



A 14-week devotional bible study to accompany our preaching series through Isaiah

Seeing God

A teaching series for Together Church from Isaiah.

This is a 14-week introductory bible study designed to supplement our preaching series in Isaiah. We cannot possibly cover all of Isaiah in 10-weeks. Therefore this bible study encourages you to read a certain section of Isaiah in your own personal bible study and then answer the questions for that section of scripture.

We would encourage you to read and read again the section each week, and if you have a study bible read the notes to help you. Why not consider chatting them through with a friend or even your spouse each week?

Additionally, make sure you catch each of the Sunday messages on Isaiah which will help give you the 'big picture' through the book. Finally, each week there will be Application notes produced as always to help you apply all you are studying to your own set of circumstances. Please be sure to pick these up on the weekly email and join us midweek to dig deeper in the book.

Introduction

Isaiah 46v5 “With whom will you compare me and count me equal?...I am God and there is none like me”

So why are we studying Isaiah? Put simply the world we are living in is in turmoil. The world is on the brink of a potential ‘third wave’ of Covid-19. The nation is in the transitional phase of BREXIT with the likely economic and social disruption this will cause. Our teenagers are suffering from more mental health problems and eating disorders than ever before. The world seems in utter chaos.

Enter Isaiah; set from 740 – 680 BC. Isaiah served as a prophet during the time when Israel was divided into two Kingdoms; the northern Kingdom of Israel and southern Kingdom of Judah. Isaiah’s ministry saw Judah slowly decline and eventually get carried off into exile at the hands of the Babylonians. He ministered in a time of utter Chaos and yet his message is full of hope for the future. What an apt message for us today. God is sovereign and in control not in spite of, but even through all the seeming chaos around us.

Isaiah 26 times calls God ‘the Holy one of Israel’. The Hebrew word ‘Qadosh’ carries concept of ‘completely set apart’ or ‘entirely in it’s own league’. This is only used 6 times in the rest of the bible. The Israelites have lost their way and Isaiah sees getting a bigger view of God as the only answer to the Israelites problems. Despite their lack of faith, seeing God is the answer. Isaiah’s name literally mean “the Lord who saves”. Isaiah is a book about the salvation plan of a mighty all-powerful God.

The book is clearly split in two halves. The first 39 chapters are known as the **books of Judgment**. This half of the book spells out what God will do to the people of Israel unless they turn from their sinful behaviour.

The final 27 chapters are known as the **book of comfort**. They console the Israelites with God’s love and mercy and a promise of restoration to come.

In Isaiah we have the Bible in miniature. 39 books OT and 27 books of new – all centred around the saviour Jesus Christ. Isaiah reveals God’s character uniquely amongst the OT prophets. Seeing the supremacy, sovereignty and majesty of God, yet also seeing the promised suffering servant Jesus Christ with breathtaking accuracy.

Isaiah further reveals the depths of the Gospel. The first half of Isaiah describes the vast gulf between God’s character and our own. Using the compelling logic of a gifted barrister to pass a guilty verdict on all. Isaiah leads us to an awareness of the depravity of our own sin and the greatness of God’s salvation plan for us. The second half of Isaiah leads us to marvel and wonder at how low God stooped to reconcile man to God. There is truly no one like Him.

As you dwell on these pages, ask God to give you an ever increasing revelation as to the depths of your sin and the outlandish salvation he has attained for you. Ask Him to life your eyes to Him, the maker of the haevens and the earth – for Him the nations are but a “drop in a bucket” (Is 40:15). Ask him to lift your sights off the problems you and the world may face, and to Him – the one who rules sovereign over all things.

Isaiah Reading Plan

See below a reading plan to make sure you cover the whole book of Isaiah by just after Easter. It is not a huge amount of reading each week, but we would encourage you to dig deep in the text, look up cross references, use a study guide etc. But most importantly read the text again and again if you can. Aim to read some of Isaiah everyday Monday to Friday and focus on the questions on the weekend. And remember if you fall behind on you are late getting started, don't worry! This has only been produced to help, serve and encourage you – not to condemn you – if you find the pace wrong or restrictive – just go at your own pace!

Additionally, if you are one of those types that would love to do a little extra study we would highly recommend Alec Motyer's excellent commentary on Isaiah – our preaching team will be digging into this in preparation for the series (however this isn't a light read!). For an accessible read try Phil Moore's excellent 'straight to the heart' series on Isaiah.

