

# The Trinity in Isaiah

By Craig Paardekoooper

## Executive Summary

### Triune Structure

The last 27 chapters of Isaiah correspond to the 27 books of the New Testament. These chapters divide into 3 parts each 3 x 3 chapters long, and each separated by the phrase "There is no rest for the wicked"

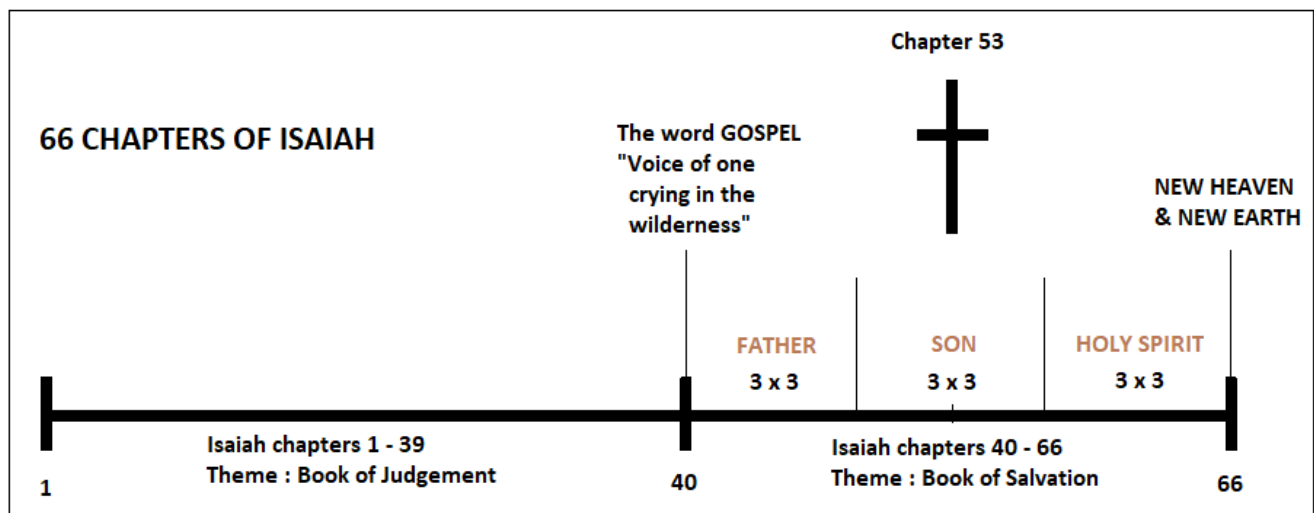
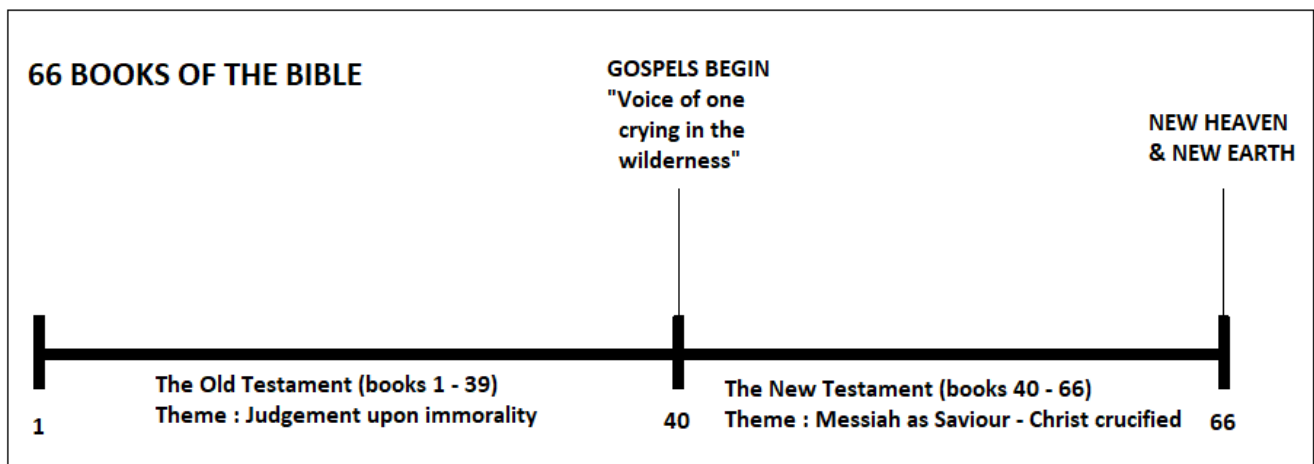
Given that there are three parts, and each part is 3 x 3 chapters long, and that the central part is about The Son, then this structure suggests that the three parts may relate to the Trinity.

