

Wheels Within Wheels

Part 1

by Craig Paardekooper

The Bible used by Christians today consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The two main groups of Christians –

1. Catholic Church
2. Protestant Church

There are 2.6 billion Christians in the world at the moment – making up 32.4% of the earth's entire population.

- Catholics 1.345 billion
- Protestants 1 billion

The Bibles of these different groups have the same New Testament, but their Old Testaments differ.

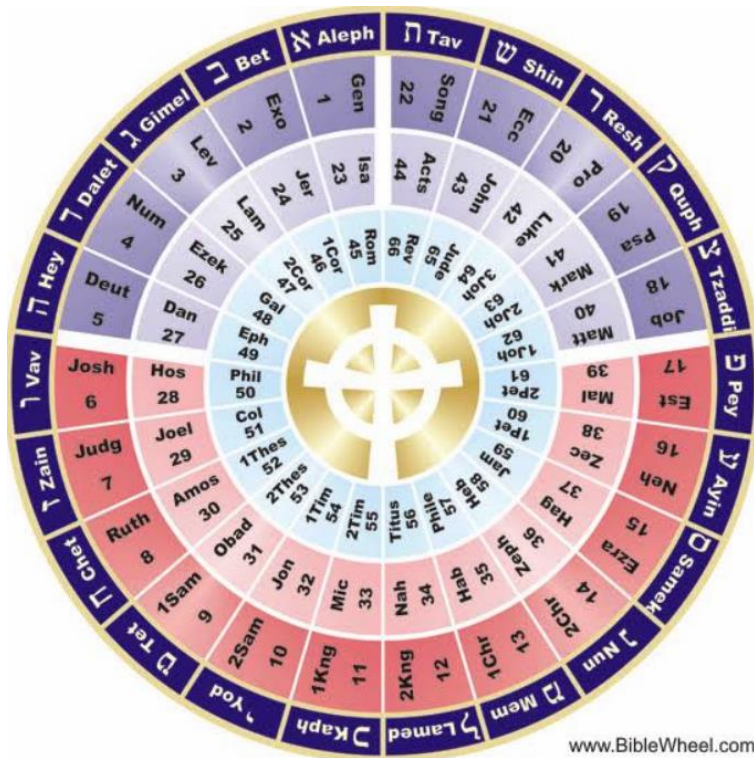
CATHOLIC BIBLE (based on Alexandrian canon of LXX; with seven Deuterocanonical books)	PROTESTANT BIBLE (retains Catholic order, but seven Apocrypha removed)
<u>Pentateuch (Law)</u> 1) Genesis 2) Exodus 3) Leviticus 4) Numbers 5) Deuteronomy	<u>Law (Pentateuch)</u> 1) Genesis 2) Exodus 3) Leviticus 4) Numbers 5) Deuteronomy
<u>Historical Books</u> 6) Joshua 7) Judges 8) Ruth 9) 1 Samuel 10) 2 Samuel 11) 1 Kings 12) 2 Kings 13) 1 Chronicles 14) 2 Chronicles 15) Ezra 16) Nehemiah 17) TOBIT 18) JUDITH 19) Esther (longer	<u>Historical Books</u> 6) Joshua 7) Judges 8) Ruth 9) 1 Samuel 10) 2 Samuel 11) 1 Kings 12) 2 Kings 13) 1 Chronicles 14) 2 Chronicles 15) Ezra 16) Nehemiah

