

At MSCE level there are three books to study and these books are:

1. The book of Isaiah
2. The Gospel According to St Luke
3. The Acts of the Apostles.

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

- The book of Isaiah is an anthology i.e. a collection of many books.
- It covers a span of over 200 years.
- It is because of this that people believe it was written by three different writers.
- These writers wrote at different times and places.

DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.

-The book is divided into three divisions and these are:

1. Chapters 1-39
2. Chapters 40-55
3. Chapters 56-66

CHAPTERS 1-39

- These chapters were written by Proto-Isaiah.
- Proto-Isaiah is sometimes also called 1st Isaiah or Isaiah of Jerusalem.
- Proto-Isaiah preached in Jerusalem.

CHAPTERS 40-55

- These chapters were written by Deutero-Isaiah.
- Deutero-Isaiah is also called second Isaiah.
- He preached in exile in Babylon
- He is also known as the Prophet of hope or comfort.

CHAPTERS 56-66

- These chapters were written by Trito-Isaiah.
- Trito-Isaiah is also known as Third-Isaiah
- He is also called as Isaiah of the Return
- he preached in Jerusalem after the return from exile.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE FIRST ISAIAH.

- Isaiah was called by God to be a prophet in the year that King Uzziah died.
- This was in the year 742BC.
- Uzziah died of Leprosy.
- It was a critical time for Judah because Uzziah the strong leader of the Israel, Syria and Judah coalition against Assyrian was dead.
- At this time, Tiglath Pileser decide to invade Syria as a first step in his conquest of Philistia, Israel, Tyre, Sidon and Egypt.
- The new King of Israel was Ahaz

- He came to power in 735BC
- He was the son of Jothan
- He was weak and unstable
- He withdrew Judah from the alliance of Syria and Israel against Assyria
- This made king Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Israel to declare war against Judah
- The war was called the Syro-Ephraimitic war. The aim of the war was to:
 - i. Force Judah to remain in the alliance.
 - ii. Replace Ahaz with Tabeel's son
- This was the occasion for the meeting between Isaiah and Ahaz.
- Isaiah told Ahaz to put confidence in God only but Ahaz disregarded Isaiah's advice
- He submitted Judah to Assyria for protection
- Ahaz began to pay a heavy annual tribute to Assyria.

RESULTS OF JUDAH'S ALLIANCE WITH ASSYRIA

1. Ahaz worshipped foreign gods in Damascus after meeting with Tiglath Pileser.
2. Ahaz introduced Assyrian gods into the Jerusalem Temple where he set up a special altar for idol gods (2Kings 16:10-16)
3. The people of Judah welcomed all kinds of foreign religious practices and superstitions
4. Judah began to pay heavy annual tributes to Assyria.

- Isaiah told Ahaz that God was using Assyria to punish Judah and Israel for their sins.
- In 732BC Tiglath Pileser of Assyria conquered Syria
- In 722BC Israel was also conquered by Sargon II King of Assyria.
- This marked the end of Israel
- The Jews were taken into exile into Assyria.

WHO IS A PROPHET?

- He is a person who proclaims/announces or speaks the word of God
- He is an intercessor between God and the people.
- He is a messenger of God
- He speaks to God on Behalf of the people.
- He prays to God on behalf of the people
- He asks God for the forgiveness of people's sins.
- The word spoken by a prophet on behalf of God is called an Oracle.

WHAT IS AN ORACLE?

- An oracle is the word of God spoken through the prophet to the people.
- An oracle is a divine message of God spoken through the prophet to the people.
- The prophet introduces an oracle with phrases like:
 - i. The Lord says
 - ii. Listen to me the Lord speaks
 - iii. The Lord said so
 - iv. Thus saith the Lord
 - v. God says

THEMES IN PROTO ISAIAH

1. The holiness of God

- God is separated from human beings
- He is sinless and spot-less
- He is pure
- He purifies all the unclean of the people

2. God is King

- He is the creator
- He is the owner of everything
- He is the ruler of all things
- He controls everything

3. The Glory of God

- God is fully alive
- He manifests himself in human form

4. Sin

- People are sinners
- Sin separates people from God

5. God is the Judge

- He forgives when one repents and destroys when one does not repent.
- Not all are destroyed but a few survive (the remnants)

THEMES IN DEUTRO-ISAIAH

1. God is King

- He is the Controller of everything

2. Condemnation of Idolatry

3. Sufferings

4. Hope of restoration

- Deutro-Isaiah talks about the restoration of Jews and comforts them (consolation)

5. The Lord is Salvation

6. God is merciful

7. Judgement.

HOW THE JEWS MAINTAINED THEIR NATIONAL IDENTITY IN EXILE?

In exile the Jews:

- i. Practised circumcision
- ii. Met for prayers in small communities
 - Synagogue worship started in exile.
- iii. Elders told stories of the Exodus and how God dealt with the patriarchs

CHALLENGES TO THE JEWS IN EXILE

- While in exile the Jews faced many problems.
- These problems were:

1. They missed many things such as

- a. They missed their King (God)

- b. They missed their temple
 - c. They missed their land
- 2. Civilization in exile e.g. The Hanging garden
- 3. The Babylonian religion was very attractive than the worship of Yahweh

RENEGADE ISRAEL (1:2-4)

- Renegade means a person who changes his religious beliefs
- It also means a deserter
- Here it is applied to Israel in her relationship with God
- These verses show Israel's negligence to God.
- By asking help from a foreign country, Israel showed her lack of trust in God.
- Israel has been reared and brought up by God's loving kindness.
- The title "The Holy God of Israel" indicates that God is not man and cannot be controlled.
- It also shows that God is God of Israel who controls everything.

NOTE: Isaiah was called to be a prophet of God in the year that King Uzziah died.

- His prophecy covered the reign of 4 kings
- These kings were Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah

- Isaiah means Yahweh is salvation
- It has the same meaning with the name Jesus

ISRAEL IS SICK (1:5-9)

- Isaiah says that God will punish Judah because of her sins.
- He compares Judah to a body of sores, bruises and wounds.
- Therefore the Israelites were punished by the devastation of their country.
- This was a reference to the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib of Assyria in 701 BC when he destroyed 46 cities of Judah.

