

rockypc SERIES COMPANION 2026

THE HOLY GOD

ISAIAH

*growing
disciples*
sacrifice. serve. speak

THE HOLY GOD

ISAIAH

growing disciples
sacred space

AUTHOR, DATE, GENRE

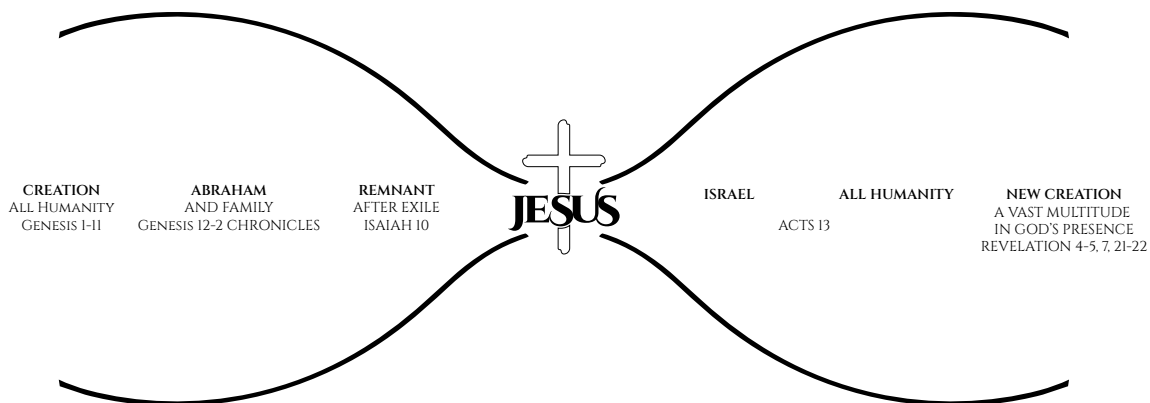
The Prophet Isaiah lived in the city of Jerusalem, in the southern nation of Judah, during the reigns of 4 kings (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah — 1v1). This means he proclaimed God's word to them at some point during their reigns from 783 BC to 686 BC. Even though Isaiah lived before Judah was exiled to Babylon in 597 BC, the looming exile dominates Isaiah's oracles in Ch 1-39. However, he seems to have received words of comfort and hope from the Lord for after Judah's return to their homeland in 538 BC.

It is thought that Isaiah's disciples compiled his prophecies in the 6th Century. However this process happened, Isaiah is one majestic book that speaks of the judgement of the holy God who is king over all the earth, who will also bring salvation through his Servant-Messiah.

Isaiah is a prophetic book, which means he proclaimed God's word. This is not simply about predicting the future. Prophets reflected on Israel's history and God's character to speak his words of warning and words of hope. The book is largely oracles spoken in poetry, that Isaiah heard from God. There are also visions, short narratives and a larger section of narrative in the centre.

Often prophecies have layers of fulfillment. For example, King Ahaz is given the sign of a son born to a young woman in 7v14 where God is with the people (Immanuel) in judgement. This son is born to Isaiah and his wife in 8v1-4, as Assyria come to raze the land. But Matthew tells us that the sign had another layer as a young woman bears a son, Immanuel, who would save God's people from their sins (Matthew 1v20-23). This is the way prophecy often functions with multiple layers/iterations of fulfillment. There is a near fulfillment and far fulfillments.

As we think about prophecy and fulfillment, the storyline of the Bible is our guide to understand how/when various layers happen. The storyline of the Bible can be described by the image below.



The Bible begins with the whole of humanity on view in Creation (Genesis 1-11), but narrows down to 1 man and his family (Abraham declared righteous because he believed God, Genesis 12- 2 Chronicles). In the exile, the story narrows further to a remnant who are faithful (Isaiah 10v20-23), before finally narrowing to the one faithful man, Jesus (Hebrews 2v14-3v6) and then flowing out through Israel, to the whole of humanity (Acts 13v1-38) to a glorious New Creation (Revelation 21v1-3).

So we can ask where a particular part of the Bible fits in the story, and where we see a prophecy being fulfilled in different layers, near and far. For example, Isaiah says that exile will mean God's people dying of hunger and thirst (5v13), recalling the abundant food and water of Eden (Genesis 1v27-31; 2v4-14), which was lost at the Fall as food came by painful toil (Genesis 3v17-19), and yet Israel had experienced anew in the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 27v1-3).

In this context, Isaiah prophesies a day of feasting to come (Isaiah 25v6-8) and abundant water (Isaiah 35v5-7). Judah returns to the land to feast (Nehemiah 8), but a hunger and thirst remains until Jesus' day (Matthew 5v3-10), where he is Bread from Heaven (John 6v25-35) and Living Water (John 7v37-39).

This flows on to us by believing in Jesus. And we look forward to a final fulfillment in the New Heavens and Earth (Revelation 22v1-5). So we can see how Isaiah's prophecy fits into the whole story of the Bible, finding its fulfillment in Jesus, where the promises flow on to us now and into the future.

ISAIAH'S POETRY

The poems which form a large part of Isaiah are conveyed through Hebrew poetic conventions. A prominent feature is parallelism, where lines come in tandem to reinforce, emphasise and move the idea forward. For example, 1v3 says:

*The ox knows its master,
the donkey its owner's manger,
but Israel does not know,
my people do not understand.*

The ox matches the donkey in knowing who owns it, and who provides for it. But the donkey is a notoriously more stubborn and stupid animal than an ox. And even more stupid are the people who don't know who they belong to and who provides for them (as God their Father does, 1v2).

Isaiah uses an array of poetic metaphors in his descriptions of the people he is talking to and about. For example, Jerusalem is a prostitute 1v21, the mighty are compared with dried out wood and a fire spark in 1v30-31 and all Israel are a fruitless vineyard in Ch 5.

Another poetic device in Isaiah is the repeating of patterns and themes across the book. For example, the fruitless vineyard of Israel (Ch 5) will be cut down to a stump (Ch 6), before a shoot will emerge from Jesse's family and he will be a Branch that bears fruit and bring the righteousness God was looking for (Ch 11).

Isaiah's poems contain a lot of word plays that are harder to access in our English Translations. For example, our NIV translation renders 5v7b

*And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed;
for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.*

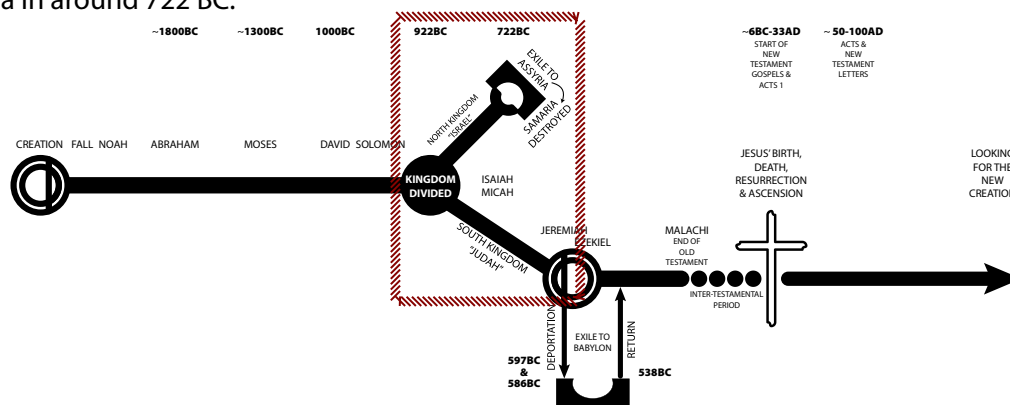
The wordplay in Hebrew is the God looked for *mishpat* (justice) but found *mishpach* (bloodshed); for *sadaqah* (righteousness) and instead found *sa'akah* (cries of the oppressed). While we can't see all of these word plays in our English translations, we can get a sense of the beauty and rhythm of Isaiah's poetry. God communicates to us in a variety of ways. And poetry speaks to our hearts in a different way from narrative or a letter. The poems Isaiah tells have a modern parallel in things like protest songs, that are spoken in social/political critique.

ISAIAH THE MAN

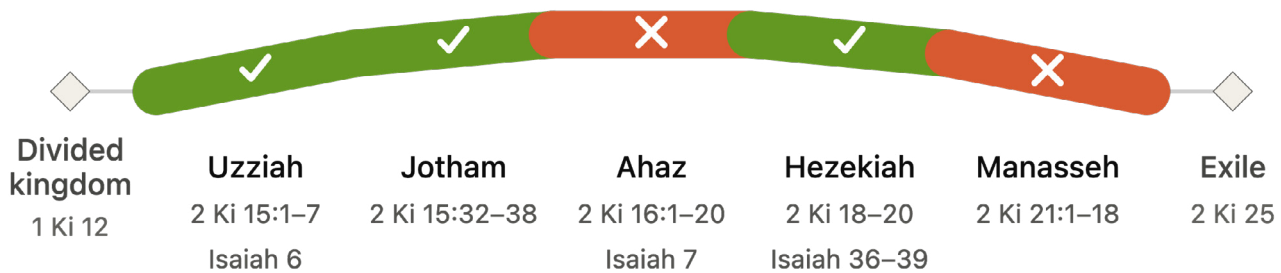
Isaiah's father is named Amoz. But we know little else about who he was beyond the glimpses we get of him in his book. Isaiah himself is part of the prophecies, as he receives a vision of God's glorious throne room and is seared in atonement for his sins in Ch 6. Here he is sent as a messenger to the people, knowing he will not be received by hard hearts and deaf ears. His children are named as part of God's warnings in Ch 7 & 8. And Isaiah walks through the city barefoot and naked in Ch 20, as a sign that Assyria will shame the nations of Egypt and Cush, who are Israel's enemies. Tradition says that Isaiah was martyred and sawed in two by King Manasseh (cf Hebrews 11v37).

