

ANCIENT ISRAEL & JUDAH



Appendix

Three Isaiahs?

The book in our Bible called Isaiah was written by more than one person and as this study makes clear, it was written during a pivotal and terrible time in Israel's history. Much of what is now our Old Testament was written or put in its current form around this time.

Scholars separate the book of Isaiah into three sections. Chapters 1–39 are ascribed to the actual prophet who lived and was named Isaiah, although future editors appear to have reworked small parts of the material we now have. He was proclaiming his message to the south (Judah and Jerusalem) from approximately 742 BCE until 722 BCE when the northern kingdom was destroyed and then annexed to Assyria. The south survived until the Babylonians destroyed it in 587 BCE.

Chapters 40–66 are commonly divided into Second Isaiah (40–55) and Third Isaiah (56–66). They originated immediately before the fall of Babylon (539 BCE) to the Persians. It was shortly after this time when Jews living in Babylonian exile were permitted to return and rebuild.

Important Dates

1000 BCE	King David's Reign
922 BCE	Israel divides into north (Israel) and south (Judah, which includes Jerusalem) after Solomon dies
742–701 BCE	First Isaiah writes
722 BCE	The Assyrians destroy and annex the north
701 BCE	Assyria does not invade Jerusalem
587 BCE	The Babylonians destroy the south and exile many leaders
587–538 BCE	The exile in Babylon
539 BCE	The Persians (now Iran) under King Cyrus conquer Babylon and then allow exiles to return and rebuild the temple

Israel, Judah, Jerusalem, Zion, Canaan—Who Is Who?

The term *Israel* came to be used in a variety of ways over the course of time. *Israelites* is the name given to all the descendants of Jacob, who was also called Israel (Gen. 35:10). Jacob, or Israel, had twelve sons, the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel. One of these sons was Judah. Things became confusing hundreds of years later when, two generations after King David's reign, the kingdom of Israel split into two nations. The northern kingdom continued to call itself Israel and the southern kingdom took the name of its largest tribe, Judah.

But after the northern kingdom was destroyed by Assyria in the eighth century BCE, *Israel* once again became available as a name for all the descendants of Jacob, including the Judeans. At this point the names became somewhat interchangeable. Though the political name of the nation that was left remained *Judah* (and later *Judea*), and though the terms *Judaism*, *Jew*, and *Jewish* derive from this name, *Israel* continued to be used side by side with these terms.

The other three names are easier to distinguish. Jerusalem is the city in Judah that King David adopted as his capital. *Zion* is another name for Jerusalem. *Canaan* identifies the physical land that the Israelites occupied, because it was originally inhabited by Canaanites.

Short Definitions of Terms

Davidic Line—also called the House of David. Refers to David's descendants

Inviolable—undisturbed, unbroken

Oracle—a message from God delivered through the prophet

YHWH—often written "Yahweh," although it is four Hebrew consonants that spell the name. Thus, YHWH. In Exodus 3 God tells Moses to tell the Israelites living as slaves in Egypt that God will liberate them from Pharaoh. Moses asks God what name Moses should use for God and God says, "YHWH" (Exod. 3:14), often translated "I AM WHO I AM."