RELIGION AND LIFE (1:10-20)

- "Rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah" are the rulers and people of Jerusalem whose sins are like of the rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah.
- The prophet is stressing that worship that is merely external is hypocrisy.
 - Isaiah is not telling us that religious ceremonies such as New Moon festivals, Sabbath, religious gathering and Holy days are bad but because they come from people who are sinners and refuse to repent.
 - God would like those people to stop doing evil and start doing right things, observe justice, help the poor, stop oppressing the weak and give orphans their rights and defending the widows.

LAMENTATION FOR JERUSALEM (1:21-31)

- God is complaining about Jerusalem
- In the past, Jerusalem was faithful but now she is like a whore (prostitute). At first she was filled with righteous people but now she is:
 - i. Habitated by murderers
 - ii. Worthless
 - iii. Like water

iv. her leaders are rebels, friends of thieves and accepts gifts and bribes, they don't defend orphans and widows.

- Due to this sinfulness, God is going to punish the city to purify it.

- He will do the following:

1. He will purify Jerusalem through suffering
2. He will give Jerusalem good leaders like those of the **past**
3. The righteous will be separated from the wicked.
4. The wicked will be destroyed

*God will also punish the adulterous for worshipping trees.

JERUSALEM IN THE LATTER DAYS (2:1-4)

- This passage refers to the future Jerusalem
- In this Jerusalem, all the nations will be accepted by God's will
- All nations will worship God (universal salvation)
- There will be universal peace based on justice and love.
- The highest mountains means that Jerusalem is the centre of spiritual activities in the world

CHAOS IN JERUSALEM (3:1-15)

-As punishment, god will take away from Jerusalem all that people need e.g. food, water and leaders.

-Various types of leaders that God will take away from Jerusalem are:

1. Heroes
2. Soldiers
3. Judges and Prophets
4. Civilian leaders e.g. politicians and statesmen
5. Magicians
6. priests

WHY IS GOD TAKING AWAY THE THINGS AND THE LEADERS FROM JERUSALEM

1. The people of Judah had become sinners like those of Sodom and Gomorrah.
2. The people of Judah were openly insulting God
3. Money lenders were oppressing the poor
4. Creditors were cheating the people
5. Leaders were misleading the people so that they didn't know which way to turn.

THE RESULTS/CONSEQUENCIES OF TAKING AWAY THE LEADERS FROM JERUSALEM:

1. There will be disorders and lawlessness in Judah.
2. Worthless people will not respect their masters
3. Judah will be ruled by immature boys.
4. Young people will not respect their elders
5. There will be hunger and diseases.
6. Everyone will take advantage of everyone else.

THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM (3:16-

- These verses describe the sins of the well to do ladies of Jerusalem.
- God will punish these women
- He will take away all their ornaments

THE SINS COMMITTED BY THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

1. They were proud.
-Pride made them to despise the poor
2. They were always flirting
3. They walked with short steps
4. They attracted men with fine ankle bracelets.
5. They loved luxurious things which drove their husbands to shame.

THEIR PUNISHMENT WILL BE

1. They will suffer from all kinds of diseases which will make them lose their hair
2. They will become poor and shameful i.e. no more fine cloths but sackcloths.
3. Their husbands will die in war
4. They will face difficulties in re-marrying because few men will be left.
5. Loss of ornaments
6. Loss of freedom
7. They will be producing bad smell
8. They will be shameful because of being unmarried.

THINGS THAT GOD WILL TAKE AWAY FROM FINE LADIES OF JERUSALEM

1. The ornaments they wear on their ankles, on their heads, necks and on their wrists.
2. He will take away their veils and their hats.
3. He will take away their charms they wear on their arms and their waists.
4. He will take away their rings
5. he will take away their robes, gowns cloaks and purses

RESTORATION OF THE FAITHFUL CITY OF JERUSALEM (4:2-6)

- The passage refers to God's plan of salvation.
- God will punish his chosen people to wash and purify their sins.
- Suffering and death i.e. judgement and punishment will be followed by happiness and a new life.
- So the people of Israel should not lose hope
- They should keep their faith in God's love, goodness and power.

NB. Cloud and fire symbolise the presence of God.

In the new or restored Jerusalem:

1. God will make every plant and tree in the land grow large and beautiful.
2. The people of God will be happy with the crops that their land produces.
3. The remnant will be called holy men of God
4. God will wash and purify the sins of the people.

5. God will send the cloud in the daytime and fire at night to lead his people.
6. God's power will cover and protect the city of Jerusalem.
7. God's glory will shade the city from the head to the day and make it a place of safety.

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD (5:1-7)

A parable is a story taken from an everyday experience of the people with a hidden meaning.

-Isaiah sang this song possibly on one of the Jewish festivals.

-The parable conveys a warning message to the people of Judah and Israel.

CHIEF CHARACTERS:

1. "My friend" who represents God himself.
2. The owner of the vineyard is God.
3. The vineyard i.e. Judah and Israel.

HOW THE OWNER OF THE VINEYARD CARED FOR IT?

1. He planted the vines on a fertile land.
2. He dug the soil and cleared it of stones
3. He planted the finest vines
4. He built a tower to guard it.
5. He dug a pit for treading the grapes

** The owner of the vineyard expected good grapes instead the vineyard produced sour grapes*

-The owner became disappointed with his vineyard.

HOW THE OWNER SHOWED THAT HE WAS DISAPPOINTED WITH THE VINEYARD

1. He took away the hedge around it.
2. He broke the wall which protected it.
3. He let wild animals to eat in it
4. He left it to be overgrown with weeds.
5. He stopped pruning and hoeing the vineyard
6. He left it to be covered with thorns and briars.
7. He forbid the clouds to let rain fall on it

THE VINEYARD REPRESENTS ISRAEL.

- God chose Israel out of all nations.

- He never abandoned her

- He made sure that Israel had leaders in time of war e.g. Moses, judges and prophets

- He gave them the fertile land of Canaan but Israel was disobedient and unfaithful to the covenant

HOW GOD CARED FOR THE ISRAELITES?

