

Quotes from Isaiah

Commentary for September 1, 2010 — Verses that Are Familiar

You are probably familiar with several verses in Isaiah because they are quoted in the New Testament. Or, you may have read these verses from the Book of Isaiah, but their quotation and interpretation by Jesus and the New Testament writers has increased your familiarity with them.

This month's article by Dr. Ernest L. Martin and me is "Introduction to Isaiah" which will cover basics about this very important Old Testament book which is central to New Testament doctrine. The [September 2010 Newsletter](#) has additional information about Isaiah. Let me give some examples of Isaiah's importance:

"And he said, 'Go, and tell this people, Hear you indeed, but understand not; and see you indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.'"

• *Isaiah 6:9–10*

This passage is cited in Matthew 13:14; Mark 4:12; and Acts 28:26. Luke 8:10 and John 12:40 cite only verse 10. In none of these New Testament citations of the Isaiah passage are there exact word-for-word quotes from the LXX (the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament).

Isaiah Chapter 7 and 8

Note the passages that refer to "Immanuel" from Isaiah chapters 7 and 8:

"Therefore YHWH himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

• *Isaiah 7:14*

"And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel. ..."

Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us [= 'Immanuel,' the same Hebrew letters]."

• *Isaiah 8:8, 10*

Isaiah 8:8–12 comments on and expands upon Isaiah 7:14. Although in the New Testament only Matthew 1:23 cites Isaiah 7:14, this single reference of "God with us" has tremendous significance: **"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."** (Matthew 1:23).

Isaiah Chapters 52 and 53

Let me give another example of Isaiah's importance. In Acts 8:26–39 Philip encounters the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading chapter 53 of Isaiah (Acts 8:28, 32–33). The eunuch was

stuck on the meaning of Isaiah 53:7–8. Philip interpreted that passage of Isaiah for the eunuch who understood and immediately desired to be baptized, which Philip did.

The Hebrew of Isaiah 53:7–8 seems to some people to give a very different message than the Greek words of Acts. The eunuch was reading from the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew. However, the message of that Greek form of Isaiah 53:7–8 was clear: **“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus”** (Act 8:35 KJV). He made it clear that Jesus was the person being spoken of in Isaiah 53:7–8.

Philip did more than just explain the two verses. He no doubt explained why Jesus was the suffering servant of all of Isaiah chapters 52 and 53. He also explained how Jesus suffered during His life by taking upon Himself the sins and sufferings of others, as well as during His trial and crucifixion.¹ Philip was present as an eyewitness to many of the events of the recent past and he understood Isaiah’s description as being precisely accurate, as did the apostles and evangelists (other than Philip) who were preaching elsewhere.

“Who has believed our report? and to whom is the arm of YHWH revealed?”

• **Isaiah 53:1**

Referring to Jesus, the apostle John writes about this Isaiah passage:

“That the saying of Esaias [Isaiah] the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, Lord, who has believed our report? and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, ‘He has blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with [their] eyes, nor understand with [their] heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.’”

• **John 12:38–40**

The people **“could not believe”** until after Christ’s resurrection and after God gave His Holy Spirit to mankind. (John is also quoting Isaiah 6:9–10 cited at the top of this Commentary.) The apostle Paul also quotes part of Isaiah 53:1:

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias says, Lord, who has believed our report? So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”

• **Romans 10:16–18**

Read Isaiah. Study Isaiah. Learn Isaiah. You will learn to love Isaiah because it gives us excellent teaching and details about God’s Messiah and Savior.

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¹ In their book *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* (BibleWorks edition, 2005), Gleason L. Archer and Gregory Chirichigno show how Isaiah 52:5, 7, 11, 15, 53:1, 4–5, 7–8, 9, and 12 (all part of the Suffering Servant section of Isaiah chapters 52–53) are quoted by various New Testament writers. The entire Suffering Servant section describes Jesus’ life and His sufferings (Isaiah 52:13–53:12). For details on that suffering and on Isaiah chapters 52 and 53, see Dr. Martin’s *The Secrets of Golgotha*, chapter 22: “The Surprising Cause of Jesus’ Death.”