Date	Week	Bible Passage - Isaiah
11 th – 15 th Jan	1	1 – 2:21
18 th – 22 nd Jan	2	2:22 – 6:13
25 th – 29 th Jan	3	7:1 – 10:4
1 st – 5 th Feb	4	10:5 – 14:32
8 th – 12 th Feb	5	15:1 – 22:25
15 th – 19 th Feb	6	23:1 – 27:13
22 nd – 26 th Feb	7	28:1 – 32:20
1 st – 5 th Mar	8	33:1 – 37:38
8 th – 12 th Mar	9	38:1 – 41:20
15 th – 19 th Mar	10	41:21 – 45:25
22 nd – 26 th Mar	11	46:1 – 50:3
29 th Mar – 2 nd Apr	12	50:4 – 54:17
5 th – 9 th Apr	13	55:1 – 59:19
12 th – 16 th Apr	14	59:20 – 66:24

Week 1 – God’s People have gone astray

Isaiah 1 – 2:21

Isaiah effectively puts the nation of Judah on trial for their sin at the start of Chapter 1. The people who were supposed to be ‘a holy people’ are now a ‘Sinful nation’ (Isaiah 1:4).

Q1. What are God’s people accused of in Isaiah 1:2-6?

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At first glance, it appears God is rejecting the very acts of worship he previously required of his people in Leviticus.

Q2. From reading verses 10-20, why is God rejecting what he had previously commanded the Israelites to do?

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Application Q1 – In what ways today can we be in danger of being like the people of Judah?

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“How the faithful city has become a whore” (Is 1:21). The covenant God made with Israel after the exodus was viewed as a marriage covenant (Is 54:5). Isaiah uses very strong language here.

Application Q2. This sort of language is very strong and not popular! What does this tell you about God’s view regarding sin?

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In chapter 2 we see in verse 2 a beautiful picture of the nation’s streaming uphill towards ‘the Lord’s temple’. This is Isaiah prophetically looking into the future and seeing the beautiful bride of Christ his church. Read revelation 21:1-3. These nations are the church, the Bride of Christ.

Application Q3. How do you view the church today? Do you see it as God sees it?

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Despite God’s promise we see the people of Judah are putting their trust in other things.

Q3. What ‘things’ can you identify in verses 6 – 8?

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Application Q4. What ‘things’ do we, in a 21st century western culture, put our trust in other than Jesus and how have these been exposed throughout the last year?

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Verse 11 and verse 17 bring to our attention a common theme through Isaiah.

Q4. What is this theme?

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Close by asking God for forgiveness for anything that you have put excessive trust in other than Jesus. Pray that we would be a people who are totally devoted followers of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Week 2 – Encountering the King

Isaiah 2:22 – 6:13

This section begins with 2:22 – a powerful summary to stop trusting in man. Chapter 3 continues to build on this theme explaining the frailness of Jerusalem precisely because of its trust in man rather than God. However, Isaiah 4:2 introduces this concept of a ‘branch of Yahweh’.

Q1. Chapter 4:2-6 describes this branch and its function. What or who is this likely referring to?

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In chapter 5 Isaiah changes tact from a straight word to a prophetic song. People were not heeding the warning of chapters 1 – 4 and so inspired by Psalm 80 Isaiah likens Israel to a vineyard in his well-crafted song. The 7 woes of verse 8 – 30 are picked up by Jesus in Matthew 23 about the leaders in Jerusalem. A stark reminder for us that this text is still relevant today.

Application Q1. Chapter 5:20 talks of calling evil good and good evil? In what areas of our culture is that true today?

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Application Q2. Perhaps more dangerously, in what areas of church and specifically in your life can that be true today?

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BIG PICTURE CONNECTION – Isaiah 5 points to the destruction of those who don’t bear fruit. Although Jesus is the only one who didn’t deserve to be destroyed like the unfruitful vine of Isaiah 5, Jesus took this destruction in our place on the cross. And now, through faith in him, any failed vine can be united to the True Vine and begin to bear good fruit (John 15).

Q2. Read Isaiah 5, Psalm 80 and John 15. How do they relate? What does Jesus mean when he says “I am the true vine”?

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After the sober introduction to Israel’s sinfulness and the promised judgment and grace to come, Isaiah 6 introduces us to Isaiah and his commission to proclaim God’s message.

Q3. How did Isaiah respond when he saw a vision of God in chapter 6:1-5?

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Application Q3. What is the overwhelming characteristic of God that the angels proclaim in verse 3? Does this have any implications for us today?

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Isaiah’s sin is atoned for through the altar, and he is restored and commissioned to proclaim his message, being warned that the people will continue in unbelief. God promises to use Isaiah even though his message will seemingly fall on deaf ears.

