

SAINT JEROME

SUMMARY OF ISAIAH

Abbreviatio in Isaiam

SABBATISMUS

Saint Jerome (347–420)
Abbreviatio in Isaia · Summary of Isaiah

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Unus liber est duodecim Prophetarum: et quod solent facere Medici in aegrotationibus, et vulneratis secundum corpus, hoc Prophetae, quasi spiritales medici, in animae vulneribus, diversisque peccatis facere consueverunt. Duodecim Prophetis quasi aegrotans, qui vitio suo curari noluerit, ad mortem usque describitur; et postea per Christum, qui verus est medicus, sanatus post mortem esse narratur. Quod ergo duodecim Prophetae per partes faciunt, et nihilominus ipsi breviter subindicant, eundem ordinem continentes, hoc latissime Majores Prophetae facere consueverunt. Ezras autem, qui interpretatur adjutor, et Zorobabel, qui interpretatur iste princeps in Babylone, et Jesus, qui in lingua nostra sonat Salvator, in figura praecesserunt Domini; ut quod caeteri Prophetae medicinalibus suis libris curare non potuerunt, isti curaverint, et reduxerint populum post captivitatem.

(Cap. I.) Visio Isaiae. Propterea visio dicitur, quia Prophetae futura cognoscunt, et spiritualibus oculis Salvatoris intuentur adventum: unde et Videntes apud antiquos vocabantur Prophetae.

Filii Amos. Plerique putant, Amos, qui tertius est de duodecim Prophetis, patrem esse Isaiae, sed vehementer errant: diversis quippe apud Hebraeos scribuntur litteris; alius per sade, alius per sin.

Quam vidit super Judam, et Jerusalem. Specialiter Isaias ad duas tribus mittitur, Judam, et Benjamin; et Jerusalem: hoc est, ad metropolim duarum tribuum civitatem.

In diebus Oziae, Joatham, Achaz, Ezechiae, Regum Juda. Sub istis ergo omnibus, qui regnaverunt in 1146 Juda, prophetia ejus extensa est: etiam in ipso libro reperimus, quae visio sub quo dicta sit rege.

Hoc secundum Historiam; secundum tropologiam autem intelligendum, quodcumque ad Samariam, et ad decem tribus dicitur, hoc dici contra haereses: quodcumque vero contra Jerusalem, hoc dici contra Ecclesiam.

Prima intelligentia tropologiae ista est: secunda alia: anima quae erraverit, et de justitia corruens vitiis subjacuerit, dicitur Ephraim, dicitur Samaria; nam dicitur vacca sibi aureas construxisse, et refertur ad decem tribus.

Quicumque adhuc in proposito perseverat, et non in apertam prorupit insaniam, negans esse quod dicitur, et nihilominus vitiis subjacet, corripitur a Propheta quasi Judas, in quo sit vera Dei confessio, et quasi Jerusalem, quod pacem quidem habere videatur, ut ab occultis criminibus se retrahat, ne etiam illi captivitas veniat.

The twelve Prophets are one book: and what physicians are accustomed to do in illnesses and for those wounded in body, this the Prophets, as spiritual physicians, were accustomed to do for the wounds of the soul and for diverse sins. In the twelve Prophets, one who is sick, as it were, who through his own fault has been unwilling to be cured, is described as being unto death; and afterwards, through Christ, who is the true physician, he is narrated to have been healed after death. Therefore, what the twelve Prophets do in parts, and nevertheless themselves briefly indicate, containing the same order, this the Major Prophets were accustomed to do most extensively. Moreover, Ezra, which is interpreted as "helper," and Zerubbabel, which is interpreted as "this prince in Babylon," and Jesus, which in our tongue sounds as "Savior," preceded the Lord in figure; so that what the other Prophets could not cure with their medicinal books, these men cured, and they brought back the people after the captivity.

CHAPTER I. The Vision of Isaiah. It is called a vision, therefore, because the Prophets know future things, and with spiritual eyes they behold the advent of the Savior: whence the Prophets were also called *Videntes* (Seers) among the ancients.

The son of Amos. Most people think that Amos, who is the third of the twelve Prophets, is the father of Isaiah, but they are greatly mistaken: for they are written with different letters in Hebrew; one with *sade*, the other with *sin*.