version) 20) 1 MACCABEES 21) 2 MACCABEES	17) Esther (shorter version)
<u>Wisdom Books</u> 22) Job 23) Psalms (150) 24) Proverbs 25) Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth) 26) Song of Solomon 27) WISDOM of Solomon 28) SIRACH, a.k.a. Ecclesiasticus or Ben Sira	<u>Wisdom Books</u> 18) Job 19) Psalms (150) 20) Proverbs 21) Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth) 22) Song of Solomon
<u>Prophets</u> 29) Isaiah 30) Jeremiah 31) Lamentations 32) BARUCH (incl. LETTER of JER.) 33) Ezekiel 34) Daniel (14 chapters) 35) Hosea 36) Joel 37) Amos 38) Obadiah 39) Jonah 40) Micah 41) Nahum 42) Habakkuk 43) Zephaniah 44) Haggai 45) Zechariah 46) Malachi	<u>Prophets</u> 23) Isaiah 24) Jeremiah 25) Lamentations 26) Ezekiel 27) Daniel (only 12 chapters) 28) Hosea 29) Joel 30) Amos 31) Obadiah 32) Jonah 33) Micah 34) Nahum 35) Habakkuk 36) Zephaniah 37) Haggai 38) Zechariah 39) Malachi

As you can see, there are differences between the Catholic bible and the Protestant bible, but they both **share a common core of 39 Old Testament books, and 27 New Testament books** - a total of 66 books, which occur in the same order in both cases.

The Bible Wheel

When these 66 books are arranged into a circle, a pattern appears.



www.BibleWheel.com

The major divisions of Scripture are

Torah (books of Moses)	5
Historical books	12
Books of Solomon	5

Major Prophets	5
Minor Prophets	12
Gospels & Acts	5

Letters	22

The 66 books form 3 cycles of 22 books each, and the divisions partition these books into the shape of a cross !

This synchrony is confirmed by another alignment.

Similarly, the 12 minor prophets divide into 9 pre-exile and 3 post-exile(Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

Finally, of all the 22 letters, only James, 1 Peter and 2 Peter are addressed to those scattered abroad (in exile)

The Three Cycles

Historical Cycle

The first cycle consists of the Torah, Old Testament history and the writings of David and Solomon. So it is concerned almost entirely with the nation and with kings. This is the HISTORICAL CYCLE. It is focused on Creation, Kings, Laws and Judgements.

Prophetic Cycle

The second cycle is all about prophets – the major prophets, the minor prophets and Jesus. The major difference between prophets and kings is that the prophets were focused on a spiritual kingdom as opposed to an earthly one. They were not zealots. They were religious teachers and religious leaders rather than political ones. This is the PROPHETIC CYCLE.

Christian Living Cycle

The third cycle consists entirely of letters, and focuses on the followers and how they should live in accordance with the teachings. This is the CHRISTIAN LIVING CYCLE.

Outward to Inward

Each cycle consists of 22 books, and seems to shift from an outward focus on nature, politics, and kings, to an inward focus on spiritual living. The focus of the 3 cycles becomes progressively inwards. The final cycle is devotional and personal – concerned with your thoughts and emotions and personal relationship with God.

The Trinity

What is really remarkable is that each cycle corresponds to a member of the trinity-

- The Father of Creation, and leaders of the nation
- The Son and the prophets
- The Holy Spirit and Christian living

The 3 cycles embody the Trinity.

Isaiah Wheel

Isaiah was the first of the so-called Major Prophets, and is widely regarded as the greatest of the Old Testament prophets.

Isaiah began his ministry in 741 B.C. (the year that King Uzziah died see [here](#)) and his ministry lasted through the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian army in 701 B.C. However, the Assyrian army did not take the city; Jerusalem was delivered. An angel of the Lord struck down the Assyrian army at the gates of Jerusalem without a single arrow being fired. It was Isaiah's preaching that saved the city from destruction.

The Name of Isaiah

The name of Isaiah is curious. It means "The Salvation of the Lord". But **Isa** is the Muslim name for Jesus Christ, and **Yah** is the name of God. This is even more obvious in Swahili, where Isaiah is written as Isaya – so his name literally means **Jesus God !**

A Miniature Bible

As you will see, Isaiah not only left us with a prophecy of the Messiah, his entire book is a miniature version of the whole Bible, and it's central figure is Christ crucified. Isaiah wrote his book 770 years before the New Testament Gospel was preached, yet Isaiah clearly foresaw that Gospel, and the whole Bible in its entirety. What you will read is proof of this. It seems that Isaiah's hand was "guided".