Application Q4. Are you facing any situations presently whereby you are being called to persevere without seemingly obvious ‘fruitfulness’?

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Application Q5. Are there any specific things / works / areas of Mission that God has called you to presently? How are you outworking his calling on your life?

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Pray that we would be a people who know what we are called to both individually and corporately. Pray that we would work tirelessly fulfilling God’s call on our lives and persevering in the face of hardship or lack of fruit.

Week 3 – Promise Keeper

Isaiah 7:1 – 10:4

At this point in history, God’s people are divided into two kingdoms, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Israel has formed an alliance with Syria. Ahaz (the king of Judah) refused God’s help and tried to bribe support from the surrounding nations (you can read about this in 2 Kings 16:8).

God again speaks to King Ahaz and instructs him to ask God for a sign (7:10)?

Q1. What is Ahaz response? Why does he respond like this? (did Ahaz really want to know what God would say?)

Application Question 1 – Are there any areas in Life for us that we are busy ‘forming alliances and pressing on’ and we don’t really want God disrupting our plans?

God in his infinite Grace offers the southern Kingdom of Judah the sign of a child called “Immanuel,” which means “God with us” (7:14).

Q2. What could this sign of meant in the original context?

Matthew 1:23 quotes this passage in Isaiah to show that this message was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus. However, in Isaiah judgment continues throughout the rest of chapter 7 and into chapter 8 as the people refuse to listen to God. The Assyrian army will eventually destroy Syria, the northern kingdom of Israel, and even the southern kingdom of Judah for their unbelief. God calls Isaiah and a faithful remnant “not to walk in the way of this people” (Isaiah 8:11-17).

In the midst of God’s judgment, gloom and despair we get an outrageous message of hope in Chapter 9 in this well-known passage.

Application Question 2 – Have you ever felt in a desperate situation that God always brings hope? How do the opening verses of Chapter 9 comfort you in a seemingly hopeless situation personally or in the world today?

Q3. What 4 titles does Isaiah use for this promised son in 9v6? What do these titles tell us about what Jesus is like?

Application Q3. Which of these attributes of the Saviour do you feel least acquainted with? (prayer that God by his Holy Spirit will help you see more of who He is)

Following this majestic hope in the midst of judgment on Judah, Isaiah turns his attention to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Israel follows a similar theme to Judah in that 9:8 – 10:4 follows a hard-hearted refusal to hear the ‘Word of God’ and a confident self-reliance which will not come to pass see 9:8-10).

Q4. What warning do we learn from the people of Israel and Judah’s downfall?

Application Q4. How can we be sure to avoid the same mistakes?

Pray together that the ‘good news’ of the gospel would permeate every area of our lives and society regardless of how hopeless the situation feels. Pray remembering the 4 attributes revealed about Jesus in Chapter 9v6.

Week 4 – Drawing on the Depths

Isaiah 10:5 – 14:32

Chapter 10 continues the theme of judgment but this time on Assyria. After he has used Assyria to judge the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Assyria in turn will be judged for their arrogance.

Q1. What does this tell you about God’s sovereignty over nations and rulers?

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Application Q1. How does this affect the way we see the world today?

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From 10:20 we begin to see the preservation of a remnant and chapter 11 and into 12 bring a future of real hope.

Q2. What is Isaiah referring to at the start of Chapter 11 where he says “a shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse”?

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Q3. Read 2 Samuel 7:12-16. How does this align with Isaiah’s stump of Jesse?

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As you continue to read Isaiah 11 it increasingly refers to the coming Messiah - Jesus. Isaiah 11:6-10 clearly has not yet been fulfilled even though the Messiah has come. This seems to refer more to Christ’s second coming, see Romans 8:18-27 and Revelation 21.

As you start chapter 12 read verses 1–2 with the context of Isaiah commissioning in chapter 6 in mind.

Q4. How does the exulting praise of Isaiah 12:1–2 fit in light of this?

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Isaiah in verse 3 says “with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation”.

Application Q2. How do we practically outwork this on a daily basis?

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Isaiah 13 begins the next section in Isaiah. In the coming chapters Isaiah shows us that God is the sovereign King, who judges all nations and moves all history along according to his gracious purposes. He is always in control.

Chapter 13 prophesies the downfall of the great Superpower Babylon. Although Isaiah is telling the historical events he constantly references “the Day of the Lord”.

Q5. What does Isaiah mean when he says “the Day of the Lord”? Why should Babylon be more terrified of the “Day of the Lord” than the day of their earthly fall?