Which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Isaiah is specifically sent to the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin; and Jerusalem: that is, to the city that is the metropolis of the two tribes.

In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah. Therefore, his prophecy extended under all these who reigned in Judah: we shall also find in the book itself which vision was spoken under which king.

This is according to History; but according to tropology, it is to be understood that whatever is said to Samaria and to the ten tribes, this is said against heresies: but whatever is said against Jerusalem, this is said against the Church.

This is the first understanding of tropology: the second is different: the soul that has erred, and falling from justice has become subject to vices, is called Ephraim, is called Samaria; for it is said to have built for itself golden calves, and it is referred to the ten tribes.

Whoever still perseveres in his purpose, and has not broken out into open madness, denying what is said, and nevertheless is subject to vices, is rebuked by the Prophet as Judah, in whom there is a true confession (*confessio*) of God, and as Jerusalem, which seems to have peace (*pacem*), so that it may withdraw from hidden crimes, lest captivity come upon it also.

Audite coeli, et auribus percipe terra, quoniam Dominus locutus est. Quoniam in Cantico Deuteronomii scriptum est, eo tempore quo Moyses, quasi nubes Domini, loquebatur: Attende coelum, et loquar, et audiat terra verba ex ore meo: exspectet sicut pluviam sermonem meum, et descendant sicut ros verba mea: et legem Dei sub his testibus dederat, coelo videlicet, et terra; hoc est omnibus creaturis quae coelo includuntur, et terra: ex parte enim totum indicatur (synecdochicôs): quod tenetur in partibus, quia omnia includuntur, ut diximus.

Coelum et terram. Quia legem Dei praevaricatus est populus, eosdem rursus testes vocat, sub quibus data lex est; ut quoniam populus audire contempsit, cunctae audiant creaturae.

1147 Audite coeli, et auribus percipe terra. Juxta historiam quod dicit hoc est: Quoniam me genus contempsit humanum, et inter cunctas creaturas et elementa quae feci, hoc tantummodo rebelle genus est, quod repugnat voluntati meae; propterea etiam irrationabiles quae putantur, audiant creaturae, ut magis rationabiles condemnentur.

Quia Dominus locutus est, Filios enutrivit et exaltavi: non dixit filios genui, sicut in vulgari habent interpretatione; superfluum enim dixisse filios genui, cum utique omnis filius sit genitus. Ergo in eo quod dixit filios, indicavit jam esse genitos. Nunc augmentum facit, quia omnis qui generat, et nutrit: ergo ego et genui, et nutrivit: et non solum enutrisse contentus fui, ut in morem animalium, et avium suae illos relinquerem passioni, et suo labori dimitterem; sed quos parvulos enutrieram, magnos quoque, et adultos, ut quibus vitam dederam, nunc darem etiam gloriam.

Ipsi autem spreverunt me. Pro tantis beneficiis vicissitudo contemptus fuit.

Cognovit bos possessorem suum, et asinus praesepe domini sui. Rationabili homini irrationabilia jumenta, et pecora comparantur, ut cum illa beneficia senserint, et brutorum quoque sensus non ignoret eum, cujus beneficia sentit; solum genus humanum condemnatur quod contempsit Deum.

Cognovit bos possessorem suum, et asinus praesepe domini sui. Bos, qui laborat, qui iugo colla submittit, et multum ex labore suo plus praestat domino, quam ipse a domino accipit, tamen intelligit possessorem suum. Asinus quoque praesepe domini sui intelligit, beneficia, et locum, in quo cibos accipere consuevit, libentius videt.

Israel non cognovit: subauditur me: populus meus non intellexit: subauditur, nec possessorem, nec dominum: simulque considerat exempla quantam vim habeant.

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken. Since it is written in the Song of Deuteronomy, at the time when Moses, as a cloud of the Lord, was speaking: *Give ear, O heaven, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words from my mouth: let my speech be awaited like the rain, and let my words descend like the dew*: and he had given the law of God with these witnesses, namely, heaven and earth; that is, all creatures that are included in heaven and earth: for the whole is indicated by the part (synecdochically): what is contained in the parts, because all things are included, as we have said.

Heaven and earth. Because the people transgressed the law of God, he again calls the same witnesses under whom the law was given; so that since the people disdained to hear, all creatures might hear.