The Book of Isaiah divides into Old and New Testament Parts

The Book of Isaiah is an interesting document. It consists of 66 chapters, just as our present day Bible has 66 books. And just as our present day Bible divides into the Old testament (with 39 books) and the New Testament (with 27 books), so also does the Book of Isaiah divide into 2 distinct parts, one of 39 chapters and the other of 27 chapters.

Chapters 1-39 of the Book of Isaiah are known as the "Book of Judgement", and (like the 39 books of the Old Testament) are filled with judgement upon immoral idolatrous men. Judah has sinned; the surrounding nations have sinned; the whole earth has sinned. Judgement must come, for God cannot allow such blatant sin to go unpunished forever.

The last 27 chapters of the Book of Isaiah (chapters 40-66) are known as the "Book of Comfort". These 27 chapters (like the 27 books of the New Testament) declare a message of hope. The Messiah is coming as a Saviour and a Sovereign to bear a cross and to wear a crown.

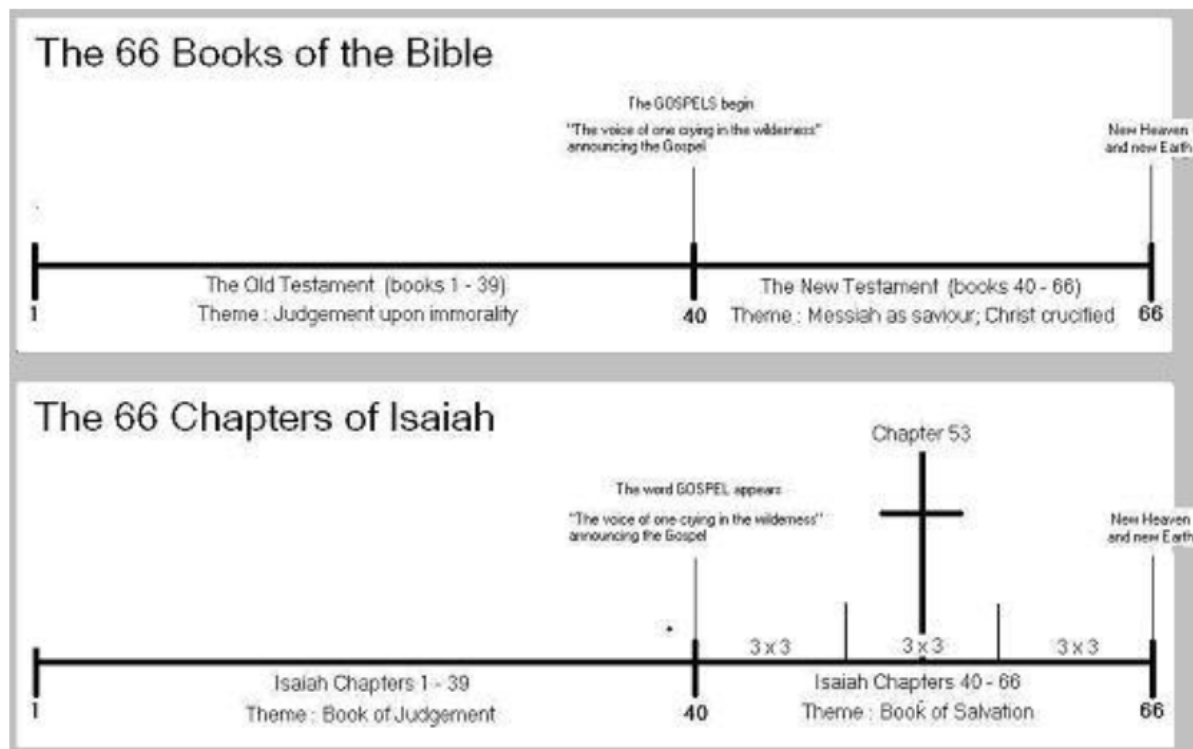
So in it's structure, and thematic content, the 2 parts of the Book of Isaiah closely match the structure and themes of the whole Bible – it's Old Testament and New Testament.