ISAIAH'S WORLD

Isaiah appeared in the courts of several kings of the nation of Judah. These kings had descended from King David, and ruled from the capital, Jerusalem. To their north was the nation of Israel. Judah and Israel split in around 930 BC, and you can read about it in 1 Kings 12. The two nations often saw each other as enemies, for example in Ch 7, Israel make an alliance with the nation of Aram to march against Jerusalem. The northern nation of Israel was exiled to Assyria in around 722 BC.



922 BC 792–740 BC 750–732 BC 732–716 BC 716–687 BC 687–642 BC 597, 586 BC

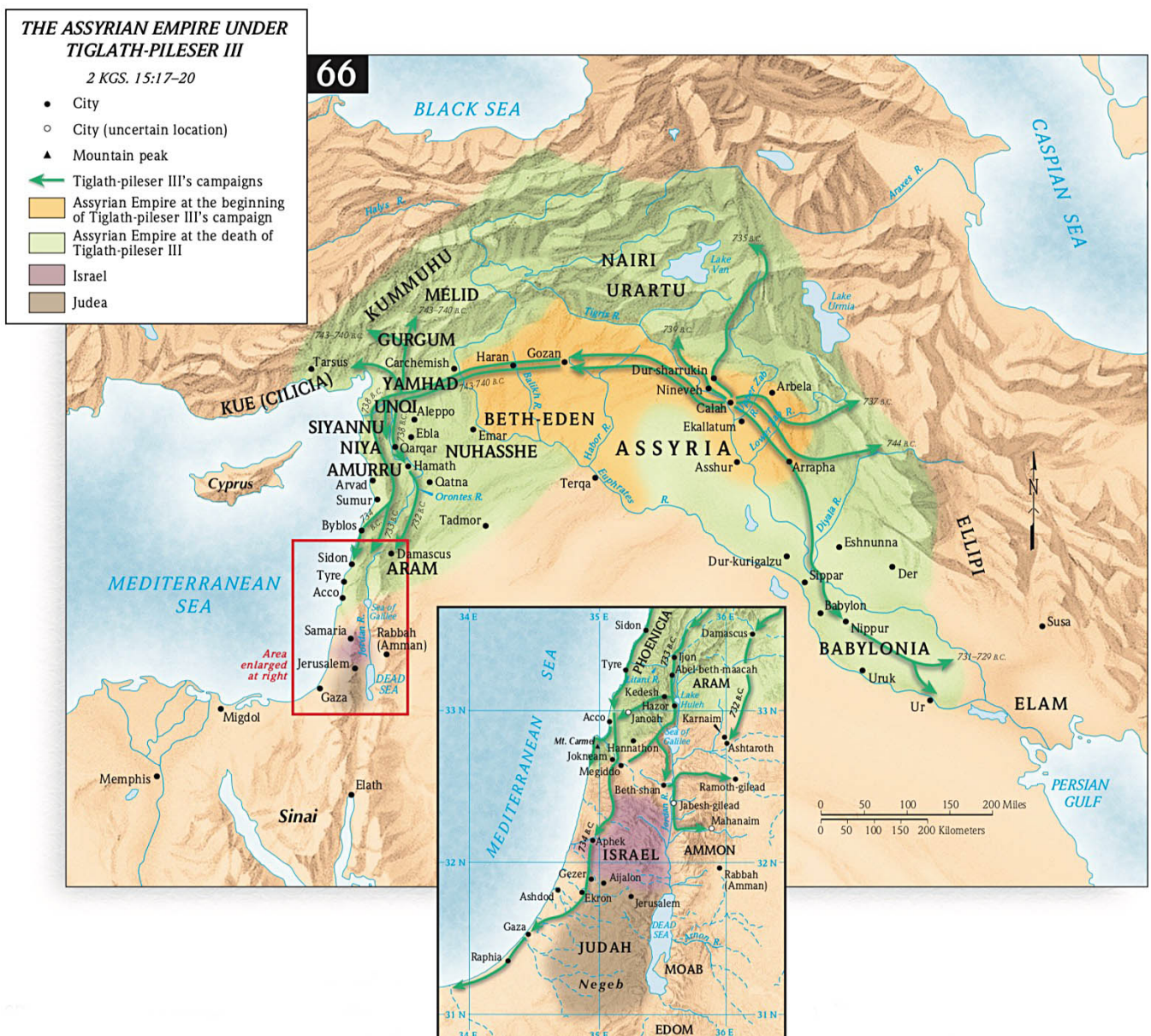


Assyria was rising as a super-power in the region at this time. They were conquering other nations and God's people feared them. At various times, they tried to make alliances to shore up their position against Assyria. The chief example of this is when King Hezekiah tried to impress envoys of the Babylonian king (Ch 39).

This backfired, when Babylon returned to plunder Judah, destroy their land, subjugate and exile them. Babylon emerged as the next Ancient Near East super-power. Isaiah tells us that without their realising it, he used Babylon to punish his people.

Isaiah speaks warnings from God about the destruction of both of these nations, along with numerous other neighbouring countries in Ch12-24. Judah has been in conflict with all of these nations since Genesis 10. These nations angered God by their idolatry and the way they treated his people over their history. It is not just the named nations who will suffer under God's right judgement, all the earth will be laid waste. And yet, we are surprised to hear that God plans to ultimately bring all of the nations to worship him in peace (Ch 2).

See the map below to get a sense of where all of these nations are.



EXILE

While there are large sections of Isaiah devoted to the judgement on the nations, it is Judah who is most held accountable. They were God's children, loved and saved by him. They had his law, priests and sacrifices and were in covenant relationship with him. But they were unclean, worshiping idols, oppressing each other and pridefully turning away from the LORD. His righteous judgement on them is exile. Isaiah helps us appreciate the horror of exile. God had promised his people a land where he'd abundantly bless them (Genesis 12v1-7). He redeemed them and brought them to the land (Exodus-Joshua). As they stood at the edge of this land, he promised blessings if Israel kept the covenant and curses if they didn't, including exile (Deuteronomy 28-30). Through Israel's history in the land, they failed repeatedly and yet God was gracious time after time, until his patience finally ran out.

Not only did the people lose the land and its blessing in horrible circumstances when they were exiled (Lamentations), but the temple was also destroyed — symbolising God's presence departing with no way of atoning for their sins (Ezekiel 10). Furthermore, God had installed David's family as kings over his people to bring rest in an everlasting kingdom (2 Samuel 7). The line of kings was held accountable for their many failures throughout their history. In exile, they were deposed and humiliated (2 Kings 25).

Isaiah tells of the coming exile in graphic terms as a warning to a people he knew wouldn't listen. And yet, out of the ashes of exile, he promises hope over and over again. The Day of the Lord was not just a day for judgement, but also one of beautiful restoration of the people, the land, blessing, the king and the temple. The king God raises up will rule with wisdom, justice and righteousness. And all nations, and all the earth are swept up in this hope.

STRUCTURE OF ISAIAH

Ch 1-35 Poems of judgement on Judah, Israel and the surrounding nations, with notes of hope in a king from the line of David

Ch 36-39 Narrative of 3 episodes in the life of Hezekiah — a siege by Assyria, the king is ill and an envoy from the increasingly powerful Babylon

Ch 40-66 Poems of comfort and hope for exiles returning home and for all nations, with are brought about through the suffering of a faithful servant

CONNECTIONS WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT

Isaiah's prophecies are frequently quoted and alluded to throughout Jesus' life and in the apostles works and writings. It is a hugely influential book in their understanding of Jesus and the salvation he brings. For example, see Luke 4v14-21; John 12v37-41; Acts 8v26-35.

READING ISAIAH

We are going to spend this term working through Isaiah 1-39 in our GROWTH GROUPS. This will mean large sections every week, so we aren't going to be able to study every chapter in detail. Instead, we will look at how Isaiah develops a variety of themes to convey to the people the holiness of God their king, who comes in judgement and salvation. To help you get a sense of the whole book, the SERIES COMPANION contains a reading plan to cover Ch1-39 at home. There will be 5 readings per week.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS SERIES COMPANION

ON YOUR OWN — If you have time, work through the questions before your GROWTH GROUP so that you've started thinking about the passage before you arrive. You can dig deeper into Isaiah by reading a smaller part each day and answering the questions. You can follow the Bible Reading plan, where you will gain even more riches from Isaiah.

WITH YOUR GROWTH GROUP — Don't be afraid to stop and talk about things that grab your attention or raise questions for you.

ON SUNDAY — Make sure you bring your SERIES COMPANION along with you, so that you can keep track of any questions you have and record the way that God's Spirit is helping you to understand His Word and grow in your love for Jesus.

These series companions are designed to be used as either a print version, or interactively on a device. Use whichever method is most helpful for you.

THE VINEYARD

ISAIAH 1-5

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

DAY ONE

READ ISAIAH 1

1. What stands out to you about God? About his people?
2. What emotions do you think God is displaying towards the people of Judah?