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The judgment of the nation’s continues into chapter 14 and specifically the devil is alluded to and the context of spiritual warfare appears.

Application Q3. How does knowledge of the ‘superpowers’ being in God’s control and one day facing his judgment affect our view of the world?

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As you finish this week’s readings, pray that you would learn to “Draw water from the wells of salvation” like Isaiah did. You need to know the depravity of your sin, and to dwell in the magnitude of your salvation. As Paul put it in Ephesians 3v16-19;

¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Week 5 – Unequally yoked

Isaiah 15:1 – 22:25

God’s prophetic judgment (or oracles) against the nations continues in these chapters. Often they make difficult reading but it is important to remember the depths of Humanity’s Sin.

Chapter 15 and 16 continues with God’s judgment against the pagan nation of Moab.

Q1. In chapter 15:5 Yahweh is the speaker and he appears moved and compassionate on a sinful idolatorous nation. What does this show you about the character of God?

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Chapter 16:6 show us the root of Moab’s sin. Pride. In verses 4 and 5 Isaiah seems to be suggesting Moab could have been secure if it humbled itself before God. God deals with this pride and arrogance severely. Pride is a killer.

Application Q1. How does this serve as a warning to us today?

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As you read chapters 17 and 18 you see that Isaiah’s next prophecy is against the northern kingdom of Israel; Ephraim. Ephraim sort to secure itself with an alliance with Damascus. Later Jerusalem tried to be self-sufficient – neither time did man’s attempts for security work.

Read Deuteronomy 6:10–19.

Q2. What light does this shed on the condemnation of the northern kingdom of Israel, here referred to as Ephraim (Is 17:4–14)? Note, in particular, Isaiah 17:10.

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When Paul speaks to the church in 2 Corinthians 6:14 about being ‘unequally yoked’ he is speaking of more than just marriage. As Ephraim found out the hard way, putting our trust in the wrong nation/business partner has consequences.

Application Q2. How does this principle affect our workplace/business relationships as Christians today?

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Isaiah continues his oracles into Egypt. These judgments are both ‘Striking and healing’. God proclaims judgment against Egypt (Is 19:1–15) and then restoration for Egypt and the nations (Isa19:16–25).

Q3. Read Revelation 5:9. How is Isaiah 19:16-25 beginning to point to this day?

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Q4. What are the various ways that nations will be blessed, according to Isaiah 19:18–25?

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Read chapter 22 regarding God’s judgment on Jerusalem. Verses 7 to 11 were Jerusalem’s attempts at man-made security. Hezekiah secured the water supply into the city with outstanding engineering. They strengthened their defences. However, Verse 12 shows what God really wanted; dependence on Him.

Application Q3. In what ways can we be like Jerusalem? Securing our defences and supplies instead of turning to our God?

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Close this week with a moment of honesty with yourself. Are you busy focusing on partnerships with pagans? Or building self-sustaining armies and security systems. Pension funds and savings (not that they are wrong in themselves). Or is your security found in Jesus?

Pray that we would be a people that find our security in Him.

Week 6 – True Security

Isaiah 23:1 – 27:13

Following the judgment on Tyre in chapter 23, chapter 24 – 27 bring to a climax God’s judgments on the nations with the message of judgment and salvation for the whole world. There is a ‘safe-haven’ as is revealed in chapter 26:4; “Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the rock Eternal”. This is our true security.

Isaiah 24:1–20 describes the violent dismantling of this present age and it’s replacement with global worship. The people have rejected God’s revealed will in order to construct their own alternative social order. This sin (Is 24:5) leads to a curse (Is 24:6).

Q1. Where else in the Old Testament have we seen this pattern? What are the effects of this curse (Is 24:6–13)?

In Isaiah 25:6-9 we get a glimpse of our future banquet. Jesus himself gave a taste of this banquet with the feeding miracles (Mark 6:30-44 and 8:1-9) and also the parable of the 10 Bridesmaids (Matt 25:1-13)

Q2. What does this passage tell us about the eternal banquet we can look forward to? Specifically what do the descriptions of the food and wine indicate about the way God treats us? What does the repetition of ‘all’ indicate?

Q3. In light of Isaiah 55:1-3, who is invited and how much does it cost to attend this banquet?

Application Q1. How does the promise of a future banquet affect us in the present?

The city is an important image in Isaiah 24–27 (see Is 24:10-12, 25:2, 26:1–2 & 5, 27:10. Isaiah views the entire world culture as a “lofty city” (Is 26:5) because it is a place of imagined safety and prideful self-sufficiency. But God will destroy it and establish a “strong city” for his people.