1. He freed them from slavery in Egypt.
2. He revealed Himself through their history i.e. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the Exodus.
3. He gave them the law to guide them.

4. He made a covenant with them.
5. He assured their future if they remained faithful.
6. He gave them the land of Canaan.

PRIVILEGES OF THE JEWS AS THE CHOSEN PEOPLE OF GOD.

1. -The knowledge and worship of one true God.
-When Israel knew and worshipped one true God, other nations worshipped many gods (Idol gods)
2. The knowledge of the 10 commandments.
3. Israel as a chosen nation to teach other nations the truth about God and salvation
-Israel was to be the light to other nations.
4. The promised land of Canaan.
5. The knowledge that God is the creator

WHY ISAIAH USED A PARABLE TO COMMUNICATE HIS MESSAGE?

- He wanted to remind the Jews that God chosen them out of many nations.
- He never abandoned them.
- He gave them prophets.
- He gave them the land of Canaan.
- He protected them from slavery.

THE CALL OF ISAIAH (6:1-13)

- Isaiah was called by God to be a prophet in the year that king Uzziah died.
- This was in the year 742 BC
- The setting of his call is in the temple in Jerusalem.
- His call was in form of a vision.

THINGS THAT ISAIAH SAW IN HIS VISION.

1. He saw the Lord sitting on his throne and highly exalted
-His robe filled the whole temple He saw flaming creatures around the throne of God

- Each creature had six wings.
- Each creature covered the face with two wings and its body with two wings and used the other two wings for flying
- The creature were calling to each other “holy, holy, holy the Lord Almighty is holy”
- His glory fills the whole world
2. He saw smoke which symbolise the presence of God.
3. He saw burning coal
4. He saw the alter of the Lord

*When Isaiah saw the glory of God, he realised that he was a sinner.

REACTION OF ISAIAH TO GOD’S CALL

- Isaiah said “there is no hope for me. I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is sinful, and I live among a people whose every word is sinful”.

HOW GOD PREPARED ISAIAH FOR HIS WORK

- One of the flaming creatures took a burning coal from the altar with a pair of tongs.
- The creature touched Isaiah's lips with a burning call.
- Then the sins of Isaiah were forgiven i.e. cleaned or purified.
- After the forgiveness of Isaiah's sins, Isaiah heard a call from God "who shall I send? Who will be my messenger?"

Isaiah accepted God's call i.e. "here I am send me Lord".

THE MESSAGE THAT GOD SENT ISAIAH TO PREACH TO THE PEOPLE

1. To make the minds of the people dull.
2. To make the eyes of the people blind
3. To make the ears of the people deaf.

WHY WILL THE TASK OF ISAIAH BE DIFFICULT?

The task will be difficult because:

People will be unable to understand

1. People will not be able to perceive or see the message preached by Isaiah.
2. People will be unable to hear the word of God.

QUALITIES OF GOD AS SEEN BY ISAIAH

1. God is holy
2. God is king
3. God is glory
4. God is the judge
5. God is merciful.

HOW EFFECTIVE WILL THE MESSAGE OF ISAIAH BE?

1. Until the cities are ruined and empty
2. Until the houses are uninhabited
3. Until the land is desolate waste

WARNING TO AHAZ (THE SIGN OF SHEAR JASHUB-7:1-9)

- Assyria intended to expand her empire as far as Egypt.
- The way to that country led through Syria, Israel, Tyre, Judah, Sidon and Philistia.
- These countries were therefore threatened
- This made Israel and Syria to force Judah into an alliance with them against Assyria.
- Ahaz king of Judah refused
- Ahaz refusal made Syria and Israel to invade Judah
- The war was called the Syro-Ephraimitic war

The aim of the Syro-Ephraimitic war was to:

1. Force Judah into an alliance of Syria and Israel against Assyria.
2. Replace Ahaz with Tabeel's
- 3.
- 4.

5. rs son.
- This made Ahaz to sought assistance from Assyria.
 - Judah became avassal state of Assyria
 - It was at this time that Isaiah met king Ahaz.

WHY WAS AHAZ AND HIS PEOPLE AFRAID?

-They were afraid of Syria and Israel victory which would mean the deportation of their king Ahaz and the destruction of Jerusalem

MEANING OF SHEAR JASHUB (VS 3)

- The name means only the remnant shall return which has double meanings
1. There will be a punishment
 2. There will be salvation after the punishment.

WHAT WAS AHAZ DOING WHEN HE MET ISAIAH?

-He was inspecting the ditch from upper pool that bring water to Jerusalem.

WHAT DID AHAZ DO WHEN HE HEARD THAT THE ARMIES OF SYRIA WERE IN ISRAEL?

1. He burnt his son as sacrifice.
2. He made an alliance with Assyria
3. He went to inspect the water supply to Jerusalem.

RESULTS OF JUDAH'S ALLIANCE WITH ASSYRIA

1. Jews had to worship Assyria gods
2. It led to corruption and oppression of the poor
3. Judah had to pay heavy annual tributes to Assyria.

WHY ISAIAH WAS AGAINST THE ALLIANCE

1. It showed lack of faith in God
2. There was no need to seek help from Assyria since Syria and Israel were weak.
3. History is made by God and not by man
 - Pekah and Rezin were men not God.

NB The smoke from the two smouldering sticks as in verse 4 was a sign that Pekah and Rezin were about to be defeated by Assyria.

THE SIGN OF IMMANUEL (7:10-17)

- A sign is usually some event assuring people of a divine intervention.
- In this case, the sign was a confirmation of God's support and protection for his people.
- Here it is an assurance that God is still with his people and that Isaiah is a true prophet of God.
- The sign was the birth of Immanuel
- When Isaiah spoke about Immanuel, he had I mind of Hezekiah son of Ahaz through whom the royal line of David would be assured.