READ JAMES 1v26-27

3. How is James' diagnosis similar to Isaiah's? What will you ask God to change in you as you repent?

DAY TWO

READ ISAIAH 2

1. What is upended in the day Isaiah sees coming?

READ EPHESIANS 2v11-22

2. How do we experience the fulfillment of peace coming to all nations in the holy temple?
3. Spend a few minutes exalting the Lord who comes near, in splendor and majesty, shaking the earth. Is there a song you want to sing to him?

DAY THREE

READ ISAIAH 3-4v1

1. Who is the Lord holding responsible here?
2. How does the Lord side with the poor and vulnerable?

READ MARK 10v42-45

3. How are Jesus' disciples to lead, as they follow his example? Pray that Jesus' ransom would transform the way you lead and care for others.

DAY FOUR

READ ISAIAH 4v2-6

1. What picture do you get of Zion?

READ EXODUS 40v34-38

2. How does Isaiah see something even better than what Israel had in the tabernacle?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 4v4-6; HEBREWS 12v22-24

3. How have we already come to experience the hope of Isaiah?

DAY FIVE

READ ISAIAH 5

1. How does this image of God's judgement on his people impact you? Is he acting justly and righteously?

READ MARK 12v1-12

2. How is the vineyard story about Jesus himself?

READ PHILIPPIANS 1v9-11

3. Pray this prayer for yourself and for **rockypc**.

GROWTH GROUP STUDY
ISAIAH 1-5

What gardening effort are you most proud of? What did you grow? What did it take to grow it?

Isaiah is a prophet to the Southern nation of Judah in the 8th-7th Centuries BC. He warned God's people of their impending exile to Babylon because of their persistent sinfulness. Isaiah also speaks to the surrounding nations of God's holy judgement on them too. But God's justice is always accompanied by his salvation. Isaiah tells of the future hope for God's people and how he will save them.

We are covering a number of chapters most weeks, so we are going to read the highlights package.

You can go into more depth by reading a smaller part each day by using the READING NOTES.

Today, we are reading Ch 1-5 which is like an introduction to the whole book, raising a number of themes that Isaiah is going to develop throughout the book. We will just focus on one of these themes, as we notice the others along the way.

As we read through Isaiah, we'll notice lots of things about God.

NOTE DOWN WHAT YOU SEE OF GOD'S CHARACTER IN THE BOXES ON EACH PAGE FOR QUICK REFERENCE.

At the end of each study, we will spend some time delighting in all God's majesty and beauty.

READ ISAIAH 1v1

1. What do we learn about Isaiah?

Later on, see the records of these 4 kings in 2 Kings 15-20

READ ISAIAH 1v2-6

2. What is the Lord's relationship with the people of Judah like?

Isaiah Theme: Children/sons

READ ISAIAH 1v7-20

3. What is wrong with the people's sacrifices?

Isaiah Theme: The Temple

READ ISAIAH 1v21-31

4. How does the Lord promise to respond to his tainted people?

Isaiah Theme: The City of Jerusalem, aka Zion

READ ISAIAH 2v1-5

5. What appeals to you about this imagery?

Isaiah Theme: The Mountain

READ ISAIAH 2v6-22

6. How had Israel modeled themselves on the nations around them?

7. What does Isaiah say it will be like on the day God rises to shake the earth?

Isaiah Theme: The Day of the Lord

READ ISAIAH 5v1-17

8. What does the story of the vineyard teach Judah about themselves and their fate?

Isaiah Theme: The Garden

READ ISAIAH 4v2-6

9. How does this promise give hope in light of the judgement God had promised would fall on his people?

READ LUKE 3v1-18

10. With Isaiah 1-5 in mind, what is the significance of the coming person John announces?

READ JOHN 15v1-17

11. How can we be fruitful, as the people of God?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

What did you love to hear about God's character as you read today?



SEEKING GOD

How have your life/attitudes/thoughts/emotions been challenged? Where do you need to repent?

How does Jesus' call to remain in him and his love bring hope and restoration when we realise our sinfulness?



SEEKING GOD

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God for his majesty, splendour and glory. He is exalted above all else.
- Praise his just and right judgement of our sinfulness. Confess that we are rebellious, proud, hypocritical, unclean, uncaring and don't stand up to help the vulnerable.
- Thank God that he longs to restore and to save people from all nations.
- Praise him for purifying us through Jesus, the one who came to cleanse and judge.
- Pray that we would remain in Jesus and in his love.
- Pray that we would bear the fruit that God is looking for as we love one another.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ISAIAH 6

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

DAY ONE

READ ISAIAH 6v1-7

1. Try to imagine seeing what Isaiah saw. What grips you about this image? Do you think you'd respond like Isaiah?
2. Do you tend to think of God as the Holy, Almighty King of all the earth? Or do you gravitate more to seeing him as Father or Friend (both Biblical images!). How does seeing God's holiness grow your understanding and love for him?
3. Spend a few minutes delighting in the incomparably, inexhaustibly, incomprehensibly holy, holy, holy Lord Almighty. Is there a song you want to sing to him about his holiness?

There is an excerpt on page 12 to help you think further about what it means for God to be holy.

DAY TWO

READ REVELATION 4-5

1. How does John's vision overlap with Isaiah's?
2. What is so praiseworthy about Jesus?
3. Pour out your heart to the holy God and his glorious Son. Worship our God and his salvation.

DAY THREE

READ ROMANS 3v25-26

1. How are our sins atoned for?

READ TITUS 3v3-7

2. How are we cleansed from our impurity?

READ COLOSSIANS 1v19-23

3. How are we reconciled to a holy God?
Spend some time thanking him now.

DAY FOUR**READ ISAIAH 6v8-13**

1. Do you think it's fair that God deliberately closes his peoples' eyes and hearts?
Read Romans 9v14-24; Acts 28v23-28 for Paul's thoughts on it.

2. What do you think is so bad about the exile as it is described in v11-13? What does it mean for God's promises to the family of Abraham/Israel of a wonderful land, like in Genesis 12v1-7 and Deuteronomy 7v7-11.

3. How is Jesus our one hope in hard-heartedness and judgement? Thank him now.

DAY FIVE**READ MARK 4v1-29**

1. Jesus' parables aren't clever illustrations in a sermon to make the point clearer. What is their role?
2. Who has ears to hear in this story?
3. How can you know what kind of soil your heart is? What is your prayer for your heart? For others'?

'What does it mean to confess that the King is holy? Some people work through etymology; that is, the bits and pieces that go into a word, to try and understand its meaning, and they argue that it means that God is separate; he is different from us.

But when the angels in Isaiah 6 or in Revelation 4 say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty," are they merely saying, "Separate, separate, separate is the Lord God Almighty"? Loses a bit, doesn't it? Nor will it do to render this as simply, "Moral, moral, moral," although we'll see this God as a God of justice.

As far as I can see, the whole notion of holiness, about which nowadays we sing a great deal in contemporary songs as well as in older hymns, as far as I can see in the Bible, the word holy has concentric circles of meaning, and you've got to watch the context closely. At its heart, when it applies to God, it is almost an adjective for God. It is almost a way of saying, "God alone is God. There is no other."

How do you describe a God who is transcendent? Whose purity is whiter than driven snow? Whose love far outstrips the most wonderful mother love? Who is more nourishing than the best of foods? Who is more entrancing than a million twinkling stars? Who is more beautiful than a spectacular sunset in the Rockies? Who is just better? He is so unabashedly good that there is nothing better than he is? He is the best. How do you describe a God like that with terms that all seem too small?

This is why Christian theologians who have tried to study the use of the word holy with respect to God see his holiness as in some ways the integrating characteristic, the integrating attribute of God. Not love. God is perfectly loving, and he is perfectly righteous, and he is good. And he is wise, and he is powerful, and all the rest. But so much so that he is....

What can you say? We are out of words. He is God. He is holy. "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!"

GROWTH GROUP STUDY
ISAIAH 6

If you surveyed your friends and family, what do you think they'd say is the meaning of the word 'holy'? Who would they think is holy?

Last week, we saw Isaiah's introduction to his vision where God speaks to Heaven and Earth. Yet, God starts with his own people, the nation of Judah and their capital city, Jerusalem. It's a message of judgement on a nation of rebellious children, of a beloved and unfruitful vineyard. Out of this darkness of judgement, there is hope of restoration, cleansing and blessing. Isaiah introduced us to a number of themes that he is going to develop over the book, like the temple, the mountain of God and the Day of the Lord.

But today, we are going to see an extraordinary moment, that set the course of the rest of Isaiah's life.

READ ISAIAH 6v1-4

1. What picture do you get of God here? How does the setting, the action and the song build this image?
See also Exodus 19v16-24; Psalm 18v6-15

2. What is the extent of the Lord's rule? How is it described here?

3. How might this vision of the Lord on his throne fit with what we read last week in Ch 1-5? *See also 1v4; 5v19, 24*

Describing the Lord as 'Almighty' is calling him the King of Hosts or Armies. This Lord has a heavenly army at his command. He reigns with power and majesty.

We don't know a great deal about the seraphim creatures. They are described in a similar way to cherubim, who are more prominent in the Old Testament. These angelic beings are part of God's heavenly court.

