



The Book of Isaiah: Introduction - Part 3

- **Introduction to the Introduction:** We are not in a hurry!
- **Unlocking the Bible:** David Pawson, YouTube, "Isaiah - Part 2"
- The **"Meditation Room"** at the United Nations, NY.

- In the original plan for the new Headquarters, a tiny room had been provided as a place dedicated to silence, where people could withdraw into themselves, regardless of their faith, creed or religion, but Dag Hammarskjöld wanted something more dignified. In his efforts he was supported by a group, composed of Christians, Jews, and Moslems, the "Friends of the UN Meditation Room", who combined their efforts and provided the money for a room worthy of a world organization.
- The work on the room began, and Mr. Hammarskjöld personally planned and supervised in every detail the creation of the "Meditation Room". Dag Hammarskjöld wrote the following text to be distributed to the visitors of the room:

"We all have within us a center of stillness surrounded by silence.

This house, dedicated to work and debate in the service of peace, should have one room dedicated to silence in the outward sense and stillness in the inner sense.

It has been the aim to create in this small room a place where the doors may be open to the infinite lands of thought and prayer.

People of many faiths will meet here, and for that reason none of the symbols to which we are accustomed in our meditation could be used.

However, there are simple things which speak to us all with the same language. We have sought for such things and we believe that we have found them in the shaft of light striking the shimmering surface of solid rock.

So, in the middle of the room we see a symbol of how, daily, the light of the skies gives life to the earth on which we stand, a symbol to many of us of how the light of the spirit gives life to matter.



But the stone in the middle of the room has more to tell us. We may see it as an altar, empty not because there is no God, not because it is an altar to an unknown god, but because it is dedicated to the God whom man worships under many names and in many forms.

The stone in the middle of the room reminds us also of the firm and permanent in a world of movement and change. The block of iron ore has the weight and solidity of the everlasting. It is a reminder of that cornerstone of endurance and faith on which all human endeavour must be based.

The material of the stone leads our thoughts to the necessity for choice between destruction and construction, between war and peace. Of iron man has forged his swords, of iron he has also made his ploughshares. Of iron he has constructed tanks, but of iron he has likewise built homes for man. The block of iron ore is part of the wealth we have inherited on this earth of ours. How are we to use it?

The shaft of light strikes the stone in a room of utter simplicity. There are no other symbols, there is nothing to distract our attention or to break in on the stillness within ourselves. When our eyes travel from these symbols to the front wall, they meet a simple pattern opening up the room to the harmony, freedom and balance of space.

There is an ancient saying that the sense of a vessel is not in its shell but in the void. So it is with this room. It is for those who come here to fill the void with what they find in their center of stillness.” (From: www.un.org)

• **“Six Reasons Why We Read and Study Isaiah”** ~ David Pawson

1. **It’s part of God’s word.** In Isaiah the key words are “save” and “salvation,” which is Jesus’ name.
2. **In Isaiah we have a very good introduction to the whole Bible.** It is a summary of all the themes of both the OT and NT brought into one book. Most of the Bible themes are all here. It’s a Bible in miniature.
3. **Isaiah is a very good introduction to “prophecy” in particular.** It’s put first in the section of the prophets in the Bible. One-third of our Bible is prophecy. Prophecy is a combination of “protest” and “prediction.” It is a protest about the present and a prediction about the future.
4. **Isaiah helps you to link the OT and the NT by showing you how they illuminate each other.** It actually helps us to know the NT to know Isaiah. This was the scripture that Jesus and Paul dwelt on most of all.
5. **To know Jesus.** He said, “Search the scriptures for they bare testimony of me.” Isaiah helps you to understand Jesus better than any other. Just read Isaiah 53.
6. **To get a bigger view of God.** If there’s one thing that the second half of Isaiah does, it gives you that bigger view of God. Somehow, when you’re talking about God and getting a big view of God, other things just don’t matter.

- **Bible In Five ~ Isaiah** (1 - 39) ~ Dr. Tim Mackie ~ <https://vimeo.com/41990676> (6:14 min.)

- **Bible In Five ~ Isaiah** (40-66) ~ Dr. Tim Mackie ~ <https://vimeo.com/41994376> (6:27 min.)

- **Discussion Questions:**

- How do you think Isaiah’s family history/social standing influence the reception of his prophetic words?
- Do you believe God had a direct “hand” in laying out the structure of the book of Isaiah? why?
- With what you know so far, what do you think will be some of the personal challenges in understanding the book of Isaiah and applying it to your life?