- Before the child was old enough Syria and Israel will be defeated.
- Immanuel means God is with us.
- This means that God is faithful to the promises he made to David and that he will not abandon his people.
- *Drinking of milk and eating of honey have two meanings:
 1. Time of prosperity and plentiful
 - To the nomadic such food are a sign of delicacy and abundance
 2. Time of famine because the settled people have nothing to eat because of destruction of war.
 - The prophet predicted that before Hezekiah reaches an old age Syria and Israel will be defeated.
 - Isaiah also predicted the invasion of Judah by Assyria and the destruction of the country.
 - Ahaz refused to ask for a sign
 - He said he cannot put the Lord to test.

MEANING OF AHAZ'S REPLY

- It showed that Ahaz lacked faith in God.

THE SIGN THAT GOD WILL GIVE

- The sign that God will give may be Hezekiah, son of Ahaz in whose birth Judah will see the presence of God among the people.

AHAZ'S POLICY (7:18-25)

- His policy was to make an alliance with Assyria so as to protect Judah from Syria, Israel and Egypt.
- There are four oracles or predictions that Isaiah made in connection with the policy of Ahaz.

These oracles are:

1. The armies of Egypt (fly) and the armies of Assyria (bees) will fight each other in the land of Judah and destroy Judah.
 2. Ahaz had hired a razor Assyria to shave his enemies now God will shave Ahaz with the same razor.
- NB: Shaving of hair and beards by enemies in ancient days was a sign of humiliation.
3. The destruction of Judah will make people to have a shortage of food.
 - Instead of having wheat and grapes as food, they will be drinking milk and honey.
 - Milk and honey were common food for nomadic people.
 4. Judah will become a hunting area i.e. many animals will settle in the land of Judah.

DIRE-CONSEQUENCIES OF AHAZ'S POLICY

1. Judah lost her independence.
 - She became a vassal state of Assyria and her land was devastated.
2. Judah had to pay heavy tributes to Assyria.

3. Judah adopted idol worship.

THE SIGN OF MAHER-SHALAL-HAZ-BAZ (8:1-41)

- The other sign that Ahaz was given was the birth of Maher-Shalal-Haz-Baz
- He was the second born son of Isaiah.
- The name Maher-Shalal-Haz-Baz means the spoil hastens, the plunder comes quickly.
- It also means quick-loot-fast-plunder.
- Before the boy is 2 to 3 years old i.e. before he is old enough to say mummy and daddy, the wealth of Damascus and Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria.

ISAIAH'S TEMPORARY WITHDRAW FROM PUBLIC MINISTRY (8:16-9:1)

- Isaiah ceased prophesying temporarily because:

1. He wanted to pay more attention to his disciples and spend more time with them.
2. He was wearied out by the attitudes of his king Ahaz.
3. He saw that Ahaz refused to follow his advice concerning the Assyrian alliance.

*Isaiah wrote down some of his prophecies and bound them with strings and sealed the scrolls with wax.

- Then he handed over the scrolls to his disciples for safe keeping.
- The scrolls were to be used as witnesses when the prophecies were fulfilled in future.
- Isaiah then waited patiently for the fulfilment of his prophecies.

THE PRINCE OF PEACE (9:2-7)

- This passage talks about the prince of peace.
- The people of Israel walked in darkness after being defeated by the Assyrians
- But now great light has come to them.
- This light refers to the birth and liberation of a child.
- The yoke, staff and rod describe the oppression and slavery the Jews after the Assyrian conquests.
- This ideal king will have the following titles:

1. Wonderful counsellor.

- Someone who is wise in his plans and purposes.
- Someone who makes the right decisions according to God's will.

2. Almighty God.

- A heavenly warrior whose weapons are justice and righteousness and not violence.

3. Everlasting father (Eternal father)

- A king ruler.
- One who loves his people as God does.
- One whose reign (Kingship) will never end.

4. Prince of peace

- He will bring peace (shalom) i.e. general well-being based on love and justice for all people.

- This passage contains a series of titles describing the characters of the Messiah.
- Christians nowadays apply these titles to Jesus the true Immanuel and prince of peace.

THE ROOT AND BRANCH: THE MESSIAH: THE COMING OF THE VIRTUOUS KING: THE JUST EIGN OF THE IDEAL KING (11:1-9)

- Chapter 11 is talking about the charismatic gift of the ideal king.
- These gifts are in three forms:
 1. Intellectual gifts.
 - He will have wisdom and understanding for government.
 2. Practical gifts.
 - Counsel and might for war.
 3. Religious gifts.
 - He will have knowledge and fear of the Lord for spiritual leadership.

QUALITIES OF THE FUTURE KING.

1. He will obey the Lord.
2. He will not judge by appearance or hearsay.
 - His judgement will be based on proofs and reliable witnesses for both poor and rich people.
3. He is one of David's descendants.
4. He will rule his people with justice.
5. He will be filled with wisdom.

CONDITIONS OF LIFE IN THE REIGN OF THE IDEA KING/MESSIAH (THE FUTURE KING)

1. Wolves and sheep will live together in peace.
2. Calves and lions calves will feed together.
3. Leopards and young goats will lie together.
4. Little children will take care of them.
5. Cows and b ears will live together.
6. Lions will eat straw as cattle do.
7. Poisonous snakes will become harmless.
8. There will be no harmful thing on Mount Zion.
9. The land will be full of knowledge of the Lord.
 - Powerful people will be destroyed by their own evil doing.

A HIGH WAY FOR THE JOYFUL RETURN OF THE EXILED JEWS (35:1-10)

- This chapter describes the return from the Babylonian exile.
- There will be joy of salvation.
- Even nature will be transformed i.e. deserts will become fertile.

WHO WILL RETURN FROM EXILE?

- the ones who are not unclean and foolish
- Those who have kept their faith in Yahweh.

*The return from exile is described as the new Exodus .i.e. the first one was from Egypt to Canaan and the second one is from Babylon to Jerusalem.

PREPARATIONS THAT WILL BE MADE FOR THE SMOOTH RETURN OF THE EXILES.

1. Deserts will become fertile.
2. A highway will be built called the way of holiness.
-No sinner will ever travel through that road.
3. There will be abundance of water.
4. Mountains will be levelled.

THE ASSYRIAN THREAT TO JERUSALEM (CHAPTER 36,37 AND 38)

-In 715 BC Hezekiah succeeded his father Ahaz as king of Judah.
-At this time, Isaiah resumed his public ministry.
-Hezekiah was a good king compared to his father.

