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Introduction

Timeline

Middle of the first Beit haMikdash

Navi for an extraordinarily long time, perhaps more than 80 years based on 6:1

Kings of Judea

Amatziah	Righteous (Melachim II 14)
Uziah/Azaryah	Righteous for much of his long reign (Melachim II 15:3), until the end
Yotam	Very righteous (Melachim II 15:34 Divrei haYamim II 27)
Achaz	Idolatrous and Fearful (Melachim II 16:1-4)
Chizkiyahu	Very righteous (Melachim II 18), but seeks inappropriate alliances
Menasheh	Wicked? (Melachim II 21:2-3, Divrei haYamim II 33:10-19)

The nations around us

Aram	Ally of Yisrael, enemy of Judea. Today's Syria.
Assyria	Rising power, transfers conquered populations. Conquers Yisrael and much of Yehudah before being stopped at Jerusalem
Babylon	Will crush Assyria and destroy the First Beit haMikdash
Edom	A nation to be punished, perhaps for aiding Babylon
Persia	Not a force yet, but Yeshayah envisions their King Cyrus as Mashiach

The Book

Framed by the Talmud as a book of consolation (Bava Batra 14b)

Structure

- Opening chapters address wealth of King Uziah
- Yeshayah attempts to bolster King Achaz against joining Assyria or the Yisrael/Aram Alliance
- Visions for a future reckoning for those who have sinned – Jews and others
- The pressure on King Chizkiyahu regarding the Assyrian invasion
- Visions of a future redemption

Themes

- Defining righteous human activity
- Our relationship with Gd
- The future

Yeshayah himself

His family is royal, or at least powerful; he is comfortable with kings

His father Amotz may have been a prophet

Married with children, who figure into his early prophecies; and his daughter marries Chizkiyahu

Has many students, who carry his message forward (perhaps in secret)

Outline of the Book

- Chap. 1 A harsh lecture against corruption that takes advantage of the vulnerable; this will cause the fall of Jerusalem. Likely transplanted from later in Yeshayah's prophecy.
- Chap. 2-6 The era of King Uziah: Yisrael is rebuked for their indulgence in luxuries; Yehudah is warned as well.
- Chap. 2 The right way to be elevated is when the nations pursue our Torah, not through the wealth and expansion of King Uziah. It will happen in the future.

- Chap. 3-4 Corruption and arrogance will lead to a harsh Divine act of purification
- Chap. 5 Gd sues His vineyard, with six cries of woe against their sins
- Chap. 6 A multi-layer vision of Gd's throne room, different from those of Yechezkel and Michayahu. May be a rebuke for the Jews, may be Yeshayah's initial commission as a prophet, may be a trial of the Jews/Yeshayah/King Uziah.
- Gap We don't have prophecies from the era of King Yotam.
During this time, Yisrael allies with Aram to rally local forces against Assyria, recruiting them by force if need be. Plishtim ally with them. King Achaz is afraid of their invasion, and of the Assyrians, and wants to ally with one of them.
- Chap. 7-12 Yeshayah tries to convince King Achaz not to join Assyria or the Syro-Ephraimite Alliance.
- Chap. 7 A message in the name of Yeshayah's son *She'ar Yashuv*, and *Emanuel* who is born to an *almah*. Have no fear, and don't make alliances, and Yehudah will survive. An offer of a miraculous sign – rejected by King Achaz.
- Chap. 8 A message in the name *Maher shalal chash baz*, and on a large sheet of paper. Don't seek alliances; the North will fall.
- Chap. 9 Mashiach is coming to Yehudah; it may be King Chizkiyahu. The northern Syro-Ephraimite Alliance will disintegrate and collapse.
- Chap. 10 The Assyrians are arrogant, and they will fall – but know that their invasion is coming
- Chap. 11-12 Mashiach is coming, bringing righteousness and justice and peace. Your exiles will return. You and the Torah will be respected and honoured, and you will be safe and prosperous.
- Chap. 13-26 Reinforces the political message of Perakim 7-12, with prophecies against regional foes. They will collapse, so don't attempt to make treaties with them!
- Chap. 13-14 Babylon will be laid waste, leading to our redemption
- Chap. 14 The Philistines will be punished for siding with the Syro-Ephraimite Alliance and fighting us in the days of King Achaz
- Chap. 15-16 Selfish Moav, child of Sdom, who aided Sancherev and took our Transjordan cities, will lose their cities and land. Yeshayah may cry for them.
- Chap. 17-18 The Syro-Ephraimite alliance of Aram and Yisrael will be crushed by the Assyrians, who will in turn fall when they attack Jerusalem. Spread the word beyond Ethiopia (of the fall of Assyria, or the arrival of Mashiach, or techiyat haMeitim)! And bring the Jews home.
- Chap. 19-20 Egypt will fall, and repent, ultimately coming to Gd along with Assyria! And an imminent fall of Egypt and Ethiopia, demonstrated by Yeshayah walking about in rags or unclothed.