As you will see below, each of the parts has a focus on a member of the Trinity

- **Part 1** – (chapters 27 to 48) – has a strong focus on God the Father as Creator. God repeatedly asserts his status as The Creator, and offers a demonstration of this by his ability to “make and form” Cyrus in the womb – i.e. to create and raise a person from their conception so that they fulfil his purposes (to conquer Babylon and to set his people free). God also asserts his ability to predict the future in comparison to dumb idols who are not able to do this.
- **Part 2** – (chapters 49 to 57) - has a focus on salvation through the Servant – and the central chapter of this section – chapter 53 – describes the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross.
- **Part 3** (chapters 58 to 66) – has a focus on holiness and righteousness. The reason for the captivity was the rebellion of the people against God. They forsook the Lord and abandoned his commandments, and followed other gods. The end of the captivity and the restoration of his people must therefore be accompanied by an end of rebellion and a return to obeying and following God. Holiness is dedication to God – which means obedience to his commands. Throughout this section God constantly contrasts his servants with those who have forsaken him and rebelled. Since God commands moral excellence therefore Holiness is consecration to god and dedication to moral excellence.

What this suggests is that the last 27 chapters of Isaiah divide into 3 parts that align with our understanding of the Trinity. These three parts therefore provide a concise outline of Christian teachings as they relate to

- the Father and creation,
- the Son and salvation,
- the Holy Spirit and communion



For a detailed examination of the correspondence between the books of the Bible and the chapters of Isaiah, please see "Wheels within wheels" - <https://t.me/bibleprophets/211>

## The First Part is About the Father

The First part, chapters 40-48, is about God showing that he is the Creator - the Father. All the phrases describing God who "formed" and "made" the creation are found in this first section. It focuses on differentiating God from idols by stressing that He is the Creator, and can tell the future.

1. **Isaiah 43:1** : *"But now, this is what the LORD says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine."*
2. **Isaiah 43:7** : *everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."*
3. **Isaiah 43:10** : *"You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me."*
4. **Isaiah 43:21** : *the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.*
5. **Isaiah 44:2** : *This is what the LORD says— he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.*
6. **Isaiah 44:24** : *"This is what the LORD says— your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself,*
7. **Isaiah 45:18** : *For this is what the LORD says— he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited— he says: "I am the LORD, and there is no other."*

Similarly, all of the phrases such as "created the heavens", "created the earth" occur in the first part.

1. **Isaiah 40:26** : *Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who **created** all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.*
2. **Isaiah 41:20** : *so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has **created** it.*
3. **Isaiah 43:1** : *But now, this is what the LORD says— he who **created** you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine."*
4. **Isaiah 43:7** : *everyone who is called by my name, whom I **created** for my glory, whom I formed and made."*
5. **Isaiah 45:8** : *"You heavens above, rain down my righteousness; let the clouds shower it down. Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness flourish with it; I, the LORD, have **created** it."*
6. **Isaiah 45:12** : *It is I who made the earth and **created** mankind on it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts.*
7. **Isaiah 45:18** : *For this is what the LORD says— he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited— he says: "I am the LORD, and there is no other."*
8. **Isaiah 48:7** : *They are **created** now, and not long ago; you have not heard of them before today. So you cannot say, 'Yes, I knew of them.'*

God provides a demonstration of His status as Creator, by showing that He made Cyrus in the womb. He does this by naming Cyrus before he was born, and assigning him with a mission to set God's people free from Babylonian captivity – all of which came to pass.

In Isaiah 39 Isaiah predicts the Babylonian captivity. Isaiah 40- 49 then speaks of how god is the true god compared to idols and how Cyrus will set his people free from Babylon. So you can see how Isaiah 40-49 follows on from Isaiah 39.

What's more the focus of Isaiah chapters 40-49 is a polemic against idolatry , which is exactly what the story of Nebuchadnezzar is about - worshipping the golden statue.

- Isaiah 40 v 12-26 is the first polemic against idolatry
- Isaiah 41 v 21- 29 is the second polemic against idolatry.

Note the second polemic focuses on Gods ability to predict the future just as Daniel did so in Babylon and how the other magi could not do so

- Isaiah 42 v 8-9 , 17 is the third polemic against idolatry
- Isaiah 43 is the big declaration of Gods identity as Creator. See the fourth polemic against idolatry in Isaiah 43 v 9- 13
- The fifth polemic against idolatry is Isaiah 44 v 6-28

Not only does Isaiah predict the Babylonian captivity but also predicts the person who will free the Jews from Babylon and also predicts the method he will use to conquer Babylon - diverting the Euphrates.

