of Isaiah, Hezekiah, and Jerusalem

Isaiah of Jerusalem

- Worked for about 30 years
- Began, it seems, at the time of Uzziah's death
- Original: Isaiah 1-12, 28-33
- Is 13-14 are against Babylon (!)
- Is 24-27 comes from after the Exile
- Is 34-35 sounds very like Second Isaiah
- Is 36-39, historical but leading to Isaiah 40-55

Isaiah 6-7

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|--------------------|--------------------|
| • Isaiah 6 | • Isaiah 7 |
| • Call: 6:1-9 | • Context: 7:1-6 |
| • Message: 6:10-13 | • Message: 7:7-9 |
| | • Refusal: 7:10-17 |

Isa 6:1 In the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the sovereign master seated on a high, elevated throne. The hem of his robe filled the temple. **2** Seraphs stood over him; each one had six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and they used the remaining two to fly. **3** They called out to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord who commands armies! His majestic splendour fills the entire earth!" **4** The sound of their voices shook the door frames, and the temple was filled with smoke.

Isa 6:5 I said, "Too bad for me! I am destroyed, for my lips are contaminated by sin, and I live among people whose lips are contaminated by sin. My eyes have seen the king, the LORD who commands armies." **6** But then one of the seraphs flew toward me. In his hand was a hot coal he had taken from the altar with tongs. **7** He touched my mouth with it and said, "Look, this coal has touched your lips. Your evil is removed; your sin is forgiven." **8** I heard the voice of the sovereign master say, "Whom will I send? Who will go on our behalf?" I answered, "Here I am, send me!" **9** He said, "Go and tell these people:

'Listen continually, but don't understand!

Look continually, but don't perceive!'

- 10** Make the hearts of these people calloused; make their ears deaf and their eyes blind! Otherwise they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears, their hearts might understand and they might repent and be healed."
- 11** I replied, "How long, sovereign master?" He said, "Until cities are in ruins and unpopulated, and houses are uninhabited, and the land is ruined and devastated,
- 12** and the LORD has sent the people off to a distant place, and the very heart of the land is completely abandoned.
- 13** Even if only a tenth of the people remain in the land, it will again be destroyed, like one of the large sacred trees or an Asherah pole, when a sacred pillar on a high place is thrown down. That sacred pillar symbolizes the special chosen family."

Call

1. A divine appearance (1-4)
 2. An introductory word from God (5-7)
 3. The call of the prophet (8-10)
 4. An objection from the prophet (11a)
 5. A divine reassurance / answer (11b-13)
 6. A sign (no in this case)
- Compare: Jeremiah 4:1-10 and Ezekiel 1-3

Isa 7:1 During the reign of Ahaz son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah son of Remaliah of Israel marched up to Jerusalem to do battle, but they were unable to prevail against it.

Isa 7:2 It was reported to the family of David, “Syria has allied with Ephraim.” They and their people were emotionally shaken, just as the trees of the forest shake before the wind. **3** So the LORD told Isaiah, “Go out with your son Shear-jashub and meet Ahaz at the end of the conduit of the upper pool which is located on the road to the field where they wash and dry cloth. **4** Tell him, ‘Make sure you stay calm! Don’t be afraid! Don’t be intimidated by these two stubs of smoking logs, or by the raging anger of Rezin, Syria, and the son of Remaliah. **5** Syria has plotted with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah to bring about your demise. **6** They say, “Let’s attack Judah, terrorize it, and conquer it. Then we’ll set up the son of Tabeel as its king.” **7** For this reason the sovereign master, the LORD, says:

“It will not take place;
it will not happen.

8 For Syria’s leader is Damascus,
and the leader of Damascus is Rezin.

Within sixty-five years Ephraim will no longer exist as a nation.

9 Ephraim’s leader is Samaria,
and Samaria’s leader is the son of Remaliah.

If your faith does not remain firm,
then you will not remain secure.”

Isa 7:10 The LORD again spoke to Ahaz: **11** “Ask for a confirming sign from the LORD your God. You can even ask for something miraculous.” **12** But Ahaz responded, “I don’t want to ask; I don’t want to put the LORD to a test.” **13** So Isaiah replied, “Pay attention, family of David. Do you consider it too insignificant to try the patience of men? Is that why you are also trying the patience of my God? **14** For this reason the sovereign master himself will give you a confirming sign. Look, this young woman is about to conceive and will give birth to a son. You, young woman, will name him Immanuel. **15** He will eat sour milk and honey, which will help him know how to reject evil and choose what is right. **16** Here is why this will be so: Before the child knows how to reject evil and choose what is right, the land whose two kings you fear will be desolate. **17** The LORD will bring on you, your people, and your father’s family a time unlike any since Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria!”

For you to work

- Isaiah 1:1-20
- Notice the poetry (saying things twice)
- Notice the images use
- Notice the message...

Isa 1:1 Here is the message about Judah and Jerusalem that was revealed to Isaiah son of Amoz during the time when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah reigned over Judah.

- 2 Listen, O heavens,
pay attention, O earth!
For the LORD speaks:
“I raised children, I brought them up,
but they have rebelled against me!
- 3 An ox recognizes its owner,
a donkey recognizes where its owner puts its food;
but Israel does not recognize me,
my people do not understand.”
- 4 The sinful nation is as good as dead,
the people weighed down by evil deeds.
They are offspring who do wrong,
children who do wicked things.
They have abandoned the LORD,
and rejected the Holy One of Israel.
They are alienated from him.
- 5 Why do you insist on being battered?
Why do you continue to rebel?
Your head has a massive wound,
your whole body is weak.
- 6 From the soles of your feet to your head,
there is no spot that is unharmed.
There are only bruises, cuts,
and open wounds.
They have not been cleansed or bandaged,
nor have they been treated with olive oil.
- 7 Your land is devastated,
your cities burned with fire.
Right before your eyes your crops
are being destroyed by foreign invaders.
They leave behind devastation and destruction.
- 8 Daughter Zion is left isolated,
like a hut in a vineyard,
or a shelter in a cucumber field;
she is a besieged city.
- 9 If the LORD who commands armies had not left us a few survivors,
we would have quickly become like Sodom,
we would have become like Gomorrah.
- 10 Listen to the LORD’s word,
you leaders of Sodom!
Pay attention to our God’s rebuke,
people of Gomorrah!
- 11 “Of what importance to me are your many sacrifices?”
says the LORD.
“I am stuffed with burnt sacrifices
of rams and the fat from steers.
The blood of bulls, lambs, and goats
I do not want.
- 12 When you enter my presence,
do you actually think I want this—
animals trampling on my courtyards?
- 13 Do not bring any more meaningless offerings;
I consider your incense detestable!
You observe new moon festivals, Sabbaths, and convocations,
but I cannot tolerate sin-stained celebrations!
- 14 I hate your new moon festivals and assemblies;

- they are a burden
that I am tired of carrying.
- 15** When you spread out your hands in prayer,
I look the other way;
when you offer your many prayers,
I do not listen,
because your hands are covered with blood.
- 16** Wash! Cleanse yourselves!
Remove your sinful deeds
from my sight.
Stop sinning!
- 17** Learn to do what is right!
Promote justice!
Give the oppressed reason to celebrate!
Take up the cause of the orphan!
Defend the rights of the widow!
- 18** Come, let's consider your options," says the LORD.
"Though your sins have stained you like the color red,
you can become white like snow;
though they are as easy to see as the color scarlet,
you can become white like wool.
- 19** If you have a willing attitude and obey,
then you will again eat the good crops of the land.
- 20** But if you refuse and rebel,
you will be devoured by the sword."
Know for certain that the LORD has spoken.