

[Go back to normal view](#)

Isaiah warns of six catastrophes

Isaiah 28 - 33 Isaiah tells of six 'woes' that will fall on the people of **Israel** and **Judah** (and on their enemy, **Assyria**) as a punishment for their misdeeds.

The Six Woes

During his vision of the downfall of **Israel**, Isaiah warned both **Israel** and **Judah** that their failure to follow God's commands would result in a series of catastrophes (sometimes known as the 'Six Woes').

1. The first warning of God's wrath went to **Ephraim** (the people of the northern kingdom of **Israel**) for their debauchery (see Isaiah 28:1-29).

2. Isaiah then warned **David's city (Jerusalem)** in the southern kingdom of **Judah** against embracing the outward signs of worship without any real emotion from the heart (see Isaiah 29:1-14). "These people say they love me; they show honour to me with words, but their hearts are far from me. The honour they show me is nothing but human rules." (Isaiah 29:13) (See also Matthew 15:7-9.)



The City of David, Jerusalem (Deror avi)

3. In the third warning about **other nations** (see Isaiah 29:15-24), Isaiah condemned those who "work in darkness" and "try to hide things from the LORD." (Isaiah 29:15)

4. Fourthly, Isaiah criticised God's "stubborn children" of **Judah** (Isaiah 30:1) for relying on foreign alliances. He pointed out the folly of relying on a treaty with **Egypt** for protection from **Assyria**. "They make plans but they don't ask me to help them... They hope they will be saved by the King of **Egypt**... But hiding in **Egypt** will bring you only shame; Egypt's protection will only disappoint you." (Isaiah 30:1-3)

5. Isaiah's fifth 'woe' rounded again on those who relied on **Egypt** for help. He criticised the women of **Jerusalem** for their complacency (Isaiah 30:6-33).

6. In his sixth and final 'woe', Isaiah condemned **Assyria** –the "destroyer" who plundered God's people (Isaiah 33:1-9).



Judaeans from Lachish going into exile in Assyria (British Museum)

Isaiah 34:1-17 Isaiah prophesies the destruction of the surrounding nations as a result of God's wrath.

Isaiah 35:1-10 He then looks forward again to better days when the restored people of **Israel** will return from exile:

"The desert will be glad and will produce flowers... It will show its happiness, as if it were shouting for joy... Then the blind people will see again, and the deaf will hear. Crippled people will jump like deer, and those who can't talk now will shout for joy... the people the LORD has freed will return there. They will enter **Jerusalem** with joy, and their happiness will last for ever." (Isaiah 35:1-2, 5-6 & 19).

[Go to next page](#)