1147 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth. According to the historical sense, what he says is this: Since the human race has despised me, and among all the creatures and elements that I have made, this is the only rebellious race, which opposes my will; therefore, let even the creatures that are thought to be irrational hear, so that the rational may be more condemned.

For the Lord has spoken, I have nourished and brought up children: He did not say *I have begotten children*, as they have in the common interpretation; for it would have been superfluous to say *I have begotten children*, since every son is indeed begotten. Therefore, in that he said *children*, he indicated that they were already begotten. Now he makes an addition, because everyone who begets also nourishes: therefore, I have both begotten and nourished: and I was not content merely to have nourished them, so as to leave them to their own passion and abandon them to their own labor, in the manner of animals and birds; but those whom I had nourished as little ones, I also made great and adult, so that to whom I had given life, I might now also give glory.

But they have despised me. For such great benefits, the return was contempt.

The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib. Irrational beasts and cattle are compared to rational man, so that since they have sensed benefits, and the sense of brute animals also does not ignore him whose benefits it senses; the human race alone may be condemned, which has despised God.

The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib. The ox, which labors, which submits its neck to the yoke, and by its labor gives much more to its master than it receives from its master, nevertheless understands its owner. The donkey also understands its master's crib, its benefits, and the place where it is accustomed to receive its food, it sees more gladly.

Israel has not known me: *me* is understood: *my people have not understood*: it is understood, *neither their owner, nor their master*: and at the same time, he considers what great force examples have.

Bos licet cibos accipiat a domino, et asinus licet praesepe cognoscat, tamen multo plus labore suo praestant dominis, quam ipsi a dominis, accipiant: ego autem cum nulla beneficia hominum habeam, nisi haec tantummodo si salventur ipsi, quos diligo: cum eis tanta praestiterim, et nihil acceperim, pro omnibus beneficiis contemptum solummodo reddiderunt.

Quia ergo tanta perpressus sum, et perdiidi Filium, quem enutrieram, quem exaltaveram, quod possum solum facere facio: plangam perditum et mortuum quem aegrotantem sanare non potui.

Vae genti peccatrici, populo gravi iniquitate, semini nequam, filiis sceleratis. 1148 Mutaverunt nomina: vae genti peccatrici, quae quondam gens mea dicta est: populo gravi; peccatis enim gravibus praegravati sunt: semini nequam; non meo semini, secundum quod alibi dictum est, Et in semine tuo benedicentur omnes gentes: filiis sceleratis (Gen. XXVI, 4), nequaquam meis filiis; statim enim ut peccare coeperimus, cum conditione peccati et filiorum nomen amittimus.

Dereliquerunt Dominum, quasi sequentem in singulis viis. Singuli sensus sunt: Cum omnia fecerint, cum cuncta scelera perpetraverint, tamen ego non dimisi eos, sed exspectavi, ut aliquando ad me reverterentur: illi autem stantem me, et pandentem manus ad poenitentiam eorum, dereliquerunt: et non eis sufficit, quod dereliquerunt (videte auxesin peccatorum), sed etiam blasphemaverunt sanctum Israel, abalienati sunt retrorsum: id est, hoc coeperunt esse, quod ante fuerant, antequam meo nomine censerentur.

Super quo percutiam vos ultra addentes praevaricationem? Poena ad hoc infertur a Domino, quasi a vero medico, ut per cauteria, et mordacem pulverem sanitas subsequatur. Ergo quod dicit hoc est: Multa emplastra apposui, diversis medicaminibus curare vos volui, non invenio genus remedii, cum vestra quotidie aegritudo succrescat: non solum, inquit, non sanamini a prioribus vitiis, sed et mea cura revolvente priora peccata, nova apponitis vulnera.

Super quo percutiam vos ultra? quasi dubitantis verba sunt: hoc est, in quo vos sanem? quia enim plaga Domini ad hoc percutit, ut emendet; ad hoc castigat, ut sanet: Dicit, super quo percutiam? hoc est quasi, quod vobis imponam emplastrum? addentes praevaricationem: cum quotidie novis peccatis vetera copuletis.

Illud autem, quod paulo ante diximus, Prophetas esse medicos spirituales, et quasi totum genus curare morborum, nunc manifestissimo curatur exemplo: videte enim Scriptura quid dicat.