1. He removed the altar of the Assyrian idol gods which his father had installed.
2. He made Jerusalem again the centre of worship.
3. He stopped paying tributes to Assyria.

*

-At first Babylon was a subject to Assyria but with the assassination of Sargon II in 705 BC Babylonian king Merodach-Baladan rebelled and became independent.
-Merodach-Baladan and Tirhakah of Egypt formed an alliance against Assyria and they wanted Hezekiah to join them and Hezekiah agreed.
-Isaiah advised him not to join the alliance but Hezekiah ignored the advice.

WHAT HEZEKIAH JOINED THE ALLIANCE?

1. He was persuaded by a strong pro-Egyptian party.
2. He trusted that the alliance against Assyria would be successful because Assyria was weakened by the Babylonian revolts.
3. He hated being a subject to Assyria and payment of tributes.
4. He hated worshipping Assyria idol gods.

*Although Hezekiah made an alliance with Egypt and Babylon, Isaiah was against it because:

1. It showed lack of faith in God.
2. It was exposing God's people to foreigners.

THE RABSHAKEH'S MOCKERY TO JERUSALEM (36:1-22)

-This chapter describes Sennacherib's message to king Hezekiah.
-Sennacherib boasted of having destroyed 46 cities of Judah.
-He sent a high ranking official to ask Hezekiah to surrender.
-The high ranking official sent by Sennacherib was called the Rabshakeh.
-The Rabshakeh was a title and not a name of a person.
-The Rabshakeh spoke from outside Jerusalem.
-He occupied the road where cloth makers live at the ditch of the upper pool which brings water to Jerusalem.

The Rabshakeh used eight points or arguments to intimidate or threaten the people of Judah.

*These arguments are:

1. Jerusalem has no weapons and words would not save her.
2. Jerusalem should not rely on Egypt.
3. God would not save Jerusalem because Hezekiah had destroyed his shrines and altars.
-This argument was not true because Hezekiah destroyed the altars of the Assyrian idol gods and not that of the Living God.
4. Assyria has horses and trained horsemen but not Judah hence Judah is weak.
5. God was bringing judgement on Judah.
6. The people of Jerusalem would get everything they want if they surrender.
7. God will not help the people of Jerusalem because other gods had also failed to save their people.
8. Hezekiah is weak to save his people.
9. Assyrians were sent by God to punish his people because of their disobedience (God was bringing judgement on Judah).

NB: the Judeans whom Hezekiah sent to meet Assyrian officials were:

1. Eliakim the court secretary
2. Shebner
3. Joah

HEZEKIAH'S REACTION TO THE MESSAGE

1. He tore his clothes to show grief.
2. He put on sackcloth to show grief.
3. He went to the temple of the Lord to pray
4. He sent his officials to Isaiah.

*Be able to relate the message Hezekiah sent to Isaiah.

ISAIAH'S ANSWER.

- Isaiah said that Hezekiah should not fear the Assyrians but that he should fear the Lord
- he said that God would deal with Sennacherib.
- Isaiah said that Sennacherib would go back to Nineveh where he would be killed.

SENNACHERIB'S SECOND MESSAGE TO JERUSALEM (37:3-38)

- Sennacherib gave a second message to Hezekiah upon hearing that the Egyptian armies were approaching.
- He warned Hezekiah to surrender immediately.
- In this message, he boasted of his victory and defied God.
- he said the gods of Assyria were more powerful than any God.

HEZEKIAH'S REACTION.

1. He went to the temple
2. He placed Sennacherib's letter in the presence of God.
3. He prayed to God.

ISAIAH'S ANSWER FROM GOD

1. He said that God was using Assyria as an instrument to carry out his plan hence she should not think that she had achieved the victories on her own.
2. He said that God will send the Assyria back to their land.
3. He gave the sign of plenty food in Jerusalem.
 - Vs 36-38 describe the Assyrian siege to Jerusalem.
 - The angel of the Lord killed 185000 Assyrians and Sennacherib returned back home where he was killed by his own two sons Adrammelech and Sharezer.
 - He was succeeded by his son called Assahadon.

THE MESSAGE OF GOD TO SENNACHERIB

1. He said that he had answered Hezekiah because of his faith.
2. He said that Assyria should know that Jerusalem laughs at her as a young girl makes fun of a great conqueror.
3. Assyrians boasting about her victory is displeasing Yahweh because she forgets that all her victories were planned by God.

WHY GOD PROMISED HEZEKIAH TO DEFEND AND PROTECT THE CITY OF JERUSALEM?

1. He wanted to fulfil the promise he made with his friend David.
2. He wanted to protect the city for the sake of his own honour.
3. We wanted to show that he alone was God and not the idol gods.

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND MIRACULOUS RECOVERY (38:1-8)

-Soon before the Assyrian invasion, Hezekiah suffered from a boil.
 -He received a message from God through the prophet Isaiah that he should put everything in order for he was not going to recover but die.

THE REACTION OF HEZEKIAH TO GOD'S MESSAGE

1. He turned to the wall and prayed.
2. He told God that he was always faithful and loyal to him.
3. He told god that he always did what God told him to do.
4. He cried bitterly.

GOD' ANSWER TO HEZEKIAH

1. He said that he has heard Hezekiah's prayer and seen his tears.
2. He promised to add 15 more years to Hezekiah's life.
3. God promised to rescue Hezekiah and the city of Jerusalem from the Assyrians.

HOW WAS THE BOIL CURED.

-Isaiah told the king to put a paste made of figs on his boil and he got cured.

THE SIGN THAT GOD SHOWED ZEKEKIAH TO PROVE THAT HE WOULD GET WELL.

-He gave Hezekiah the sign of a show of a stairway go back ten steps.

THE ROLE OF A PROPHET AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE STORY

1. He is the messenger of God.
2. He is the mediator between God and the people.
3. He carries messages from God to the people
4. He prays on behalf of the people.