Q4. What is the primary characteristic of those who will be in God’s city (Is 26:1–4; see also Is 7:9, Is 12:2)?

Application Q2. In what ways is the mind-set of the “lofty city” seen in today’s society, and how are we tempted to embrace it?

We then move into chapter 27 and Isaiah refers back to the vineyard for a third time. (3:13-15, 5:1-7).

Q5. What are the specific ways in which the vineyard story of Isaiah 27:2–5 is similar to that of Is 5:1–7?

Q6. What does the message of Isaiah 27 show us about God when contrasted against the ruined vineyard of Isaiah 5?

Pray that we would be a people that find our true security in Jesus. That we would be a people with an eternal perspective; that one day we would sit at such a glorious banquet table and therefore we would not look for security from the world. We would know that God never abandons us, just like he never abandoned the vineyard.

Week 7 – Take God at his Word

Isaiah 28:1 – 32:20

Chapter 28 signifies the start of a new section of Isaiah which is full of ‘Interim Fulfillments’ which act as assurances that the greatest predictions can be trusted. Fulfillments against Assyria and Israel that were set in context and visibly fulfilled and spoken of here. Warnings of judgment and promises of Grace are strung through this section. Each judgment beginning with the word ‘Woe’.

The first proclamation of woe is against God’s people: The northern kingdom of Israel, here called “Ephraim” (Is 28:1–6), and the southern kingdom of Judah (Is 28:7–13). Because the leaders scoff at Isaiah’s message as beneath their intelligence (Is 28:9–10). God will now only speak to them by the foreign tongue of Assyrian invaders (Is 28:11–13).

Q1. How does this relate to Isaiah 6:9–12?

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Application Q1. How is this also a warning for today?
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Review Isaiah 28:14–16 closely. Jerusalem’s leaders rejoiced over their alliance with Egypt for protection from Assyria.

Q2. Why would Isaiah call their agreement with Egypt a “covenant with death” (Is28:15)? Where is the real source of security?
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God responds to Israel’s sin in verse 16. Read 1 Peter 2:4-8 and Romans 9:33.

Q3. How is this promise ultimately fulfilled in the New Testament?
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In chapter 29 the people of Jerusalem (here called “Ariel”) are rebuked for hypocritical worship. They “honor me with their lips,” God says, “while their hearts are far from me” (Is 29:13). Jesus quotes Isaiah words to the Pharisees in Matthew 15:8–9.

Q4. What does this warning tell us about what God desires from our worship?
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Application Q2. How could this warning apply to us today?
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The stubbornness of Israel described in Isaiah 30:1–17 comes to an unexpected crescendo in verse 18.

Q5. How does God respond to their stubbornness? What does this tell us about God’s character?
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Is 30:19–26 show us how this grace will redeem Israel once they turn from their pact with Egypt. Assyria will then be dealt with. Chapter 31 continues to promise that security does not lie with the Egyptians or earthly allegiance but with God.

Reflect on whether your security lies more with people or God. Pray and ask God for his help to see him as the True security. Ask God to help you worship from the heart and not as the Pharisees did.

Week 8 – Ahaz, Hezekiah and obedience?

Isaiah 33:1 – 37:38

As you begin to read into this section. Chapters 33 – 35:10 present an eschatological view. Although we can see some historical events it is far less clear and primarily concerned with eternity.

Q1. What does Isaiah 34 teach us about eternal judgment?

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Application Q1. How is this relevant to us today?

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Note here that the judgment described in chapter 34 seems to be an intensification of the curse put on humanity at creation (Isaiah 34; see Gen. 1:2; Gen 3:17–18), while salvation is described as a reversal of the curse and restoration of pre-fall flourishing (Isaiah 35; Genesis 1–2).

Q2. What in these chapters leads to such conclusions?

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The command of 35:4 to “be strong and do not fear” is echoed throughout scripture. Why should we be strong? The rest of verse 4 encourages the Israelites that “your God will come”. When we fear, the answer is not to ‘steel ourselves’ but to put our trust in the ultimate security found in Jesus.

Application Q2. What fears are you carrying in life presently?

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Chapters 36 and 37 are grounded back in history with King Hezekiah. In 701 BC Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, sent an army with Rabshakeh, an Assyrian military officer, to Jerusalem to pressure King Hezekiah to surrender.

Q3. In what ways is the situation described in Isa 36:1–9 similar to that of Isa 7:1–9, which involved Hezekiah’s father, Ahaz?