'In the OT, cherubim guarded the way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24). In the tabernacle and the temple, cherubim hovered over the mercy seat, symbolizing their guarding of God's presence (Ex. 25:18-22; Num. 7:89; 1 Kings 6:23-28; 8:6, 7). Cherubim were also woven into the curtains of the tabernacle (Ex. 26:1; 36:8) and carved on the walls of the temple (1 Kings 6:29, 32, 35; cf. Ezek. 41:18, 20, 25). The OT speaks of Yahweh being enthroned on cherubim (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; 1 Chron. 13:6; Pss. 80:1; 99:1). In Ezekiel the cherubim play an important role as God's presence leaves the temple because of Israel's sin (Ezek. 10:1-22; 11:22). The cherubim were associated, as are the four living creatures, with God's presence and throne.'

What Does the Bible Say About Cherubim?

June 26, 2025 by: Iain M. Duguid, Gary Millar, Thomas R. Schreiner, Jay Sklar

<https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-does-the-bible-say-about-cherubim/?srsltid=AfmBOorvLOLgt5I5XIJSE8rvyspql2toKTKjlxjzV6-J8an8MjARo6P4>

Putting these images together helps us see these heavenly beings, not as cute Valentines Day card icons, but rather as powerful, fearsome angelic servants who hide their faces from the Lord's holiness, and yet are moved to sing out his praise.

READ ISAIAH 6v5

4. What is the impact of the vision of the Holy Lord on Isaiah? What does he realise about himself and about his people? *See also Exodus 33v18-20*

READ ISAIAH 6v6-7

5. What is needed in Isaiah's uncleanness?

READ ISAIAH 6v8

6. What does the cleansing of Isaiah's lips enable him to do?

READ ISAIAH 6v9-10

7. What is Isaiah's message? How will the people of Judah react?

READ ISAIAH 6v11-13

8. What will the people's calloused hearts eventually lead to? When do you think this is describing?
Check out 5v13 if you need a hint

9. Is there any hope in the wasteland?
Check out 4v2-3 if you need a hint

Isaiah spoke God's warning and judgement to the people of Judah in his day, and as God said, they were like blind and deaf people who refused to turn to him for healing. They were exiled and their homeland was ravaged. But hope remained in the form of a holy seed. One who was sent to preach the same message as Isaiah, to the rebellious people of his day.

READ JOHN 12v37-50

10. What are the implications of Jesus being sent by the judge, his Father?

11. What are the words Jesus speaks from the Father? What will be the result for those who do not keep Jesus' words? *See also John 6v26-29*

growing disciples

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As you reflect on God's incomparable holiness, how are you moved/convicted/humbled?

Where do we get our picture of God wrong, as when we fail to appreciate his holiness?



SEEKING GOD

We shouldn't read Isaiah 6 as our own personal call for God to send us. The sending of Isaiah is a foretaste of the sending of the holy and glorious one himself.

How are you responding to Jesus and His Word?

What are you asking God to do with your heart/eyes/ears?



SEEKING GOD

What is your hope in the uncleanness of your lips and stubbornness of your heart?



SEEKING GOD

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise the Lord Almighty, who is holy, holy, holy. The whole earth is filled with his glory. He is high and exalted, far beyond us and all of creation. Praise him in humility and worship.
- Confess our uncleanness before such a holy God. Confess that we are helpless before the King of all the earth.
- Praise the Lord God that he has made a way to cleanse us and to atone for our sin, through the death of his holy Son. Thank him that we are no longer stained by sin or fearing his judgement.
- Praise the Lord Almighty for sending Jesus with the word of salvation, that through believing in him, we might have eternal life. Thank him for sending Jesus to shine light into our darkness.
- Ask forgiveness for the ways that we have closed our eyes and ears and had calloused hearts towards Jesus and his words. Pray that we might turn and be healed. Ask that the Lord would grow our faith in Jesus and our delight in keeping his word.
- Pray for our friends and family who refuse to listen to Jesus. Ask that he'd soften their hearts and give them open ears, that they might be cleansed.

A SON IS GIVEN

ISAIAH 7-12

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

DAY ONE

READ ISAIAH 7

1. Aram and the northern nation of Israel are allied against the southern nation of Judah. What hope is there for Judah? What judgement?
2. How is King Ahaz receiving God's word? How does this compare with the attitude God warned of in 6v8-10?

READ JOHN 3v16-21

3. What does the sign of the coming of this Son communicate? Where do you stand with him?

DAY TWO

READ ISAIAH 8

1. How will Judah descend into darkness in the plundering flood of Assyria's attack?
2. What does God desire from his people?

READ HEBREWS 2v10-18

3. How does the faith-filled Son of God (Hebrews 1v1-4) build a family of faith-filled children of God?

DAY THREE

READ ISAIAH 9v1-10v4

1. What happens as the light breaks through the gloom of Judah's plight of Ch 8?
2. What turns God to anger against Israel?

MATTHEW 4v12-17

3. How is Jesus' message the great dawning of light that Isaiah foresaw? How will you praise this king?

DAY FOUR

READ ISAIAH 10v5-19

1. How do the Lord's purposes and actions fit with Assyria's? What is difficult/comforting in this? *See also Acts 2v22-24*

READ ISAIAH 10v20-34

2. What will it be like for the remnant who are left after Assyria has ravaged their land? Where does their hope lie?

READ ROMANS 9v22-33

3. How do many in Israel stumble over Jesus, the stone God lays in Zion? What is the result for those who do? What is the result for Gentiles and Jews who do have faith? Thank Jesus for this!

DAY FIVE

READ ISAIAH 11

1. What kind of king arises from the felled tree of Judah? What will characterise his reign?

READ LUKE 3v21-22; 4v14-21; ROMANS 1v1-6

2. How does the Spirit reveal who Jesus is?

READ ISAIAH 12

3. This is Isaiah and Judah's song of praise for the glorious day of the Lord's king. How can we sing the same praises because we know this Promised King?

Does your family place significance on the meaning of family names? Tell the group about it!

Last week, Isaiah saw a vision of the supremely Holy God who purified his unclean lips and sent him to his people with a message that would stop up their ears and close their eyes. Judah would respond to God's word with hard hearts. But there was a note of hope of a holy seed remaining in the ashes of the Promised Land.

Today, the scene shifts from the death of King Uzziah in Ch 6, to the reign of his grandson, Ahaz. You can read about his reign later in 2 Kings 16. Here, the southern nation of Judah was attacked by its northern brother-nation, Israel, who had made an alliance with Aram. To fend them off, Ahaz made a treaty with the superpower, Assyria. This was expressly forbidden by God, because the gods of these nations would turn his people away from him (Deuteronomy 7v1-6). And yet, Ahaz thought he needed their help in a dire time. Let's see God's response.

As we do, remember to make notes about God's character throughout.

READ ISAIAH 7v1-9

1. Should Ahaz be scared of the Israelite/Aramean invasion? What does God promise will happen?

Note: The dominant tribe of Israel was Ephraim and its capital city, Samaria, so it was also known by both these names. Aram was also known by its capital city of Damascus.

READ ISAIAH 7v10-25

2. What do you make of Ahaz's reaction to the Lord's reassurances? How does the warning of Isaiah 6v8-10 lead us to expect it?

3. What is the son born to a young woman a sign of?

Note: The word translated 'virgin' is a more general term for a young woman.

Also: A diet of curds and honey sounds luxurious, but it's what you'd have to scavenge if your fields and vineyards had been ravaged.

READ ISAIAH 8v1-10

4. How do Isaiah's life events parallel the sign of 7v14ff?

Note: The waters of Shiloah are spring-fed rock pools at the base of Jerusalem. Pilgrims would have washed there before ascending to the temple.

The section began with the royal son, Ahaz, meeting Isaiah and his son, A Remnant Will Return (Shear-Jashub). When Ahaz refuses to ask the Lord for a sign, the sign of a son is given. This son is called 'God With Us' (Immanuel), and he signals God's judgement in Assyria ravaging Aram and Israel (which eventuated in 732BC), and then Judah (in 702BC). Isaiah then has another son, 'Quick To The Plunder, Swift To The Spoil' (Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz). The promise that Assyria will sweep through all 3 nations is reiterated. Jerusalem/Zion herself may even be on view here, as birthing the son of the sign (see 1v8; 66v7-13). All of these sons embody what God promised in 6v11-13 — the promised land lying in ruins, where only a remnant remains. God is with his people in judgement. And yet, he is with them in a sliver of hope.

READ ISAIAH 8v11-22

5. How is Isaiah and his small group of disciples a contrast with Ahaz, and the rest of the people of Judah?

6. What is the picture of God's people by the end of this chapter?

READ ISAIAH 9v1-7

7. How does this son step in to the darkness to restore?

READ ISAIAH 11v1-11

8. When Judah has been ravaged down to a stump (6v11-13), where will hope arise? What is the significance of his lineage? See 9v7

9. What is so good about this branch?

READ ISAIAH 12

10. In the day that the Root of Jesse rallies the nations, how will the peoples respond?

READ MATTHEW 1v18-23

11. What is the birth of Jesus a sign of, for Judah and all the nations?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.



How are you impacted by the God who is with us, even in judgement? And in salvation?

How will you praise God who sends his Son, filled with his Spirit, to reign in light, righteousness and peace?



When do you struggle to trust God?

How have you been encouraged to trust him today?



What would you say to someone who thinks God is distant from us and uncaring?