TOWARDS CAPTIVITY: BABYLON EMBASSY TO JERUSALEM (39:1-2)

- Melodach-Baladan son of Baladan sent ambassadors to Hezekiah.
- The apparent reason for sending the ambassadors was to congratulate Hezekiah for his recovery from illness.
- But the secret (real or hidden) reason was to ask Judah to make an alliance with Babylon against Assyria.
- Hezekiah showed the envoys all the treasures in the place to impress them.
- These treasures, silver military equipment, spices and perfume.
- Isaiah was not happy with what Hezekiah did by showing the envoys all things in the palace.

*He predicted that:

- All the riches of Judah will be taken off to Babylon.
- Some of Hezekiah descendants will be taken away to Babylon.
- Hezekiah's sons will be made eunuchs to serve in the palaces in Babylon.

NOTE:

The envoys brought a letter and gifts or presents to Hezekiah.

DEUTRO-ISAIAH (40-55)

- These chapters show that the Jews are in exile in Babylon.
- They suffered many things i.e. the temple and Judah were in ruins.
- God sent the word of comfort through Second-Isaiah.

LIFE IN EXILE

- The Jews were allowed to stay together in communities.
- The Jews were given freedom of movement.
- The Jews started business and others got rich.

THINGS THAT THE JEWS MISSED WHILE IN EXILE

1. They missed their temple.
2. They missed their king God.
3. They missed their land.

TEMPTATIONS TO JOIN BABYLONIAN RELIGION

-The Jews were tempted to join the Babylonian religion.

WHY WERE THE JEWS TEMPTED TO JOIN THE BABYLONIAN RELIGION

1. The Babylonian god Marduk seemed to be more powerful than God.
2. The Babylonian festivals were impressive and attractive events.
3. The highly educated Babylonians took their religion seriously.
4. The Jews were backward compared to the Babylonians.

HOW THE JEWS MAINTAINED THEIR NATIONAL IDENTITY IN EXILE.

1. They kept their faith by gathering together on Sabbath in Synagogues.
2. They practised circumcision.
3. Elders told children stories of the patriarchs e.g. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and The Exodus.
4. They were strengthened by their prophets e.g. Ezekiel and Isaiah.

THE JOYFUL RETURN TO JERUSALEM AND THE MAJESTY OF GOD (40:1-17)

- Chapter 40 contains the message of comfort or consolation to Israel.
- Isaiah comforts God's people who had spent many years in exile.
- Isaiah tells the people that the time of war is over and that their sins are forgiven.
- The prophet announces that the time to return to Jerusalem had come.

PREPARATIONS THAT WERE MADE FOR THE RETURN OF THE EXILED JEWS TO JERUSALEM.

1. A highway was built.
2. The road for the Lord was constructed across the wilderness.
3. Every valley was filled.
4. Hills became plains.

*This passage introduces John the Baptist (Luke 3:4).

- In chapter 40:6 Isaiah stresses that men are weak compared to God.
- Man is like grass i.e. he does not last long.

THE CHOICE OF CYRUS (44:24-28)

- God sent the people of Israel into exile as punishment.
- He had now pardoned them.
- God will now lead his people back to Jerusalem.
- He will use Cyrus to fulfil his purpose.
- He promised the people that Jerusalem and the Temple will be rebuilt.

WHAT WILL CYRUS DO?

1. He will conquer all nations.
2. He will strip the powers of kings.
3. He will break the bronze gates and smash their iron bars.

HOW GOD PREPARED CYRUS. [45:1-

1. He gave him strength.
2. He gave him honour.
3. He levelled mountains and hills for him.
4. He opened the gates of cities for him.

THE CALL OF CYRUS (45:1-8)

- The prophet says that God has called Cyrus and anointed him to rescue his people from Babylon.

THE ROLE OF CYRUS

- Cyrus will help the Jews to return to Jerusalem as he will conquer Babylon.
- Cyrus will let other nations exiled by Babylon return to their homeland.
- Through Cyrus all nations and the world will know that Yahweh is triumphant.
- Through Cyrus Gentiles will come to Zion to worship and confess that Yahweh is God and not their idols.

WHY CHOOSING A GENTILE AND NOT A JEW (45:1-13)

- Some Jews failed to understand and accept the choice of Cyrus.
- They questioned God why he chose a Gentile and not a Jew because the Jews were chosen people of God.
- They thought Yahweh would have chosen one of them to deliver them from Babylon.
- When these Jews complained or were puzzled with the choice of Cyrus God answered them by using two illustrations:

1. The clay pot and the potter.
2. The child and his parents.

- The clay pots cannot complain that its maker has no skill.
- In the same way the child cannot ask his parents how he was born.
- In the same way the Jews to question Yahweh why he had chosen Cyrus to rescue the Jews.
- God the creator is too great to be questioned.
- God is the Lord of history who makes his own decisions.
- He controls events.
- He can use anybody because all men were created by him.

WHY THE JEWS COMPLAINED ABOUT THE CHOICE OF CYRUS?

1. Cyrus was a Gentile and not a Jew i.e. he was a foreigner.
2. Cyrus was an idol worshipper.
3. Cyrus was not circumcised.

CYRUS ADVANCES ON NATIONS (41:1-7)

- God sent Cyrus to conquer all nations so that his people should be freed from the exile.
- This shows that God is all powerful and all wise.
- He controls history.
- God called a meeting of all nations so that they can see the current event from the beginning of human history to its end.

WHAT WILL CYRUS DO?

1. He will obey God's call.
2. He will call on the name of the Lord.

3. He will defeat all the enemies of God.

NB Cyrus was the king of Persia.

GOD PROTECTS ISRAEL HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE (41:8-20)

- In this passage, God promises Israel protection from enemies.
- He reminds her that she is the chosen nation of God.
- He promises to give power to Israel to defeat all nations.