Although the ox receives food from its master, and the donkey knows its crib, yet by their labor they provide much more to their masters than they themselves receive from their masters: but I, though I have no benefits from men, except only this, that they themselves whom I love should be saved: though I have bestowed so much upon them, and have received nothing, for all my benefits they have rendered only contempt.

Therefore, because I have suffered so much, and have lost the Son whom I had nourished, whom I had exalted, I do what alone I can do: I will mourn for the lost and dead one whom I could not heal when he was sick.

Woe to the sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a wicked seed, corrupt children. 1148 They have changed their names: *woe to the sinful nation*, which was once called my nation: *a people laden*; for they are weighed down with heavy sins: *a wicked seed*; not my seed, according to what is said elsewhere, *And in thy seed shall all the nations be blessed*: *corrupt children* (Gen. 26:4), by no means my children; for as soon as we begin to sin, with the condition of sin we also lose the name of children.

They have forsaken the Lord, as if following in individual ways. The individual meanings are: Although they have done all things, although they have perpetrated all crimes, yet I have not forsaken them, but I have waited, that at some time they might return to me: but they have forsaken me, standing and stretching out my hands for their repentance: and it is not enough for them that they have forsaken me (see the increase of sins), but they have also *blasphemed the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged and gone backward*: that is, they have begun to be what they were before, before they were counted by my name.

On what part shall I strike you any more, you that add transgression? Punishment is inflicted by the Lord for this purpose, as by a true physician, that health may follow through cauterization and biting powder. Therefore, what he says is this: I have applied many plasters, I have wished to cure you with various medicines, I find no kind of remedy, since your sickness grows daily: not only, he says, are you not healed of your former vices, but with my care turning over your former sins, you add new wounds.

On what part shall I strike you any more? These are the words of one who doubts, as it were: that is, in what shall I heal you? For the Lord's blow strikes for this purpose, that it may amend; it chastises for this purpose, that it may heal: He says, *on what part shall I strike?* that is, as if to say, what plaster shall I apply to you? *you that add transgression*: since you daily join new sins to old ones.

Moreover, what we said a little before, that the Prophets are spiritual physicians, and cure, as it were, the whole range of diseases, is now illustrated by a most manifest example: for see what the Scripture says.

Omne caput languidum, et omne cor moerens; a planta pedis usque ad verticem non est in eo sanitas; vulnus, et livor, et plaga tumens. Omne caput languidum, et omne cor moerens. Frequenter admoneo, ut in Prophetis verba singula consideremus; idcirco enim secundum historiam imperitis utilitas non videtur, quia non intelligunt quod dicitur.

Omne caput languidum, et omne cor moerens. Si quis aegrotaverit, vel difficillimo morbo corpore oppressus fuerit, habuerit autem animam laetiozem, infirmitas corporis laetitia animi sustentatur.

1149 Rursus si aliquis moerorem habuerit, et dolorem cordis, et diversas tribulationes, robustum autem corpus, imbecillitatem animae sanitas corporis sustentat: cum autem et corpus in aegrotatione est, et anima in dolore, nulla possunt subvenire remedia. Hoc est ergo quod medicamine dicitur, omne caput languidum. Et omne cor moerens: simulque considera, quia principali animae, hoc est cordi, corporis comparaverit principale, id est caput: in capite omnes sensus sunt; caeteris membris truncatis vivere anima potest; truncato capite, vita omnis aufertur: et non dixit, omne caput amputatum; superfluum enim erat, caetera membra describere, et morbos reliquorum artuum, si amputatum dixisset. Languidum ergo dicit, ut et in descriptione membrorum caeterorum habeat locum.

A planta pedis usque ad verticem non est in eo sanitas. Totus aegrotat Israel; ne unus quidem vir sanctus inveniri potest, quasi in corpore membrum aliquod, quod sanum esset videatur. Si enim esset in toto corpore aliquid, quod sanum esset, ex unius sanitate etiam caetera medelam trahere viderentur.

Vulnus, et livor, et plaga tumens: vulnus, peccata recentia, livor antiqua scelera: plaga tumens, incoctum, et vetus delictum, quasi quodam pure parturiens.