Or that at his core, he is angry with us?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that he cares about us and draws near to bring justice.
- Praise him that he is the God of mercy and salvation
- Thank him for the promise of a son who rules with righteousness forever.
- Praise him for his Son, Jesus, God with us, the one who saves and who rules.
- Praise God that a light dawned, bringing joy and hope to our darkness when Jesus came to us.
- Ask forgiveness for the times we don't trust God and his word. Pray that we would know that he is our strength and defense, our comfort and joy. Ask that our trust in him would grow.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

ISAIAH 13-23

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

DAY ONE

READ ISAIAH 13

1. What will the Day of the Lord's judgement be like for the nation of Babylon?

READ ISAIAH 14

2. How is this day a relief and a celebration for Israel?

READ REVELATION 19v1-5

John saw that Babylon would finally fall in the return of Jesus in Revelation 18. Babylon represents all idolatrous (prostituting), godless nations, like Ancient Rome. All pagan powers will ultimately be thrown down (18v2,8 & 24).

3. How will we celebrate God's final victory over evil when Jesus returns? Do you think you'll be celebrating?

DAY TWO

READ ISAIAH 15-16v5

1. What is Moab's response to God's judgment on them? Where can they turn?

READ ISAIAH 16v6-13

2. How does the Lord feel about judging Moab? How does this fit with the rejoicing of Isaiah 14?

READ 1 TIMOTHY 1v12-17

3. Why do you think God judges wickedness with tears in his eyes? How will you respond to him?

DAY THREE

READ ISAIAH 17v1-8

1. Where does the demise of Aram (capital city Damascus) and the northern nation of Israel (main tribe Ephraim) cause them to look?

READ ISAIAH 17v9-14

2. Is Aram and Israel's repentance genuine? What have the other nations failed to know/remember?

EPHESIANS 1v17-23

3. What does Paul pray these Christians will see and know? How are we safe with a powerful God like this?

DAY FOUR

READ ISAIAH 18v1-19v15

1. What does judgement look like for the allies of Cush (Ethiopia) and Egypt?

READ ISAIAH 19v16-20v6

2. What surprises you about the Lord's actions here?

READ 1 JOHN 4v9-10

3. What does the coming of Jesus show about his heart? What do you want to say to him now?

DAY FIVE

READ ISAIAH 21; 23

1. What is the cumulative effect of one nation falling after another? Do the nations repent?

READ ISAIAH 22; LUKE 19v41-44

2. What is the contrast between Judah's emotions in the day of the judgement, and the Lord's emotions? And Jesus?

READ ACTS 18v22-31

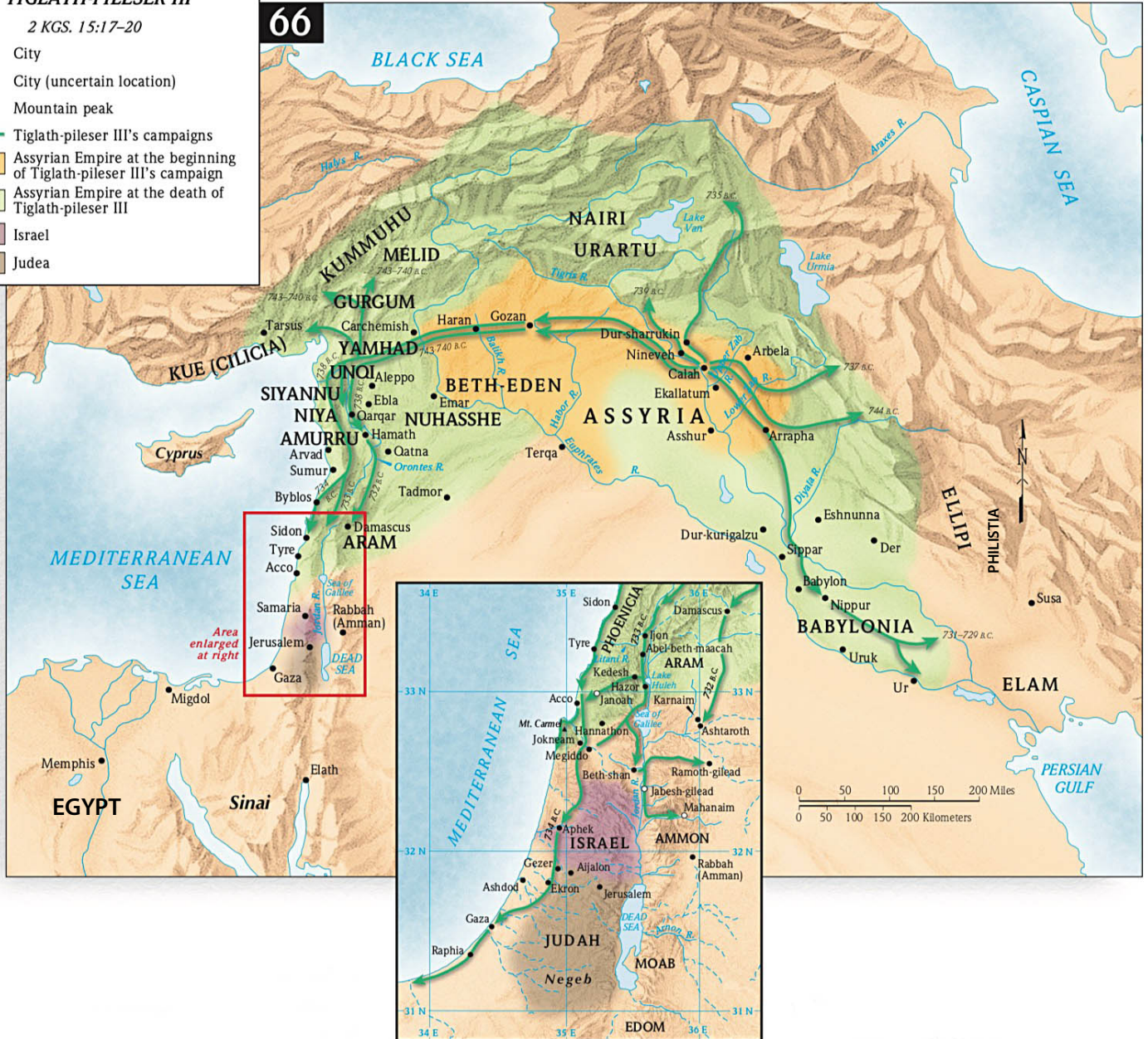
3. What does the resurrection mean for all nations now and in the future?

THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE UNDER TIGLATH-PILESER III

2 KGS. 15:17-20

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak
- Tiglath-pileser III's campaigns
- Assyrian Empire at the beginning of Tiglath-pileser III's campaign
- Assyrian Empire at the death of Tiglath-pileser III
- Israel
- Judea

66



GROWTH GROUP STUDY
ISAIAH 13-23

Which reality show would you rather be in — Survivor (with the Dwayne ‘The Rock’ Johnson as your ally) or Millionaire (with The Supernerd, from the Chase, as your unlimited Phone-a-friend)?

The small nation of Judah is living under the threat of being overrun by the superpower, Assyria.

In fact, all of their neighbouring nations are in danger of being conquered. They are making alliances with each other, trying to strengthen their military power. We saw one of these alliances between the northern nation of Israel and Aram in Ch 7. Despite their power and dominance at that time, the Lord had already decreed Assyria's downfall in Ch 10.

In the background, are long-standing instructions from God forbidding his people from making alliances with pagan nations, eg Exodus 23v31-33; Deuteronomy 7v1-2. As with King Ahaz, God wants his people to trust his power to defend and protect them, rather than looking elsewhere. Today, we will see God decree the downfall of the other nations that Judah is considering making alliances with. A day of judgement against them is coming.

There is no indication that Isaiah told these nations what would happen to them. Jonah is the only prophet we know of that was sent to warn another nation of coming judgement. So it is unlikely that Ch 13-27 was announced to the pagan nations for an opportunity to repent. Rather, this section is a message to God's own people — these nations do not have the enduring strength Judah are looking for. In fact, their demise is deserved. And yet, there is hope, even for enemy nations.

Again, we're going to note down the majestic character of God as we read some highlights of this section of Isaiah. And you can circle each nation on the map on the previous page as you read about them.

READ ISAIAH 13v1-13

1. What image does Isaiah's poetry conjure for you of the coming day of the Lord?
2. How will Babylon feel on this day?
3. What makes God so angry as to wage war against Babylon?

Through into Ch 14, Isaiah continues his prophecy against Babylon, who symbolise the arrogance and power of the surrounding nations (see Genesis 11v1-9; Revelation 18-19). The people are rejoicing in God's victory over evil.

Babylon did rise to prominence after the Assyrians, and King Nebuchadnezzar took Judah into exile in 597BC (more on that later in Isaiah). But their dominance in the region came to an end in 539 BC when they surrendered to King Cyrus of Persia.

At the end of Ch 14, Isaiah then gives a short prophecy against the Philistines in v28-32.

Next, we hear about Moab who are to the east of Judah. Moab have a common ancestry with Judah (Genesis 19v29-38). Despite their kinship, Moab didn't care for Israel when they passed through from Egypt to the Promised Land, and tried to curse them and seduced them to idolatry (Numbers 22-25). Moab subjugated Israel in the time of the Judges, before God rescued them (Judges 3). The two nations remained in conflict during the time of Saul and David (1 Samuel 14; 2 Samuel 8). And Isaiah says their time is up, but there is no rejoicing here.