Central Figure of the New Testament Part is Jesus Christ

On close examination of the last 27 chapters of Isaiah (corresponding to the New Testament), we find something quite remarkable. These 27 chapters divide into three groups of 9 (3 groups of 3 x 3). Each of these groups is separated by the phrase **"There is no rest for the wicked"**.

The central group of 9 chapters deals with the Servant Messiah, and the central chapter within this central group is chapter 53. Chapter 53 of Isaiah describes the DEATH OF JESUS ON THE CROSS. So the central figure of Isaiah chapters 40-66 is the crucified Christ.

In summary, chapters 40 to 66 (the last 27 chapters) of the Book of Isaiah correspond to the New Testament (the last 27 books of the Bible). We have seen that the theme of these chapters is salvation, and the central figure (found in the central chapter – chapter 53) is that of Christ crucified.



The Beginning of the Gospel of Isaiah Corresponds with the beginning of the New Testament

Incredibly, the very text of chapter 40 of the Book of Isaiah corresponds to the text of the 40th book of the Bible, which is the first book of the New Testament.

1) John the Baptist

Chapter 40 v 3 of Isaiah reads

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way for the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

These words find a precise correspondence in the 40th Book of the Bible – the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew (40th Book) Chapter 3 reads –

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make his paths straight.’"

These are the words spoken by John the Baptist who announced the coming of the Kingdom of God and the Gospel.

2) Explicit reference to the word GOSPEL:

Richard McGough, on his website www.biblewheel.com, points out an even deeper level of connection.

The connection between Isaiah 40 and the Gospel is made explicit in the text of **Isaiah 40 v 9**

“O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’ Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

“Behold your God!” and “all flesh shall see” refer to the physical incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, who, becoming physical, was visible to all flesh.

This passage from Isaiah contains the FIRST OCCURRENCE in the Bible of the Hebrew word MAVESERET, meaning BRINGER OF GOOD TIDINGS. The Greek Septuagint version of Isaiah 40 v 9 translates “that bringest good tidings” into the word EVANGELIZEMONOS. This word is used in the New Testament, where it is translated as PREACH THE GOSPEL (Romans 9 v 18). It is from the root EVANGELIDZO from which we get the word EVANGELIZE. It is the root of the word translated GOSPEL throughout the New Testament.

So Isaiah chapter 40 uses the very words spoken by John the Baptist, the announcer of the Gospel, and introduces the word GOSPEL, just as The Book of Matthew (The 40th Book) starts with John the Baptist announcing the Gospel and is the first book of the New Testament (The Gospel). The phrases “Good Tidings” and “Good News” occur 6 times in the 27 chapters of Isaiah that correspond to the New Testament, and these phrases are completely absent from the 39 chapters of Isaiah that correspond to the 39 books of the Old Testament.

In summary:

We have a familiar series of events –

- Isaiah's name means "Jesus God"
- Isaiah preached for 40 years before the siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C.; just as the Gospel was preached for 40 years before the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
- Isaiah leaves us a Gospel of Salvation, which -
 - 1) Has 27 chapters corresponding to the 27 books of the New Testament,
 - 2) Has the central character of Christ crucified – in chapter 53 (the central chapter)
 - 3) Introduces the word GOSPEL in chapter 40 corresponding to the 40th Book of the Bible, Matthew – which is the first book of the New Testament,.
 - 4) In chapter 40 Isaiah uses the very words spoken by John the Baptist – the announcer of the Gospel.
 - 5) The last chapter of Isaiah, Chapter 66 uses the words “New Heavens and New Earth”, the very words found in the 66th book of the Bible and last book of the New Testament – the Book of Revelation
 - 6) Isaiah 53, the central chapter of Isaiah's "New Testament" foretold that the Messiah would come as a suffering servant to suffer and die for the sins of many.