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Q4. How does Hezekiah respond differently to his Father before Him? (see 37:1-2, Isaiah 7:10-12)

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Application Q3. How do we respond when God is trying to speak to us? Are we ready to listen to Him?

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Hezekiah was ready to listen where Ahaz his father in his arrogance refused help from God. Are we ready to respond when God speaks to us or are we too busy going our own way? Pray that each of us would be soft-hearted and ready to hear from God which direction he wants us to go.

Week 9 – Bad choices

Isaiah 38:1 – 41:20

As you enter into Isaiah 38, you enter into a new section of Isaiah. Isaiah 38 to 55 comprises the book of the servant and largely begins to prophesy more clearly that these promises will be fulfilled through a servant King – ultimately through Jesus Christ.

At the outset however, Isaiah focuses on Hezekiah. It is worth noting historically the events of chapters 38 and 39 happened before chapters 36 and 37. God showed great mercy on Hezekiah and allowed him to live another 15 years (see 38v1-5). However, Hezekiah’s great sin is to forget the promises of God and in his fear of Assyria be lured into partnership with Babylon (39:1-8) contrary to God’s command. Ultimately it was showing off to Babylon that led to Judah’s downfall. Look up 2 Chronicles 32:24-31.

Q1. What does this teach us about King Hezekiah?

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Application Q1 – Do we ever seek to impress others like Hezekiah did instead of giving all the glory to God?

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Through Isaiah, God tells Hezekiah of his people’s future exile, when everything “shall be carried to Babylon” (Is 39:6).

Read 2 Kings 24:10–25:21. Jerusalem fell and the people were exiled to Babylon as Isaiah prophesied.

Q2. What were the key events in the exile of Judah?

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As soon as Hezekiah’s downfall is prophesied, Isaiah shifts his gaze back to the outrageous promises of God in Isaiah 40 – 42. He no longer addresses just his 8th century BC contemporaries but rather addresses the future exiled generations in Babylon (Babylonian exile was 586 BC).

Q3. What are the key messages of comfort in Isaiah 40:1-11 for the exiled people in Babylon?

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Q4. What attribute of God do each of the following verses draw out?

40:12.....

40:12-14.....

40:15-17.....

40:22-23.....

40:25-28.....

Isaiah 40:12-31 shows God is the creator and therefore powerful to deliver his comforting promise of 40:1-11. In Isaiah 41 – Isaiah offers a second guarantee – Yahweh is the world ruler and guardian of his people.

Application Q2. What life circumstances are you going through presently where you are doubting some of God’s promises over your life? How do these chapters help to reassure you?

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Pray that we would be a people that remember the vastness and immensity of our Creator and that this would give us a confidence in our Faith and in Life, knowing he is sovereign, powerful and faithful.

Isaiah 10 – God’s surprising deliverance plan

Isaiah 41:21 – 45:25

Isaiah 41 and into 42 looks at the promised saviour. Initially in Isaiah 42:1-9 the Servant is best explained as a true and faithful Israel. It is the nation as it should be, faithful to their calling and mission.

Q1. Who is the ‘true servant’? What is this servant called to do?

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Application Q1. How do these verses act as a comfort to us when we think on what God has called us to do?

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In 42:18-25 Isaiah turns his attention to Israel – who is also frequently referred to as God’s ‘servant’. In the early verses of Isaiah 42 he describes a servant who will change the entire world. However, he then states quite clearly that the nation of Israel is, in no way up to the task and a greater servant is needed.

Q2. What do these verses tell us about the nation of Israel?

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Application Q2. In what way do these verses serve as a warning to us?

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Chapters 43 and 44 continue to expand on Israel’s sin and God’s redemption plan with a particular focus on forgiveness from sin. Isaiah 43:25 perhaps sums up this section – It is the Lord who “blots out your transgressions”. This section is a timely reminder that only God can save and forgive sins. There is nothing you or I can do to “add to our salvation”.

Application Q3. In what ways do you get tempted to try to ‘add to your salvation’?

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Isaiah 44:6-23 focuses on idolatry. Again highlighting that there is only one true God.

Application Q4. What are the god’s of the age today in 21st Century Western culture? How should we respond to these false gods? (Read Isaiah 41:21-24)

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In Isaiah 44:24–45:8, we hear of God’s surprising plan to use Cyrus the Great, leader of the rising Persian empire, to conquer Babylon and release Israel to return to their land.

Q3. How does Israel respond to this plan (Is 45:9–10)?

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Q4. How does God reply (Is 45:11–13)?