READ ISAIAH 15

4. What will happen to the people of Moab? What's it like for them?

READ ISAIAH 16v1-5

5. What is Moab's only hope?

READ ISAIAH 16v6-12

6. Who is in tears along with Moab? (also 15v5) Does this surprise you? What do you make of this outpouring of grief?

Isaiah's prophecies aren't given in chronological order. Rather, they are now compiled geographically. From Moab in the east, we hear of Aram (with the capital city of Damascus) in the north in Ch 17, and their ally in Israel. In their desolation, they need to look to their Maker and Holy One of Israel, yet they forget him.

Next is Cush in Ethiopia, who is allied with Egypt against Assyria, in Ch 18. They are to the west of Judah.

Next, is Egypt itself in Ch 19, to the South. Egypt has a history with Judah too (see Exodus). They represent the oppression of Pharaoh and his counselors in enslaving Israel. They defied the Lord, but he famously displayed his glory and power in rescuing his people (Exodus 15).

READ ISAIAH 19v1-15

7. How does the Lord's judgement on Egypt humble them?

READ ISAIAH 19v16-25

8. What is the surprising twist in Egypt (and Assyria's story), in the day of the Lord?
See also Isaiah 2v1-4; 11v10-16

9. As Judah hear about the day of the Lord and the fate of all of these surrounding nations, what does the Lord want them to know?

READ ROMANS 5v6-11

10. How is the Lord's character on display at the cross?

READ 2 PETER 3v7-15

The nations experienced the day of the Lord's judgement. But Peter says there is a final day to come.

11. How is the Lord's character on display in the coming day?

12. How does that day affect us now and into the future?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

How has God's character shone through to you today?

What response does this prompt in you?



SEEKING GOD



What do you want to do/say/believe/desire in view of the coming day of the Lord??

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God for his justice that triumphs over evil. He brings the sinful and the arrogant down. Thank him that there is a day of judgement to come where all will be made right and King Jesus will reign.
- Thank God that he doesn't delight in judgement but that his heart laments over sinners and their end.
- Praise God that he is a refuge for his enemies, that all can come to him and know his compassion and healing. Thank him that we see his love most beautifully demonstrated at the cross, where Christ died for us and saves us from the wrath we deserve.
- Pray that we would look to God to defend and protect us by his mighty hand. Ask forgiveness for when we think other people/gods/things are more powerful to save us. The Lord alone is Almighty.
- Pray that we would share Jesus' salvation with those who are facing his judgement. Pray for urgency and passion to see enemies reconciled to the Holy God.

MOUNTAIN FEAST

ISAIAH 24-27

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

DAY ONE

READ ISAIAH 24v1-16a

1. What is the relationship between the earth and humanity?
2. How is the remnant's song in v14-16a in contrast with v7-13?

READ PHILIPPIANS 2v5-11

3. Why do the ends of the earth sing praise to the name of Jesus? Sing to him now.

DAY TWO

READ ISAIAH 24v16b-23

1. What is this coming day like for earth and its kings?
2. How do the Lord's actions display his glory?

READ MATTHEW 27v45-54

3. How does this day display the glory of the king? What will you do today to acknowledge the glory of Jesus?

DAY THREE

READ ISAIAH 25

1. What do you notice about the Lord's victory celebration on that day?
2. How is the Sovereign Lord both exalted and gently near?

READ LUKE 14v1-24

3. Will you taste Jesus' banquet? How do you know?

DAY FOUR

READ ISAIAH 26v1-9

1. What characterises these people on that day?

READ ISAIAH 26v10-21

2. What is the contrast between the people in v10-15 and those in v16-21?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15v50-58

3. What is our hope in the face of death? How will you wait for the Lord?

DAY FIVE

READ ISAIAH 27

1. Compare v2-6 with 5v1-7. What has changed? Why do you think the vision is different now?

2. Where does the threshing lead Israel? (see also Luke 3v15-18)

READ EPHESIANS 3v14-19

3. What do you think the fullness looks like for those who are in Christ?

If you could hire a famous chef to cook a feast for you, who would you get? What do you love about them/their food?

In Ch 1-12 of Isaiah, the focus on the Lord's judgement was on God's own people of Judah and Israel. In Ch13-23, the scene switches to the surrounding pagan nations' destruction at his hand. Today, in Ch 24-27 the entire earth is under a curse because of humanity. And yet, God will make a way of salvation. Note what stands out to you about the Lord's character as you go.

READ ISAIAH 24v1-13

1. How is the earth affected by humanity? What is the emotion here?

READ GENESIS 1v26-31; 3v17-24

2. What is the covenant that is broken by humanity? How is blessing turned to curse?

READ ISAIAH 24v14-16a

3. What is the joyful song of the remnant in the ruins?

READ ISAIAH 24v16b-23

4. What images does Isaiah give of the day of God's terrible judgement on all the earth?

5. How does he show he is the exalted king? Where does he reign?

READ ISAIAH 25v1-5

6. What makes the Lord praiseworthy for Isaiah?

READ ISAIAH 25v6-8

7. How will the Lord remove the curse on the earth and its people?

8. Where will this victory feast take place? Where do you think this is? What's significant about this place?

Isaiah knew that the earth was already bearing the curse of humanity's disobedience. And that future judgement remained for the earth as well. But God's ultimate plan was in the day he would bring blessing, joy and feasting with death itself swallowed up, as he reigns from the mountain of Zion (Jerusalem).

READ ROMANS 8v18-34

9. How do we know that the curse on the earth will come to an end one day?

10. How is this a blessing for us now and in the future?

READ REVELATION 5v9-14; 21v1-14

11. What will the new Jerusalem be like on that final day for those who belong to the Lord?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

How has praise for the Lord welled up in you today?

How will you praise him?

SEEKING GOD



What do you want to remember in times when you are groaning and not feeling joyful?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that Jesus has the exalted name above every name. He is the king of glory, reigning on high. Glorious, majestic and righteous.
- Ask that, from every nation, all people would recognise him. Pray that 8000 new people and more from our city would give Jesus the acclaim that he is due.
- Praise God that he removes the curse on the earth and humanity through his precious Son. Thank him that we receive so many blessings through his death and resurrection, as he pours out his Spirit and makes us his children.
- Pray that we would rejoice in Jesus' salvation now, knowing that there is a joyful day to come.
- Ask that we would remember all that we have in Christ, refuting in him, in times where we groan and aren't feeling joyful.
- Praise God that death was swallowed up as Jesus rose from the dead, guaranteeing eternal life for us with him.
- Thank God that he is the one who shelters us, wiping tears from our eyes and bringing us to his glorious feast in the new Jerusalem.
- Pray that we would wait for the day of Jesus' return with a longing to see him, patience in his timing and faith in his final judgement and salvation.

THE LORD'S PLANS

ISAIAH 28-31

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

DAY ONE

READ ISAIAH 28v1-13

vv10 & 13 are difficult to translate. They are likened to childish babble with no meaning, which fits the context of how the people are responding to God and His Word.

1. How does the glory of the Lord compare with Ephraim's (Israel)? How does the Lord judge their failure to turn to him?

READ ISAIAH 28v14-29

2. What is the contrast between Judah's leaders and a simple farmer? How does a new building/temple stand at the centre of God's plans to save, rule and judge?

READ 1 PETER 2v4-10

3. How are we now included in God's plans to save, rule and judge?

DAY TWO

READ ISAIAH 29v1-8

'Ariel' is a poetic way to describe Jerusalem. It means 'altar hearth' (see the word play in v2).

1. How will the Lord solve the problem Jerusalem faces?

READ ISAIAH 29v9-16

2. What problems do you see with Judah's attitudes? How does the Lord's response match their problematic attitudes?

READ REVELATION 5v1-10

3. How is Jesus able to open the scroll and reveal God's plans? What song will you sing to him?

DAY THREE

READ ISAIAH 29v17-24

1. What will happen in that day for the humble and for the mocker?

READ MATTHEW 15v1-20

2. How are the rulers of Jerusalem in Jesus' day the same as in Isaiah's? Where are you in danger of this sin?

READ JOHN 9

3. How is this man's story our story? How has Jesus done for you what Isaiah foresaw?

DAY FOUR

READ ISAIAH 30v1-17

1. What is wrong with Judah relying on Egypt to protect them from Assyria? What should they have done instead?

READ ISAIAH 30v18-33

2. What strikes you about the Lord's character here?

READ LUKE 15

3. What is the Lord's character towards lost, wayward and rebellious children? How does this speak to your heart?

DAY FIVE

READ ISAIAH 31

1. How is turning to Egypt's military strength linked with idolatry? How do they both compare with the Lord?

READ 1 THESSALONIANS 1v2-10

2. What did it look like for the Thessalonians to turn to the Lord? What was it like for you?

READ HEBREWS 2v10-18

3. How do we see the Lord's powerful hand of salvation most beautifully?

Do you like to read? What is your favourite genre?

Isaiah has been telling of God's judgement on all nations (Ch 13-23) and on all the earth (Ch 24-27). From Ch 28-35, Isaiah's prophecies are against the backdrop of the threatened invasion of Assyria. We are looking at the first half of these prophecies today. You can read about it in 2 Kings 18v1-16. Here, King Hezekiah of Judah initially defies the superpower nation of Assyria, and refuses to serve them. Assyria captures the northern nation of Israel and then takes town after town of the southern nation of Judah. Hezekiah gives in and tries to pay Assyria off with temple and palace silver. But Assyria comes again to besiege Jerusalem. More on that in weeks to come!