"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

"Who is the Suffering Servant?"

In the New Testament, different people had different opinions as to who Jesus was. Some said he was Elijah, some said he was a prophet and others thought he was just a good teacher. "Who do people say that I am?"

John's gospel provides the answer in 7 "I AM" sayings

The 7 "I AM" Sayings in John (Book 43)

There are the seven [distinct] "I AM" sayings in John, the 43rd book of the Bible:

- 6v35 "I am the bread of life"
- 8v12 "I am the light of the world"
- 10v7 "I am the gate for the sheep"
- 10v11 "I am the good shepherd"
- 11v25 "I am the resurrection and the life"
- 14v6 "I am the way, the truth and the life"
- 15v1 "I am the true vine"

The 7 "I AM" Sayings in Isaiah (Chapter 43)

Similarly, there are seven 'I AM' sayings in the 43rd chapter of Isaiah:

- v 3: "I am the Lord, your God"
- v10 "so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he"
- v 11 "I, even I, am the Lord"
- v12 "I am God"
- v13 "from ancient days I am he." [KJV: Before the day was, I am he.]
- v15 "I am the Lord"
- v25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions."

Isaiah at the Centre

Structurally, the Bible forms three cycles, and Isaiah marks the beginning of the central cycle

- Genesis is the 1st book of the first cycle
- Isaiah is the first book of the second cycle
- Romans is the first book of the third cycle

Similarly, time-wise, Isaiah is found exactly midway in Jewish history –

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------|--|
| • Torah | 1491 B.C. | Establishment of the 12 tribes at time of the Exodus |
| • Isaiah | 721 B.C. | From Exodus till the destruction of 10 tribes by the Assyrians (770 years) |
| • Isaiah | 701 B.C. | Assyria lays siege to Jerusalem, but Jerusalem is miraculously spared. From the siege until the destruction of the remaining 2 tribes in 70 A.D. (770 years) |
| • Revelations | 70 A.D. | Final destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans |

So Isaiah appears bang in the centre of Israel's history.

In the time of Isaiah, Israel consisted of two "kingdoms" - the Northern Kingdom - centred on the capital Samaria, and the Southern Kingdom - with its capital at Jerusalem. The Northern Kingdom perished in 721 B.C., 770 years after the Exodus (1491 B.C.). However the Southern Tribes escaped destruction and were miraculously delivered in 701 B.C.

- Northern Kingdom $1491 - 721 = 770$ years
- Southern Kingdom $701 + 70 = 770$ years (we do not count 0 B.C.)

The Northern Kingdom perished after 770 years. It was utterly destroyed by the Assyrians. However Hezekiah repented, and the Southern Kingdom was spared. Just as Hezekiah was given an extension of his life, so the Southern Kingdom was given an extension for 770 years - a second chance.

I would like to stress that the symmetrical pattern of 770 years was not read in to the data - I made no attempt to interpret the dates - the dates provided by Ussher simply fall into this pattern – which should stimulate our curiosity.

When I saw that the Southern Kingdom lasted 770 years (701 B.C. till 70 A.D.) I thought it was a happy coincidence. Then, when I realised that the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom had also existed for 770 years, I was surprised. Then when I saw that these two periods cover the entire span of history from the Exodus to 70 A.D., and that they are arranged symmetrical about the midpoint of Jewish history, it seemed beyond coincidence. The balance of symmetry seems to extend to the theme - judgement on one side, and salvation on the other - guilty and forgiven !!

