

The Divided Kingdom (930-725 BCE)

Isaiah Prophecies about a Savior

Readings: *Isaiah 10:1-11:16; 12:1-6; 2 Kings 16:5-6; 2 Chronicles 28:9-21*

Reflections:

- Isaiah continues with themes that are well established by this point: God's anger against the injustice against the poor, vulnerable and weak; the coming judgment against Assyria for its pride and violence; the hope of a remnant that will be saved; and judgment against Israel. We see at the end of Isaiah 10, the prophet brings back to us the picture of Israel being like trees that will be cut down. In Isaiah 6 he spoke of only tree stumps being left in the land. At the end of this section on judgment, he reminds the readers, "The lofty trees will be felled, the tall ones will be brought low."
- This sets up an important prophetic image in Isaiah 11, "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." This reference to the Messiah is then expanded by the prophet. First, he will be a leader empowered by the Spirit's wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge and the fear of the Lord. He will bring justice to the poor and needy. He will ultimately usher in the full restoration of creation. In Isaiah 11:7-9 we see the promise of the restoration of the Garden of Eden and the complete removal of the curses of the fall. All of creation will now live at peace with each other and a child will lead them. The child here is the picture of complete human innocence that is completely free and at one with the created order. Humans, made in the image of God will be restored to creation and will again provide the kind of gentle, grace-filled leadership that will bring the best of creation.
- The hope of the Messiah culminates in this wonderful promise of hope, "for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." We know that because the Messiah brings the light of God to the world, "the nations will rally to him and his place of rest will be glorious." Isaiah then immediately returns his focus to the promise of restoration for a remnant of Israel and the hope of their restoration from captivity.
- These prophecies end with praise and worship to God for all that he has done.

- At the end of this section, we return to the political scene. None of Isaiah's words of warning makes any difference for Ahaz. Maybe Ahaz did think he was just plain crazy. He would not be the first prophet that people had written off. War, captives, defeat...the story of God's people completely blowing it continues. The final verse of this section says it all, "Ahaz took some of the things from the temple of the Lord and from the royal palace and from the princes and presented them to the king of Assyria, but that did not help him." Rather than trusting in God, repenting and surrendering all he had to the Lord's leadership, Ahaz continues his striving to somehow secure himself through human alliances. His heart continues to be revealed through is self-willed independence and rebellion to God. No doubt, more bad news is on the way!