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God’s plan is not always what we expect. Yet he is God and not us. God’s plan is also often bigger than we realise. Here he goes beyond the return of his people to Jerusalem. He has worldwide salvation on his radar. (Is 45:14–25).

Q5. What does Paul’s use of Isaiah 45:23 in Philippians 2:9–11 tell us about the One to whom the world must submit?

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Pray that we would catch a glimpse of God’s bigger plan for us. Thank God for his incredible deliverance plan in sending Israel’s true servant Jesus Christ. Thank God for his incredible promises in Isaiah 42:1-9 about Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 11 – His Glory, not ours

Isaiah 46:1 – 50:3

Chapter 46 begins with a prediction of the fall of Babylon’s gods. However powerful these gods felt, in the present situation and captivity to the Israelites, God is completely sovereign over them and they will pale into insignificance.

As you start reading chapter 46 notice the stark contrast between the false gods of Babylon and the real God.

Q1. What trait in particular is contrasted in the first 5 verses of Isaiah 46?

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Q2. What is the second contrast in verses 5 – 13?

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The reality of our mighty God does not always feel as clear as in this passage. When facing a ‘god of this age’ remind yourself of this powerful contrast. These Babylonian gods who felt irresistibly powerful at the time were pathetic compared with the true and living God.

The theme of Babylon falling continues in chapter 47 and 48 with the return home of the exiles. However, chapter 48 shows that although some of the Israelites were coming out of exile and physically coming home their hearts are still far from God.

Q3. How does chapter 48:1-8 show that in many ways the Israelites are just as sinful as the Babylonians?

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Verses 9 – 11 reveal God’s motive for restoring the people of Israel. Read God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.

Q4. How do these two passages relate to one another?

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Some people may struggle with God’s glory being his greatest motive. However, it lifts our eyes off ourselves. God’s will is for your good and his glory. It goes very wrong when we get this the wrong way round and think it is about our glory!

Application Q1. In what ways in our individualistic culture can we get it the wrong way round and think God wants to glorify us?

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Application Q2. What have the first 50 chapters of Isaiah taught us about what God thinks when we get this the wrong way round?

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Isaiah 49 brings the second ‘servant song’ (the first was Isaiah 42). Israel will return from exile in Babylon but the problem of Sin will still remain. We learned back in Isaiah 42 that Israel failed to be the ‘light to the nations’ they were called to be. But in chapter 49 we have our answer, the promised Messiah Jesus Christ.

Q5. Look up Hebrews 4v15. How does verse 4 relate to this?

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Application Q3. How does this aspect of Jesus comfort you throughout trial and discouragement?

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Q6. Pick out the promises of God fulfilled in Jesus in chapter 49

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As you finish today, re-read Isaiah 49 and thank God for his promises fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Reflect on the fact that your life is all about his Glory. Pray that we would delight in this truth as his followers.

Isaiah 12 – An unlikely King

Isaiah 50:4 – 54:17

We approach Holy ground indeed as we approach some of the most powerful scriptures from Isaiah. As the servant King Jesus is displayed in chapters 50 and 51 into chapters 52 and 53 there is a clear focus on the ‘sin-bearing’ work of our Lord and servant King Jesus Christ.

In the next section of the servant song we see the servant sustaining others through his teaching.

Q1. What, specifically, do we learn about Jesus in Isa 50:4-9?

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Into chapter 52 Israel longs for God to “awake” from his supposed slumber and redeem them (Is 51:9–11). God turns their cry back on them, calling them to “awaken” because redemption draws near.

Q2. What are the central elements of this glad proclamation of salvation in Is 52:7–11?

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Read and re-read 52:13 onwards and 53.

Q3. Look up the following passages. Find which passages in Isaiah they are quoting from. What do they display about how the NT writers interpreted Isaiah’s prophecies?

1 Peter 2:22-25

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Acts 8:32-35

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Q4. Read chapter 53:10. Who was ultimately responsible for putting Jesus on the cross? What does this tell us about God?

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We have no understanding for a love like this. Read 1 John 4:7-12. This reminds us what Isaiah 53:10 was for. We have been receivers of the most incredible love through the atoning work of Jesus.

Application Q1. How does John immediately point to how we outwork this love? Are you outworking His great Love today with those around you? Who is God calling you to love more today?

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Isaiah 54 and 55 then gives the consequence of this great sacrifice. Here he starts with Zion (Israel) in chapter 54 and then to the world in chapter 55.

Q5. How does Isaiah use the metaphors of Israel as a barren woman (Is 54:1–3) and widow (Is 54:4–8) to show the glorious salvation provided by the servant’s work? What is he trying to show us?