Scales of Justice

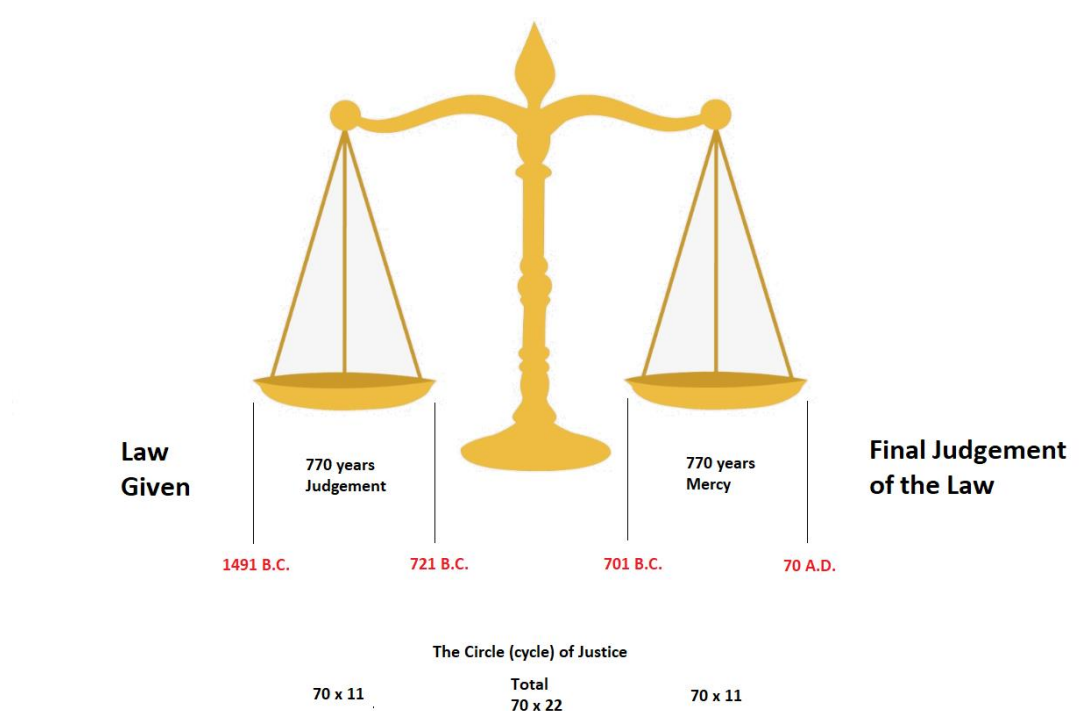
Isaiah's gospel seems perfectly placed, at point of balance between judgement and salvation – between the JUDGEMENT of the Northern Kingdom and the SALVATION of the Southern Kingdom - a balance mirrored in the "Book of Judgement" and the "Book of Comfort".

When I contemplated this pattern, the impression it created was one of balance between judgement and salvation - like a giant pair of scales - scales of justice. This was more remarkable because the pattern begins with the giving of the law, and ends with the final judgement upon Jerusalem. And at the very centre of this pattern, at the point of balance, we find the Gospel of Isaiah.

What are the chances that 10 tribes were judged and destroyed 770 years after being founded (at the time of the Exodus in 1491 B.C.) - then in 701 B.C the remaining 2 tribes were shown mercy and allowed to continue a further 770 years – these two spans of time occupying the entire history of Israel as a nation, and symmetrically arranged about its midpoint ?

Biblical history takes the form of a scale of justice – a scale that is balanced - judgement after 770 years on one side, and mercy for 770 years on the other. This reflects the nature of God – (justice and compassion). It suggests that at the foundation of our universe is a God who balances good against evil – a God of retribution / karma and mercy.

You may think this is a fluke – something to be laughed at or dismissed without much concern – but consider this - IF God WAS active in shaping Israel's history, then wouldn't He shape it to demonstrate both His justice and His compassion?



Wheel of Retribution

Some have depicted justice as a wheel of retribution or karma, where every action has its final consequence. "What goes around comes around". Here you can see that the first period of 770 years and the second period of 770 years sum to 22 x 70 years. The ratio that defines a circle is 22/7.