- Isaiah 45 continues with the Cyrus prediction . Isaiah 45 v 4-7, and Isaiah 45 v 11-13, Isaiah 45 v 18-21 are the sixth polemic against idolatry
- Isaiah 46 v 1-12 is the seventh polemic against idolatry
- Isaiah 47 describes the fall of Babylon. Isaiah 47 v 12-14 is the eight polemic against idolatry - in particular against the astrologers of Babylon who are burnt up in the fire- reminiscent of Daniel where the astrologers were thrown into the fire after accusing Daniels 3 friends.
- Isaiah 48 v 3-7 is the ninth polemic against idolatry. Isaiah 48 v 12-15 is the tenth polemic . Isaiah 48 v 20 predicts Israel's freeing from Babylon

What is interesting is that God's polemic of comparing himself against idols and differentiating himself by his predictive ability and status as Creator IS COMPLETELY absent in the next section – Isaiah chapters 49-57 - that instead focuses on the Servant - Jesus. It is also completely absent in the third section - Isaiah chapters 58-66.

My point is that the first section - Isaiah chapters 40-48 - is concerned with the Father as Creator. The second section with the Son as Saviour. Later I will show how the third section is concerned with the Holy Spirit.

This continual polemic against idolatry for the Jews in Captivity, suggests that the Captivity was brought about because of that reason, and makes the Josiah and Cyrus prophecies all the more remarkable.

## **One God and Eternal Being**

An interesting aspect of Isaiah's polemic against idolatry is the eternal nature of a being that can see past, present and future because they are both first and last and see all. It is possible to argue that there can only be one consciousness that spans all time - in the same way that there could only be one object if it filled all space .

## **Multiple Temporal Levels**

Another interesting feature of Isaiah's dialog are the multiple temporal levels that it speaks at simultaneously . For example Isaiah speaks of the Babylonian captivity yet simultaneously speaks of John the Baptist in Isaiah 40 . Oddly enough, this is how an eternal being would communicate - their words would be like multifaceted crystals reflecting different times at once but interweaved with a common meaning . It's extraordinary.

## The Second Part is About the Son

The second part, chapters 49-57, has a strong emphasis on the Servant. The central chapter of this part is chapter 53, which describes Jesus's crucifixion. So Jesus is at the very centre of Isaiah's 27 books. Throughout this section we encounter many phrases that were applied to Jesus in the New Testament. In the final part of this section salvation is provided for the Gentiles – which only began with the advent of Christianity. And the means of evangelism to the Gentiles is via a system of highways that only came into being during Roman times.

### Isaiah 49

In Isaiah 49 the servant – Israel – speaks in the first person. However it seems to refer to a person or entity that is distinct from the people of Israel, since the servant gathers Israel back to God.

**A Light for the Gentiles :** God says that he will make the servant

*“a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth”*

which is phraseology and a global scope that more apply applies to Jesus in the New Testament than to any earthly ruler.

**Rejected by Israel :** God then says that the servant was despised and abhorred by the nation – again suggesting that he is not the nation but someone rejected by it.

**A New Covenant :** The servant will be made a covenant for the people – suggesting that the servant himself embodies this covenant.

**Roman roads :**

*“I will turn all my mountains into roads, and my highways will be raised up”.*

It was the Romans who built all the roads, making level pathways across valleys and through mountains, and Christianity would spread along these routes.

### Isaiah 50

In Isaiah 50 v 4 - 9 the servant is speaking. Many of his phrases are reminiscent of those of Jesus –

**Turn the other cheek –**

*“I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.”*

**Innocent of charges before Pilate –**

*Because the Sovereign LORD helps me,*

*I will not be disgraced.*

*Therefore have I set my face like flint,  
and I know I will not be put to shame.*

<sup>8</sup> *He who vindicates me is near.*

*Who then will bring charges against me?*

*Let us face each other!*

*Who is my accuser?*

*Let him confront me!*

<sup>9</sup> *It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me.*

*Who will condemn me?*

### Isaiah 52

**Good News :** The phrase, “good news” is literally the word Gospel. Once again, reminiscent of Jesus.

*How beautiful on the mountains  
are the feet of those who bring good news,  
who proclaim peace,  
who bring good tidings,  
who proclaim salvation,  
who say to Zion,  
“Your God reigns!”*