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Read 54:10. Look up Psalm 89:34 and Romans 8:38 – 39.

Application Q2. How does this triplet of promises assure and comfort us?

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Finish marvelling at the outrageous work of what Jesus did for us as the suffering servant. Thank God for his sacrifice. If you study this passage with a friend, break bread and wine together.

Isaiah 13 – A Great Invitation

Isaiah 55:1 – 59:19

The great invitation of Isaiah 54 now extends to the world in Isaiah 55. The living water of eternal Life is spoken of by Jesus himself to the women at the well in John 4:14. Those who drink from this water will never thirst again. Jesus is to be our ultimate satisfaction; he quenches every thirst.

Q1. Read Isaiah 55:6 and then 2 Corinthians 6:1-2. What do these 2 passages tell us about the urgency of the message?

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Application Q1. How should this affect the way we live?

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Q2. Isaiah 55:8-9 are very commonly quoted. In the context of Isaiah what does it mean?

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Application Q2. What do verses 10 and 11 suggest to us about the power of sharing the gospel? How is this both a comfort to us when it seems to fall on deaf ears and also a provocation to us?

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As we read Isaiah 56 to 59 we see historically the waiting captives returning from Babylon. However, although in one sense they have been ‘saved’ they are still awaiting their ultimate salvation through the blood of Jesus.

Application Q3. Read Isaiah 56:1. In what sense are we ‘saved’ and yet still awaiting our salvation?

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Q3. What does God promise to give the foreigners who trust in him (Is 56:6–8)?

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Q4. How does Is 56:8 expand the vision of Is 11:11–12? How does this shed light on what Jesus says in John 10:16?

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A common term of phrase is found in Isaiah 57:21 – “there is no peace... for the wicked”

Q5. In the context of Isaiah 57 what does this mean?

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Q6. On the contrary verses 14-19 seem to point to those who ‘find peace’. What are the characteristics of this group? Contrast these with the characteristics found in v-13.

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Application Q4. How do we make sure we are those that stay humble and contrite?

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Q7. What does true godliness look like, according to Isaiah 58:6–14? How does this provide a similar picture to what we read in James 1:27?

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Application Q5. What might this look like today?

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Pray that we would always be humble and always thirst after God. Pray also that we would proclaim the gospel boldly and clearly knowing “it will not return empty”.

Isaiah 14 – The Saviour changes everything!

Isaiah 59:20 – 66:24

Here enters with a suddenness the Servant of the Lord. But this time not as a suffering servant but as a conquering King.

Q1. What two things mark out the saviour in Is 59v21?

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Isaiah 60 foresees humanity uniting together in knowing the true God. God’s glory will be displayed for his people as a light shining in darkness.

Q2. What will the nations do at this time (Is 60:3–9)?

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Q3. Read Revelation 21:22-27. Although the fulfilment of Is 60:3-9 has begun in Jesus incarnation, what does this passage in revelation suggest?

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Application Q1. How do we live in light of the truth of revelation 21:22-27? How does it affect us on a daily basis?

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Q4. Read Luke 4:16–21. What does Jesus’ quotation of Is 61:1–2 teach us about his identity and mission?

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Some interpreters have noted that Jesus stopped his quotation mid-sentence, leaving out, “and the day of vengeance of our God” (Is 61:2)

Q5. Does this imply there is a difference between the primary agendas of his first and second comings? If so what is the difference?

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Q6. As you read into Isaiah 63v1-6 read revelation 19v11-16. How does this give us a greater understanding of what Jesus will do when he returns?

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Isaiah 63:7 to 64:12 is an extended prayer. Where the people of God are calling on God and remembering all he has done. Focus in on Isaiah 64:4.

Application Q2. How do we apply this verse in our walk with God today?

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In Isaiah 65 and 66 the prayer has now ended. Isaiah ends with a vision of two contrasting eternal destinies.

The Faithful remnant from every nation worshiping God in his new creation (Is 66:19–23) will be gloriously blessed. The second destiny is eternal destruction (Is 66:15–18, 24).

Q7. What is Isaiah seeking to accomplish in the readers by ending with these two divergent destinies?

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Application Q3. Read back to chapter 65:17-25. How do these verses comfort and motivate us to persevere until the end in the midst of suffering and hardship?

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Close by praying that we would catch a glimpse of the conquering saviour. That one day he will rule and reign again. Thank God together that he did not treat us as our sins deserved but showed grace. Also pray for those who don’t yet know Jesus as their Lord and saviour.