Non est circumligata nec curata medicamine, neque fota oleo. Non quod haec Deus non fecerit; fecit enim omnia, et 1150 sine causa missi erant Prophetae, si ista non fecissent: sed quia non est sanitas subsecuta, quodammodo videntur non facta esse quae facta sunt.

Secundum tropologiam. Audite coeli, et auribus percipe terra: hoc est, et vos, qui sancti videmini, et vos, qui peccatores, pariter audite.

Filios enutrivit, et exaltavit, ipsi autem me spreverunt. Deus filios homines habere dignatus sum; enutrivit eos, et magnificavit, ut de servis amicos dicerem: ipsi autem spreverunt me; hoc, per peccata sua, et certe cum nullam meam duritiam senserint.

Et prudenter dixit spreverunt: nemo spernit, nisi cuius nimia bonitas est: ergo et illius clementiam, et mansuetudinem meam imbecillitatem interpretantes, spreverunt quem timere, et amare debuerant: et proponit exemplum, quod supra diximus, de bove, et asino.

The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is sad; from the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it; a wound, and a bruise, and a swelling sore. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is sad. I frequently admonish that in the Prophets we should consider every single word; for this is why, according to the historical sense, there seems to be no utility for the unlearned, because they do not understand what is said.

The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is sad. If someone has been sick, or oppressed in body by a most difficult disease, but has had a more cheerful soul, the infirmity of the body is sustained by the cheerfulness of the soul.

1149 Again, if someone has had sadness, and grief of heart, and various tribulations, but a robust body, the health of the body sustains the weakness of the soul: but when the body is in sickness, and the soul in sorrow, no remedies can help. This, therefore, is what is said by way of medicine, *the whole head is sick*. And *the whole heart is sad*: and at the same time, consider that he has compared the principal part of the body, that is, the head, to the principal part of the soul, that is, the heart: in the head are all the senses; with the other members cut off, the soul can live; with the head cut off, all life is taken away: and he did not say, the whole head is cut off; for it would have been superfluous to describe the other members, and the diseases of the other limbs, if he had said it was cut off. Therefore, he says *sick*, so that it may have a place in the description of the other members.

From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it. All of Israel is sick; not even one holy man can be found, as if some member in the body might be seen to be sound. For if there were anything in the whole body that was sound, from the health of that one, the rest would also seem to draw healing.

A wound, and a bruise, and a swelling sore: a wound, recent sins; a bruise, old crimes: a swelling sore, an undigested and old offense, as if festering with a kind of pus.

It has not been bound up, nor dressed with medicine, nor mollified with oil. Not that God has not done these things; for he has done all things, and 1150 the Prophets would have been sent in vain if they had not done these things: but because health has not followed, in a way the things that were done seem not to have been done.

According to tropology. *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth*: that is, both you who seem to be holy, and you who are sinners, hear alike.

I have nourished and brought up children, but they have despised me. I, God, have deigned to have men as sons; I have nourished them, and magnified them, so as to call them friends instead of servants: *but they have despised me*; this, through their sins, and certainly when they have felt none of my harshness.

And he prudently said *despised*: no one despises, except one whose goodness is excessive: therefore, interpreting both his clemency and my gentleness as weakness, they despised him whom they ought to have feared and loved: and he proposes the example, which we mentioned above, of the ox and the donkey.

Hoc autem totum interpretamur in Scripturis de eis, qui per peccata sua a Domino recesserunt, quod multo deteriores sint brutis animalibus: illa enim non habentia tanta dominorum, et possessorum beneficia, nihilominus a domino non recedunt: et bos enim cum vapulaverit, et asinus, cum a domino fuerit indignatus, non sentit plagas, sed beneficiorum tantummodo recordatur; et cum viderit dominum alludit, et laetitiam mentis quibuscumque potest gestibus indicat: Israel vero, hoc est, anima videns Deum, me cognoscere noluit, etc.

We interpret all this in the Scriptures concerning those who have departed from the Lord through their sins, that they are much worse than brute animals: for those, not having such great benefits from their masters and owners, nevertheless do not depart from their master: for both the ox when it has been beaten, and the donkey when it has been angered by its master, does not feel the blows, but only remembers the benefits; and when it sees its master, it plays, and indicates the joy of its mind with whatever gestures it can: but Israel, that is, the soul *seeing God*, did not want to know me, etc.