FALSE GODS ARE PUT ON TRIAL(41:21-29) OR (45:20-25)

- God tells the people that the idol gods and their worshippers are powerless and ridiculous.
- He challenged idol gods.
- He asked idol gods to explain the events.
- He asked idols to predict the future.
- He asked them to explain the causes of history.
- God now asked Israel to trust in him because:

1. He is all wise.
2. He knows everything.
3. He controls the history of the world

GOD PUNISHED ISRAEL'S PAST BLINDNESS (42:18-25)

- This passage shows that Israel had always not understood God's plan of salvation e.g.
 1. The Jews complained in the desert (Exodus).
 2. The Jews continued to be infidels during the time of Fudges.
 3. Their kings lacked faith in god e.g. Ahaz.
- *God sent the Jews into exile so as to punish them and open up their eyes but the Jews did not understand the purpose of the captivity (exiled) and defeat.
- They did not know that it was God's plan of serving them i.e. restoring them.

YAHWEH ALONE IS GOD (44:1-8)

- The belief in one God is called monotheism.
- The Jews worshipped one God (monotheism).
- This passage contains a message of hope or consolation.
- God will transform Israel.
- All the people will receive the spirit of God.
- The Gentiles will also accept Yahweh as the one true God and will follow the religion of the Jews.
- God has no equal.
- He is the only God.
- He knows the future as the fulfilment of his prediction.

YAHWEH'S DEVASTATING ATTACK ON IDOL WORSHIP(44:9-20)

What is Idol worship?

It is the serving and worshiping of man-made gods in place of the living God.

WHY ARE IDOL GODS FOOLED/ RIDICULED?

It is because:

1. Idols are made by man and man cannot make God.
2. The energy and skill of ironsmiths and carpenters, iron and wood are all God's gifts to man so how can God's gifts produce a god.
3. The wood used to make a god is also used as firewood.
4. Idols are made by man so they have no powers to save people.
5. Idols do not speak and have no life.
6. Idols are made from God's creation so how can they save the people.

WHY THE JEWS FOUND IDOL WORSHIP ATTRACTIVE?

1. Idols were easily seen by the people unlike God who is not seen.
2. People found pleasure in idol worship because they were free to do sexual intercourse.
3. The Jews thought that idols were powerful and superior to God.
4. Idol worship was impressive and attractive events.

IDOLS THAT ARE STILL WORSHIPPED TODAY.

1. Big trees
2. Ancestral spirits
3. Mountains
4. Big rivers
5. Charms
6. Money
7. Husbands
8. Wives
9. Witchdoctors/Herbalists

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF IDOL WORSHIP ON THE PEOPLE

1. Idol worship brings humiliation on the people
2. Idol worship brought disgrace
3. Idol worshippers are blind and ignorant.

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE WORSHIP IDOLS TODAY?

1. In order to find riches or money.
2. To strengthen their magic powers.
3. To let rain fall in cases of drought.
4. To cure their diseases.
5. To ask for protection against witchcraft.

A CALL TO ISRAEL TO RETURN TO THEIR GOD(44:21-28).

-This is a short poem asking Israel to return to God.

WHAT REASONS DOES GOD GIVE IN ORDER FOR ISRAEL TO RETURN TO HIM?

1. Israel is God's servant.
2. God swept away all the sins of Israel
3. God saved Israel.
4. God is the creator of Israel.

HOW DOES GOD DEAL WITH FALSE GODS?

1. He makes fools of fortune tellers.
2. He frustrates the prediction of astrologers.
3. He refutes the words of the wise.
4. He shows that words of wise are foolish.

THE FUTURE JERUSALEM

1. In the future Jerusalem people will live there again.
 2. The cities of Judah will be rebuilt.
 3. Jerusalem and the Temple will be rebuilt.
- *God chose Cyrus to carry out his purpose.

BABYLON'S PRIDE AND HUMILIATION (47:1-15)

- After Babylon had conquered all the nations, she became proud of herself.
- She thought she would rule the world forever.
- She harshly treated the nations she conquered especially Israel.

ACCUSATIONS LEVELLED AGAINST BABYLON.

- The charges that God levelled against Babylon were as follows.
 - i. Babylon was proud.
 - She thought she would never be conquered.
 - ii. Babylon thought that she was a queen.
 - iii. She thought that she was God.
 - iv. Babylon thought that she would never be a widow.
 - v. She thought that she was as great as God.
 - vi. She thought she was a virgin.
 - vii. She thought that she will never suffer the loss of her children.

HOW THE BABYLONIANS MADE THE JEWS SUFFER IN EXILE?

1. The Babylonians showed no mercy to the Jews.
2. They treated the old people harshly.

HOW WILL GOD PUNISH BABYLON?

1. Babylon will cease to be the world ruler i.e. world super-power.
 - Cyrus will defeat her.
2. She will be humiliated and lose all the privileges of a rich nation.
3. Her men and children will die in wars.
4. The country will be devastated and ruined.
5. Babylonian magicians and sorcerers will be unable to help her

REASONS WHY GOD SENT THE JEWS INTO EXILE.

1. God sent the Jews into exile in order to purify them.
2. He sent them into exile in order to punish them for their sins.

FINAL INVITATION OF THE BANQUET OF THE LORD (55:1-9)

This passage contains God's invitation of his people.

-God is inviting his people to come to him and buy food and drink water and wine free of charge.

GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE INVITED.

God is inviting the Jews, Gentiles, poor people, the lame, blind etc.

CONDITIONS FOR ONE TO FULFIL GOD'S OFFER OF MERCY

1. One must be thirsty i.e. need to see God's love of salvation.
2. One must be poor i.e. who do not have money (who cannot save himself).

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ISAIAH 55:1-9 AND THE INVITATION IN LUKE 14:14-24)

1. In both books, the invitation is first given to the Jews.
2. In both books the invitation is given to the poor.
3. In both books the invitation is given to those who seek to see God's salvation.

NB Come and buy grain without money. Come and drink water, wine and milk symbolises that God's salvation is free. Salvation cannot be bought.

THE FOUR SERVANT SONGS.

The four servant songs or the songs of the suffering servant are found in chapter 42:1-7, 49:1-7, 50:4-9, 52:13-15 and 53:1-12).

IDENTITIES OF THE SERVANT.

-Many interpretations have been given concerning the identities of the servant.

1. The Jews believed that the servant represented Israel.
-God's people were personified as an individual.
2. Christians also believed that the songs personified Israel.
3. Other people believed that the servant was an individual either Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah or Zerubbabel

THE FIRST SERVANT SONG (42:1-7)

Who is the speaker in the first servant song?