## **Isaiah 53**

### **The Passion**

*See, my servant will act wisely<sup>[b]</sup>;  
he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.  
14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him<sup>[c]</sup>—  
his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being  
and his form marred beyond human likeness—  
15 so he will sprinkle many nations,<sup>[d]</sup>  
and kings will shut their mouths because of him.  
For what they were not told, they will see,  
and what they have not heard, they will understand.*

*Who has believed our message  
and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*

*2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot,  
and like a root out of dry ground.*

*He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,  
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.*

*3 He was despised and rejected by mankind,  
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.*

*Like one from whom people hide their faces  
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.*

*4 Surely he took up our pain  
and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
stricken by him, and afflicted.*

*5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.*

*6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to our own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.*

*7 He was oppressed and afflicted,  
yet he did not open his mouth;  
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,  
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.*

*8 By oppression<sup>[a]</sup> and judgment he was taken away.  
Yet who of his generation protested?*

*For he was cut off from the land of the living;  
for the transgression of my people he was punished.<sup>[b]</sup>*

*9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,  
and with the rich in his death,  
though he had done no violence,  
nor was any deceit in his mouth.*

*10 Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer,  
and though the LORD makes<sup>[c]</sup> his life an offering for sin,  
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,*

*and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.*  
<sup>11</sup> *After he has suffered,  
 he will see the light of life<sup>[d]</sup> and be satisfied<sup>[e]</sup>;  
 by his knowledge<sup>[f]</sup> my righteous servant will justify many,  
 and he will bear their iniquities.*  
<sup>12</sup> *Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,<sup>[g]</sup>  
 and he will divide the spoils with the strong,<sup>[h]</sup>  
 because he poured out his life unto death,  
 and was numbered with the transgressors.  
 For he bore the sin of many,  
 and made intercession for the transgressors.*

## Isaiah 54

### Redemption, Compassion, Covenant of Peace

Healing of Israel's relationship with God (a wife taken back in).

## Isaiah 55

**Come all who are thirsty :** This brings to mind the words of Jesus –

*“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*

### Forgiveness of Sins :

*“Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.”*

## Isaiah 56

### Salvation for the gentiles :

*“Let no foreigner who is bound to the Lord say ‘The Lord will surely exclude me from his people.’”*

*And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD  
 to minister to him,  
 to love the name of the LORD,  
 and to be his servants,  
 all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it  
 and who hold fast to my covenant—  
<sup>7</sup> *these I will bring to my holy mountain  
 and give them joy in my house of prayer.  
 Their burnt offerings and sacrifices  
 will be accepted on my altar;  
 for my house will be called  
 a house of prayer for all nations.”**

This is a powerful theme of Christianity, since the Christians were the first to extend the worship of Yahweh to the Gentile nations.

Isaiah is regarded as the Universalist prophet for this very reason.

## Isaiah 57

### Pagan religions cannot save

Ends with comfort and healing for those far and near.

So Isaiah 49-53 describes the work of the Messiah, and Isaiah 54-57 invites Gentiles to partake of the worship of Yahweh – something that only began with Christianity !!

## The Third Part is About Being Holy and Righteous

Since the First and Second Parts describe the Father and Son respectively, we would therefore expect the Third Part, chapters 58-66, to be about the Holy Spirit.

The reason for the captivity was the rebellion of the people against God. They forsook the Lord and abandoned his commandments, and followed other gods. The end of the captivity and the restoration of his people must therefore be accompanied by an end of rebellion and a return to obeying and following God.

Holiness is dedication to God – which means dedication to obeying his commands. Since God commands moral excellence therefore Holiness is dedication to god and dedication to moral excellence. Throughout this section we find God constantly contrasting the servants of God with the rebellious – and contracting the wicked with the righteous.

So this section is about a return to holiness and righteousness.

### Rewards of Holiness

- Freedom from physical captivity
- Freedom from the spiritual tyranny of false gods
- Restoration of physical possessions and powers
- Restoration of a relationship with God

### Isaiah 58

The first chapter of this section opens with the statement -

*“Shout it out, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their **rebellion** and to the descendants of Jacob their **sins**.*

*For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that **does what is right** and has not **forsaken the commands of its God**.”*

### Isaiah 59

The sins of the people separate them from God

*“For our offences are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offences are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities; rebellion and treachery against the Lord, turning our backs on our God, inciting revolt and oppression, uttering lies our hearts have conceived.”*

But redemption comes to those who repent

*“The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins”*

### Isaiah 63

*“Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them.*

### Isaiah 64

*“You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways. But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry. How then can we be saved? All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and have given us over to our sins.”*



It is obvious from all these passages that the main theme of this section is the call for people to cease rebellion and rededicate themselves to following God and obeying his commandments. In other words – the very definition of holiness.