In Isaiah 28v1-13, the Lord reminds Judah that he had warned their northern brothers in Israel (or Ephraim) against prophets who babbled nonsense, instead of speaking the truth of God's word and promises. It led to the nation's downfall. Will Judah heed the warning? Will they listen to the Lord and trust him, with Assyria threatening, just over the horizon?

Again, note down the Lord's character as you read.

READ ISAIAH 28v14-22

1. What are the rulers in Jerusalem boasting about? *See also 30v1-5*
2. How will the Lord respond to the boasting, lying leaders? What is the contrast with the new building in v16-17?

At Mt Perazim, the Lord broke out like a flood against the enemy Philistines to save the Israelites. At the Valley of Gibeon, the Lord smashed the enemy coalition with hailstones. What a strange work and alien task for him to be rising up against his own people! He would rather they learned a lesson from the farmer who uses wisdom in all parts of the plowing, sowing, threshing, grinding process to make bread. The Lord's plan is to wisely use various means to teach his people to rely on him (not their crafty deals with foreign powers — see 31v1-3).

READ ISAIAH 29v1-8

'Ariel' is a poetic way to describe Jerusalem. It means 'altar hearth' (see the word play in v2).

3. Who is besieging Jerusalem?
Hint: There's 2 answers!

4. What will the Lord's rescue be like? *See also 31v8-9*

READ ISAIAH 29v9-16

5. What is in the hearts of the prophets and rulers of Judah?

6. What will the Lord do to astound them?

READ ISAIAH 29v17-24

7. Who can see and hear now? How do they show it?

READ ISAIAH 30v15-19

8. What is God's heart for his people?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 1v18-2v10

9. What are God's plans in salvation? Where do the power and wisdom of God's plans lie?

10. How are God's plans (previously hidden) revealed? What are God's reasons for doing it this way?

growing disciples

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What astounds you about the Lord's salvation in Christ? What do you love about him?



SEEKING GOD

Where is there pride in your heart? When do you think you know better than God?
What could humble reliance on the Lord look like instead?



SEEKING GOD

How does your worship of the Lord flow from your heart, not external actions?
What will help when you find your heart is far from him?



SEEKING GOD

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that he longs to show compassion. He longs to be gracious to those who wait for him.
- Praise him for his plan to save us through Jesus' death on the cross. A crucified Saviour is his wisdom and power. We're astounded that he would save us in an unexpected way.
- Praise God that his plans always come to pass, they can't be thwarted. No one else is strong to save us like he is.
- Thank him for his Spirit who opens our eyes and unstops our ears so that we can understand and believe in Jesus.
- Pray for our friends and family who don't yet see. Ask that God's Spirit would open their eyes to see the glory of Jesus' salvation.
- Thank God that he doesn't save the smartest or the wisest. He saves the humble and the needy.
- Pray that we would turn to him in humility and rely on him alone.
- Confess that we are often proud, thinking we know better than God. We think that we can do things our own way and make our own plans succeed.
- Ask forgiveness for saying the right things and looking religious, but our hearts are far from the Lord.
- Pray that we would honour him in worship sincerely from our hearts.

THE BEAUTIFUL KING

ISAIAH 32-33

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

DAY ONE

READ ISAIAH 32v1-8

1. How will this king be good for his people?
2. How will the people be different from 6v8-10?

READ MATTHEW 7v24-29

3. What does wisdom look like? What does foolishness look like? Which are you, and how do you know?

DAY TWO

READ ISAIAH 32v9-14

1. How are these women a picture of Judah, with Assyria at their borders?

READ ISAIAH 32v14-20

2. How will the Lord bring blessing to the people instead?

READ JOHN 7v37-39; GALATIANS 5v22-25

3. How has the Spirit been poured out on us? How is the Spirit growing his fruit in you?

DAY THREE

READ ISAIAH 33v1-4

1. How will the Lord be gracious to his people in their distress?

READ ISAIAH 33v5-6

2. What lifts your heart in this description of the Lord?

READ COLOSSIANS 1v27-2v3

3. What is so good about Jesus? Tell him about it now!

DAY FOUR

READ ISAIAH 33v7-12

1. What causes the Lord to rise up? How does he compare with those who oppose him?

READ ISAIAH 33v13-16

2. Who does the fire of the Lord consume? Who can dwell with it?

READ ROMANS 3v10-24; HEBREWS 12v22-29

3. How can you dwell with the God who is a consuming fire? How will you express this to him now?

DAY FIVE

READ ISAIAH 33v17-19

1. How does this coming king compare with the leaders who came before?

READ ISAIAH 33v20-24

2. How will Jerusalem/Zion be transformed?

READ REVELATION 22v1-5

3. What is our hope in the new Jerusalem and its beautiful king?

Who was the best boss you ever had? What made them so good?

We have been hearing God's word to Judah as they anticipate the invasion of the superpower Assyria. Last week, we saw the Lord's judgement on their leaders who refused to understand or believe God's word to them. These leaders made their own plans without reference to God. Today, we will see God's answer to this problem.

Remember to make a note of what you see of God's character as you read.

READ ISAIAH 32v1-8

1. What is it like for the people, when their king rules with justice and righteousness?

In Isaiah 6, God's word to the people would stop up their ears and blind their eyes. Last week, we saw this playing out for the Jewish leaders. But now, the people's hearts are no longer stubborn. They are receptive to the Lord's word.

READ ISAIAH 32v9-14

2. What is wrong with these women's attitudes? *See also 3v16-4v1*

3. What warning are they ignoring?

READ ISAIAH 32v14-20

4. What will make a change for the people?

READ ISAIAH 33v1-4

5. What will happen to those who betray the Lord's people?

We will see this playing out for the enemy nation of Assyria in a couple of weeks' time.

READ ISAIAH 33v5-6

6. What do the people need to know in their time of distress?

READ ISAIAH 33v7-16

The scene switches back from the exalted Lord to the men on the streets, who are despairing at the invasion of Assyria.

7. How is the Lord described?

8. What is the answer to the questions of v14?

READ ISAIAH 33v17-24

9. What will the people see? v17, v19, v20-22

10. What blessings are there for the people as the Lord reigns?

READ LUKE 23v32-47

11. What kind of king is Jesus?

READ EPHESIANS 1v3-14

12. What blessings flow to us from King Jesus?

13. How can we dwell with a holy God?

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

Does it make you uncomfortable to think about the Lord as a consuming fire?
What hope do you have of being able to dwell with him?



SEEKING GOD

What is beautiful to you about King Jesus?
When are you tempted not to believe that he is a good ruler or that his reign is good for us?



SEEKING GOD

Which blessings are precious to you, as you've come to see the Lord Jesus?



SEEKING GOD

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that he is holy, like a consuming fire. He is always wise, righteous and just.
- Praise him for Jesus, who bore the fiery judgement of God on the cross for us. Praise him as the righteous king who stayed on the cross to save us.
- Praise Jesus as our beautiful king, reigning over us in his kingdom.
- Ask that we would see his beauty and his salvation.
- Ask forgiveness for times we've tried to be independent of him and go our own way.
- Pray that we'd see how good it is to be ruled by Jesus.
- Thank God that in Jesus, we have a sure foundation, refuge, peace and salvation.
- Thank him for pouring out his Spirit on us, blessing us with forgiveness and redemption in Christ

HIGHWAY HOME

ISAIAH 34-35

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

DAY ONE

READ ISAIAH 34v1-4

1. How are the heavens and earth affected by the Lord's anger at the nations?

READ ISAIAH 34v5-7

2. How do you react to this judgement-sacrifice on the nation of Edom?

READ HEBREWS 9v11-14

3. How do you react to the sacrifice of Jesus?

DAY TWO

READ ISAIAH 34v8-17

1. What will happen to Edom as the Lord avenges his people?

READ GENESIS 1v26-28; 3v14-24

2. How is Edom's downfall like the original Fall?

READ EPHESIANS 2v1-10

3. How is our downfall reversed in Christ?

DAY THREE

READ ISAIAH 35v1-2; 33v7-9

1. What will change for the land?

READ ISAIAH 35v3-4

2. What does the coming of God mean for his people?

READ PHILIPPIANS 3v18-21

3. What is our confidence in the coming of our Saviour? How does this strengthen and steady your heart?

DAY FOUR

READ ISAIAH 35v5-7

1. How will the people and the land be restored?

READ MATTHEW 11v1-5

2. What does it mean that Jesus is healing the blind, lame and deaf?

READ JOHN 4v414

3. How does Jesus bring a greater restoration for anyone who comes to him?

DAY FIVE

READ ISAIAH 35v8-10

1. Why is this journey so joyful?

2. Who can travel this highway? How is the Lord the one who enables this?

READ TITUS 2v11-14

3. How does our redemption lead to our holiness and joy? Praise God for his gracious rescue in Jesus!

What is the best thing about coming home after you've been away on holidays?

The Lord has been pronouncing judgement on his unfaithful people, Judah. This will be through an invasion by the neighbouring nation of Assyria, but the Lord will rescue them. A judgment still remains through a different nation — Babylon. Judah will be exiled out of their homeland, which they had inherited through God's promises (Genesis 12v1-7). Not only would God's own people suffer the Lord's judgement, but so would Assyria, Babylon and other pagan nations (Isaiah 13-27). All of this would take place in the next few centuries after Isaiah spoke God's words.

