

the sin of the nation, but the second audience to which Izziah also speaks is an audience composed simply of those people who are true followers of God, who are listening to the words of God's prophet and are anxious to obey him. These people, while they must also suffer for the sin of the nation as a whole, are people who are grieved by the nation's sins and who are longing that the nation would turn back to God. They are people who are filled with despair as they see the inevitableness of the punishment which is ahead., To these people Izziah frequently brings no consolation and comfort. Sometimes he will be speaking to the nation as a whole and then he turns his attention to the Godly in order to give them an oath of comfort and to show them that after the punishment God still has purposes of grace for Israel and that God is going to perform his righteous will in the end despite all the opposition which men can bring. It is vital to the understanding of the book to have the two audiences in mind and to see how the prophets attention oscillates from the one to the other.

Now let us look at the main division of the book. We note that the book has 66 chapters in it. It is interesting that this is the same number of chapters as the Bible has of books, ~~in it.~~ It is interesting also that the most common division of the book is into a first part with 39 chapters and a second part with 27 chapters, and this again corresponds to the number of books in the Old Testament and ⁱⁿ the New Testament. I do not say that there is any meaning in this similarity; I simply mention it because it is helpful for remembering the arrangement, ~~that there are the same number of~~