## Summary

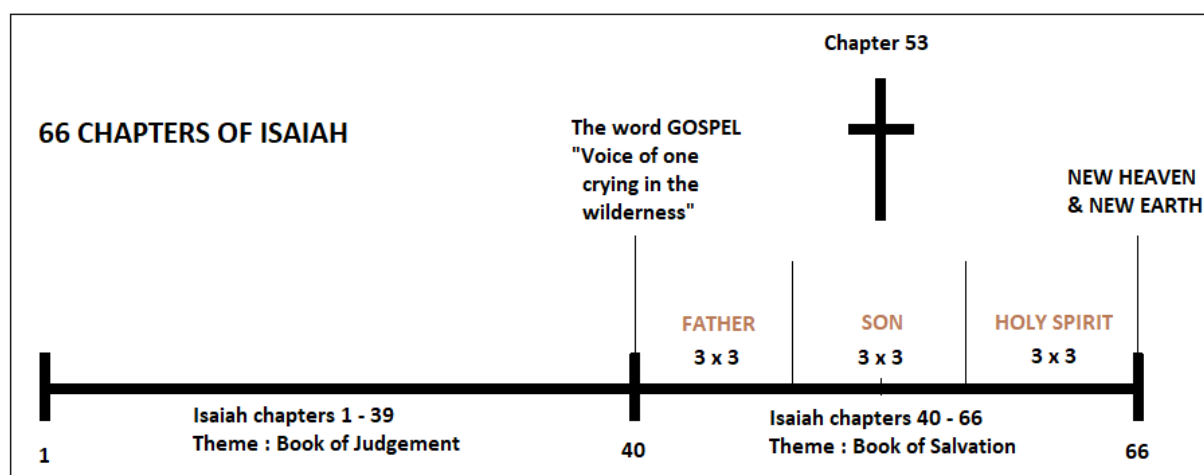
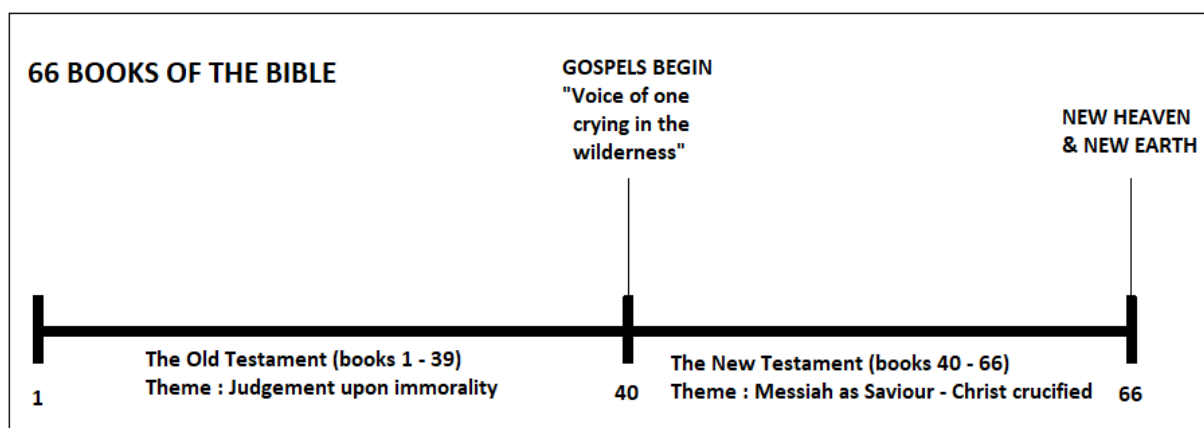
In the First Part the focus is on God as Creator who forms and makes Cyrus in the womb for the purpose of freeing His people from Babylonian Captivity.

The Second Part describes the work of the suffering servant who dies for the sins of many upon a cross.

In the Third Part, the focus is a call to the people to cease rebellion and rededicate themselves to God. In a word, they are called to be Holy.

So the 3 sections, each of 3 x 3 chapters, focus on God the Father, Jesus the Son, and on the Holy Spirit respectively.

So in Isaiah we find the Trinity.



## **“There is no rest for the wicked”**

Now, concerning the cryptic phrase – “there is no rest for the wicked”.

We have seen that this phrase appears at the partition between each of the three sections, dividing the 27 chapters into three groups of 3 x 3 chapters each.

Now we can understand what this phrase means.

“Rest” refers to –

- Freedom from physical captivity
- Freedom from the spiritual tyranny of false gods
- Restoration of physical possessions and powers
- Restoration of a relationship with God