

The Theme of Trust in Isaiah
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The Hebrew word for “trust” in Isaiah is *batach*. “The range of meaning ... is similar to that of ‘trust’ in English. That is, trust can be placed in a large number of different people or things and can often be misplaced. God is the supreme object of trust, and some of the things in which people put their trust are substitutes for God, however naturally worthy of trust they may appear to be in themselves (Moberly 645).”

I. Trusting God or Trusting Yourself 1:1-6:13

“God will purify the nation, but restore those who trust God (1:20,24,29-31; Smith 125). “Every false source of trust and pride will disappear (2:2-4; 4:2-6; Smith 126).” Israel can continue to trust in God even through the defeat and exile because a remnant will be preserved (4:2). “The prophet preached to those who still did not trust in God (5:8-30; Smith 137).” Israel can trust in God, because he is still on His throne (6:1).

II. Trusting God or Testing God 7:1-12:6

“King Ahaz would not trust in God’s ability to control his enemies (7:11-12). Ahaz trusted in the military power of Assyria (2Ki 16:7; Smith 128).” “Judah should not fear Assyria, but trust in the Holy and Mighty One of Israel (10:5-7; Smith 130).” “With a new exodus (11:14,16), Judah’s enemies will be destroyed. Then Judah will sing praise to God for His salvation; they will trust Him and joyfully make known His name throughout the earth (12:1-6; Smith 131-132).” “Behold God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid (12:2a).”

III. Trusting God’s Plan for the Nations 13:1-27:13

“Isaiah’s Jewish audience thought their only hope was to trust in the military power of other nations, so the prophet told them about God’s humbling of the nations (13:1-14:23; Smith 132).” “Judah’s leaders ... must trust God who rules the nations, not the military leaders who try to control the future with alliances (Smith 133).” “Isaiah knew that civil war would tear Egypt apart (19:2,4), its idols and sources of insight would fail (19:3); therefore, it was senseless to trust in Egypt (Smith 134).” Jerusalem “trusted in weapons of war and not the divine plan (22:8,11; Smith 135).” “God’s plan was to remove Tyre’s pride (22:9-9). This was another warning not to trust in alliances (Smith 135).” “The old world will end.” “A transformed world will take its place.” “People will be righteous and trust God (26:1-4; Smith 137).” “The steadfast of mind [God will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in [God]. Trust in the Lord forever (26:3-4a).”

IV. Trusting God or Other Nations 28:1-39:8

“God interacted with mankind on the basis of His precepts of justice and their trust in Him (28:23-29; Smith 138).” “The people preferred pleasant words rather than negative ones from a holy God, oppression and military strength rather than a quiet trust in God (30:10-11,15-17; 31:1; Smith 138).” “Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel, ‘Since you have rejected this word and have put your trust in oppression and guile, and have relied on them, therefore this iniquity will be to you like a breach about to fall (30:12-13a).’ “For thus the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, has said, ‘In repentance and rest you will be saved, in quietness and

- trust is your strength (30:15).” “Trust in Egypt will cause shame and not profit (Smith 138).” “Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many (31:1a).” The king of Assyria said, ‘Do not “let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord” (36:14-15).’ “Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, ‘Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the King of Assyria’ (37:10).” “Hezekiah was caught between two strategies. Should he submit to Assyria or trust God (37:1-4; Smith 140)?”
- V. Trusting God for Deliverance 40:1-48:22**
 “Those who trust in God can gain strength for their trials (40:29-31) and insight from His promises and character (41:20; Smith 144).” God will deliver His people and use His people to deliver others (42:6-7). “Why refuse to trust God if He will accomplish these redemptive acts for Israel (Smith 146)?” “They will be turned back and be utterly put to shame, who trust in idols, who say to molten images, ‘You are our gods’ (42:17).” “Some people called themselves the people of Zion and claimed to trust God (48:1-2; Smith 146).” “God’s past faithfulness legitimated the people’s trust in His future acts of salvation (46:8-13; Smith 146).”
- VI. Trusting in God for Salvation 49:1-55:13**
 “Salvation through the servant was possible for those who trusted God (49:8-13).” “Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God (50:10).” “The second series of salvation speeches (51:1-52:12) encouraged those who trusted God (51:1,7) to maintain their present worldview, to remember how God was faithful to His promises to Abram (51:2-4; Ge 12:1; Smith 148).” “The prophet pictured new Jerusalem richly adorned with precious jewels (54:11-17), the people being taught by God (2:2-4), and righteousness governing all behavior. This will be the heritage of those who choose to trust and serve God (Smith 148).” “Trust must be based on what cannot be fully understood (55:8-9) and looks forward to a kingdom that is not yet seen (Smith 153).”
- VII. Trusting in God for Restoration 56:1-66:24**
 Israel’s lack of trust was evidenced in their behavior. “No one sues righteously and no one pleads honestly. They trust in confusion and speak lies (59:4).” “God’s plan was a basis for trust (Smith 151).” “The conclusion of [Isaiah’s] sermon dealt with the final judgment and restoration (63:1-66:24). It challenged the listeners to make a response of trust in God so that they could avoid God’s judgment and enjoy God’s blessing (Smith 151).”

Bibliography

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 R.W.L. Moberly, New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).