Background to Isaiah

*The Prophet Isaiah

1) Born into upper-class family; he preached to kings and leaders (7:3).

2) His name, YeshaYah means Yahweh Saves or Salvation is of the LORD (similar to the name Yahoshua (Joshua/Jesus)

3) He lived most of his life in Jerusalem and preached to the people of Judah (the southern Kingdom) of impending judgment due to wickedness, idolatry, and unequal yokes with pagan kings, cultures and customs

4) Northern Israel (10 tribes) would be taken captive in 722 BC to Assyria, and Judah (southern 2 tribes of Israel) would be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon finally in 586 B.C.

5) The book of Isaiah was written during the reigns of four kings of Judah (1:1).
   - Uzziah (790-739 B.C. Note Uzziah was also called Azariah in 2 Kings);
   - Jotham (750-731 B.C.);
   - Ahaz (735-715 B.C. Note: Samaria-Israel was taken captive by Assyria in 722 B.C.); and Hezekiah (715 – 686 B.C.).

   This would date the ministry of Isaiah during the years of 739-686 B.C. (He was called into the ministry the same year as when King Uzziah died (6:1);

   Therefore the book of Isaiah was written between the years of 740 – 681 B.C.

6) Isaiah would die in 681 or 680 B.C. when (according to Tradition he was placed into a hollow log and cut in two – cf. Hebrews 11:37). There is a tradition reported in the Martyrdom of Isaiah (a Christian text from around AD100 which expands on 2 Kings 21) that Isaiah was condemned to death by King Manasseh. Although he hid in a tree, he was found and the tree with Isaiah inside was sawn in half.

*Predictive Prophecy

1) Liberals dispute the authorship of chapters 40-66 due to Isaiah's accurate predictions of:

   a) The Persian king Cyrus (chap. 45)
   b) The future suffering Messiah (chap. 52-53)
      --the Virgin birth
      --substitutionary death

2) Proofs that the 66 chapters were written by Isaiah include:

   a) The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls
   b) N.T. quotes of Isaiah attribute it to him
   c) Jesus Christ's quotes of Isaiah attribute it to him

***<u>Key Themes</u>:**

- The lethal effects of sin
- The sovereignty of God
- The coming Messiah
- The deity of Christ
- The Day of the Lord
- The Tribulation & Millennial Kingdom
- The holiness of God
- Restoration of Israel