The speaker is God.

QUALITIES OF THE SERVANT.

1. He was filled with the spirit of God.
2. God delights in him.
-The servant is faithful and pleases God.
3. The servant will not complain about his tough conditions.
4. He will be compassionate to the poor, weak and the helpless.
5. He will not get discouraged by the rejections and misunderstandings of his teaching.
6. He will be the light to the nations.

THE MISSION OF THE SERVANT

1. He will bring justice to all nations.
2. He will be the great spiritual teacher of God's plan of universal salvation.
3. He will open the eyes of the blind.
4. He will set free those who sit in dark prison.

THE SECOND SERVANT SONG (49:1-7)

Who is the speaker?

-It is the servant himself who speaks.

HOW GOD PREPARED HIS SERVANT?

1. He gave him the Law.
2. By the suffering of the exile.
3. By giving Israel prophets

QUALITIES OF THE SERVANT.

1. His words were sharp as a sword.
2. He trusted God.

THE MISSION OF THE SERVANT.

1. To bring back God's people.
2. To bring the Gentiles to God.
3. To restore the remnant.
4. To bring light to all nations.

5. To bring salvation to all nations

NOTE: The servant complained that he had worked tirelessly but accomplished nothing.

-People did not follow his teaching.

*The servant was chosen before he was born.

THE THIRD SERVANT SONG (50:4-9)

Who speaks in the Third Servant Song?

-The speaker is the servant himself.

-The servant is showing confession of faith in Yahweh.

-In this song, the servant claims that he is an attentive disciple of God i.e. "Day after day" ("Morning by Morning") God wakens him to continue his instructions and find him to be a good listener.

-The servant also accepted the exile as a just and useful punishment of God for his unfaithfulness.

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE SERVANT.

1. He was flogged on the back.
2. His beards were pulled away.
3. He was mocked.
4. He was spat upon.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS AND THE SUFFERINGS OF THE SERVANT.

1. Like the servant Jesus was also flogged on the back (LK 22:63).
2. Like the servant Jesus was also mocked on the cross (LK 23:11)
3. Like the servant Jesus beards were also pulled away on the cross.
4. Like the servant, Jesus was spat upon (MK14:65).

WHO MADE THE SERVANT TO SUFFER?

1. The Gentiles during the exile in Babylon.
2. The Jews who did not understand God's plan and persecuted the servant i.e. Israel.
-Many of God's prophets were rejected and killed in Jerusalem.

NOTE: In spite of all these sufferings, the servant keeps faith in God.

WHY THE SERVANT KEEPS FAITH IN GOD?

1. God helps him so he cannot be confounded.
2. God is near him.
3. God was with him so there is no-one who can oppose him.
4. God declares him innocent.

THE FOURTH SERVANT SONG (52:13-53:1-12)

Who is the speaker in the fourth servant song?

- The speaker in 52:13-15 is God.
- The speaker in 53:1-12 seems to be
 - i. The Jews themselves.
 - ii. Isaiah himself as the spokesperson of his people.
 - iii. The Gentiles.

THE SUFFERING OF THE SERVANT.

1. He was despised and rejected by his people.
2. He was wounded because of the sins of his people.
3. He was beaten because of the sins of his people.
4. He was treated harshly
5. He was put to death because of the sins of his people.
6. He was buried in a grave together with evil doers.

QUALITIES OF THE SERVANT

1. He had no dignity or beauty.
2. He was not attractive.
3. He had an enduring spirit.

NOTE: Jesus death fulfils Isaiah's prophecy about the suffering and death of the servant.

- Jesus was despised and rejected by his people.
- He was sentenced to death.
- He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.

THIRD ISAIAH/TRITO ISAIAH

Third Isaiah is also called Isaiah of the return.

- Third Isaiah covers chapters 56-66.
- Third Isaiah prophesised in Jerusalem after the return from exile.

FIRST GROUP

- It was led by Sheshbazzar a prince Judah in 538 BC (Ezra 5:14).

SECOND GROUP.

- This group was encouraged by Haggai and Zechariah the prophets.
- The group was led by Zerubbabel.

-It returned in 522 BC.

LIFE IN JERUSALEM AND JUDAH AFTER THE EXILE.

-After they return from exile the Jews faced a number of problems in Judah.

PROBLEMS THAT THE RETURNED JEWS ENCOUNTERED IN JERUSALEM.

1. They saw that Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed.
2. Judah was poor and backward compared to Babylon.
3. Only a few Jews returned to Jerusalem.
4. There was social injustice and corruption in Judah.
5. Judah was being attacked by foreign nations.
6. The Jews were being attacked by the Samaritans (Ezra 10).

THE ADMISSION OF EUNUCHS AND FOREIGNERS (56:1-8)

-At first eunuchs and foreigners (Gentiles) were not allowed to worship in the Temple.

WHY WERE EUNUCHS NOT ALLOWED INTO THE TEMPLE.

1. They were unable to have children.
2. They were shameful to God because their bodies were mutilated (Dt 23:2-8)

WHY WERE FOREIGNERS NOT ACCEPTED IN THE TEMPLE?

1. The Jews had always been exclusive of any other nation e.g. Gentiles.
2. The Jews considered themselves a selected and privileged nation.
3. Jews considered any contact with a Gentile as a defilement i.e. Gentiles were considered as unclean people.
4. Gentiles were not circumcised therefore they were not accepted into the Temple.

THE COMPLAINTS OF EUNUCHS AND GENTILES

1. Eunuchs complained that because they cannot have children they cannot be part of God's people.
2. Foreigners complained that they were not allowed to worship in the Temple.

WHAT WAS GOD'S ANSWER TO THE PEOPLE'S COMPLAINTS?

God's answers to the complaints were that:

1. Foreigners were equally welcome to join the Lord's people.
2. Eunuchs should not worry about being a dry tree.
3. Eunuchs should keep the Lord's Sabbath.

4. Eunuchs should keep the Lord's covenant
5. It is individuals faith that will earn God's favour.
6. Gentiles should also be welcome because of doing God's will.
7. They should be doing what pleases God.