But Isaiah has also had all of history on view. The lens has been switching between the immediate context of Judah in the 8th-7th Century BC, and a future hope and judgment. Today, we will see a judgment on the nation of Edom which represents a final punishment of all of the rebellious enemies of God. And we will see the salvation God brings for his people 70 years after exile, which points to his final salvation.

Keep making notes about God's character throughout.

READ ISAIAH 34v1-4

1. How does the imagery help us understand the ferocity of the Lord's anger at the nations?

READ ISAIAH 34v5-7

2. What picture do you get of the Lord here?

3. How might the judgement on Edom be like a sacrifice that is normally found in the temple in Jerusalem?

Edom were Israel's closest relatives. Their patriarchs were twin brothers (Esau/Edom and Jacob). From their earliest moments, they were rivals (Genesis 25v19-34). The Lord chose Jacob, the younger brother to receive the family promises. Edom responded with envy and violence (Genesis 27). Like their forefathers, the Edomite nation continued in hatred of the Israelites (see Numbers 30; 1 Samuel 14; 22; 1 Kings 11; Psalm 60; 83). Despite being brothers, this nation was an enemy to God's people. So their punishment represents God's judgement on all who oppose him — because opposing Israel, is to oppose God. God said to Abraham,

*"I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."* (Genesis 12v2-3)

We are seeing this curse at work here. We may balk at the graphic description. But God's anger isn't out of proportion or out of control. God warned them long before (Deuteronomy 32v34-43 cf Genesis 4). These people have lived by violence and rejection of God, so they will receive God's justice, as he avenges his people.

READ ISAIAH 34v8-17

4. How is the day of the Lord's vengeance pictured affecting the land, the animals and the people?
How is this a de-creation? See Genesis 1v26-28

The wild animals have taken over the decimated city. Isaiah ironically says that the animals will own Edom, like Israel had owned the Promised Land (eg Joshua 23). There is a finality to this judgement, with unquenchable fire, smoke rising forever and the created order upended from generation to generation (see Revelation 14v6-12). But this is not the final word for God's people. After the despair and devastation of exile, the Lord says a time of joy is coming.

READ ISAIAH 35v1-7

5. What are the pictures we see on the flip side of God's vengeance?

READ ISAIAH 35v8-10

6. What is the way back to Zion like for the exiles who return?

7. Who will walk/dance down that road?

The 'redeemed' is a term for those who have been rescued by a kinsman redeemer or their next of kin (See Leviticus 27; Ruth). The Lord is so committed to his people, he steps in as a close family member to bring them home. The people will finally reflect the character of their God (Isaiah 6).

Judah was exiled to Babylon in 597 BC (according to Isaiah's prophecy — 5v13). Roughly 70 years later they returned from exile (as Isaiah also foresaw — 45v13). The books of Ezra and Nehemiah recount the return to Jerusalem. But it's a mixed time. The people aren't as holy as God desires (Ezra 10; Nehemiah 13). And the shouts of joy are mixed with tears of sadness (Ezra 3v10-13). By Jesus' time, the people are in the land, but remain under the oppressive rule of foreign nations. It's as though they are still in exile.

To think more about the exile and the way it ends in Christ, check out this podcast:

<https://moore.edu.au/resource/podcast-episode-002/>

In the first century, Israel were still awaiting the blessing of the Lord's salvation. But then, singing breaks out at the birth of John the Baptist. Hear what his father sings.

READ LUKE 1v67-79

8. What does the birth of John signify?

READ JOHN 14v1-7

9. How is the exile over?

10. Where is the home we're returning to? What is it like?

growing disciples

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Are you rejoicing in the Way home?

What spurs you on to keep singing joyfully of his salvation?

SEEKING GOD

What have you found hard in thinking about the Lord's vengeance today?

What do you need to remember about the Lord's character?

SEEKING GOD

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that he doesn't leave sin unpunished. Praise him that he is patient, just and measured in his judgement.
- Thank God that his judgement also means his salvation. Praise God that Jesus took our punishment. His blood soaked the ground as a sacrifice to atone for our sin.
- Thank God for redeeming us through Jesus. He is our salvation and rescue. Through Jesus, we see God's mercy and forgiveness. Jesus is the one who makes us holy.
- Thank God that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He opens a highway for us to return home to God our Father.
- Praise God that through Jesus, we can know God and he will take us to his Father's house forever.
- Ask forgiveness for times we lose sight of how wonderful it is to be saved by him. Pray that we will have abounding joy in Christ.

CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

Some Christians think that promises of a return to Zion, like Isaiah 36v10, mean that believers in Jesus (Jew and Gentile) are looking forward to the restoration and re-establishment of the modern-day city of Jerusalem. This is a misreading and misapplication of the Bible's teaching. All of God's promises for rescue, redemption and joy are found in a person, not a place — it's Jesus ! (Matthew 11v28-29; John 4). This is not a cause for anti-semitism (which should be abhorrent to anyone who knows our loving God). Nor is this a statement about the geopolitics of the Gaza region (which is a complex matter requiring wisdom and compassion). Rather, this is about hearing God's word on its own terms, as we see all of God's plans and purposes culminate in Christ, who will one day bring the heavenly Jerusalem in all her beauty (Revelation 21).

See what John Stott and Don Carson say below.

THE PLACE OF ISRAEL, By John Stott

<https://stephensizer.com/2023/05/john-stott-the-place-of-israel/>

'Now that leads me to the question that must be in some of your minds, "What about the promised land?" Is the setting up of the State of Israel a fulfillment of the prophecy? Well, I cannot go into this in a detail. I can only say this: Some people think so. Especially dispensationalists, as we call them. There may be some here. They say in effect that the prophets promised that the Jews would return to the promised land. They even delineate the boundaries that the Jews would occupy in the promised land. Those promises were not fulfilled in the Old Testament literally, so we look for a fulfillment in the future. It is a reasonable view to hold, and many do hold it. And we regard them with respect and love. Others, among whom I number myself, do not hold that view. I'll leave aside political questions that could occupy us for a long time, but I'll just mention to you that you need to think about political issues here. The risk of ignoring the justice of the Palestinians' cause is on the one hand, and on the other is the risk of encouraging further Jewish expansionism since the land promised to Abraham in the Old Testament included territory that belongs today to Jordan and to Lebanon and to Syria. So beware of what you are saying if you think all that belongs to the Jews forever.

1. The Old Testament promises about the Jews' return to the land are comforted by promises of the Jews' return to the Lord. It is hard to see how that secular, unbelieving State of Israel can possibly be a fulfillment of those prophecies.
2. The Old Testament promises about the land are nowhere repeated in the New Testament. The prophecy of Romans 11 is a prophecy that many, many Jews will turn to Christ, but the land is not mentioned nor is Israel mentioned as a political entity. There is only one verse in the New Testament that has ever been regarded as a promise that the Jews will return to the land, and that is Luke 21:24 when Jesus says that Jerusalem is going to be trodden down by the gentiles until the times of the gentiles be fulfilled. That is an ambiguous verse, and it can be interpreted in two different ways. It could refer not to a period of gentile domination after which Jerusalem is going to be rebuilt, but the times of the gentiles could rather refer to the whole of the present world order until the end of history when Jesus will come again in power and great glory. But even that left aside, there is no other verse that repeats the promises of the Old Testament. So we need to be very cautious in simply jumping back to the Old Testament promises and ignoring how they are handled in the New.
3. The Old Testament promises according to the apostles are fulfilled in Christ and in the international community of Christ. The New Testament authors apply the promise of Abraham's seed to Jesus Christ. And they apply to Jesus Christ the promise of the land and all the land which is inherited, the land flowing with milk and honey, because it is in Him that our hunger is satisfied and our thirst is quenched. A return to Jewish nationalism would seem incompatible with this New Testament perspective of the international community of Jesus.'

Psalm 48 | AUGUST 22, 2023 | DON CARSON

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/sermon/psalm-48/>

'So we have already seen, then, that this temple language shows up in John 2 on the lips of Jesus: "Destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it again." But Jerusalem language shows up explicitly in Galatians 4: "We belong to Jerusalem that is above." In other words, there was already a recognition in the mind of apostle Paul that the historic Jerusalem is not the ultimate Jerusalem. It cannot be the ultimate Jerusalem. It's too small, it's too constraining for this great King. We belong to the New Jerusalem, language that is picked up in Hebrews 11; Revelation 21 and 22. In other words, this description of Jerusalem itself falls on a biblical trajectory that ultimately takes us to the very end of the Bible. This is the city of the great King.'

THE ONLY GOD

ISAIAH 36-39

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

DAY ONE

READ ISAIAH 36

1. How is this Assyrian king ridiculing the living God?

READ 1 SAMUEL 17v8-37; PSALM 2

2. When his enemies are ridiculing him, how does the Lord act through his chosen one?

READ 2 THESSALONIANS 1v6-10

3. How will the Lord act through King Jesus when his enemies are ridiculing him/us? What encouragement is there for you here?

DAY TWO

READ ISAIAH 37v1-20

1. Which truths about the Lord is Hezekiah holding onto?

READ ISAIAH 37v21-38

2. How does the Lord show his sovereignty here?

READ ACTS 2v22-24

3. How do we see the Lord's sovereignty, even in the moment of the worst evil of all? How will you hold onto these truths about the Lord, in your heart and mind?

DAY THREE

READ ISAIAH 38v1-8

1. What do you think of Hezekiah's prayer and the Lord's response? What does it make you wonder?

READ HEBREWS 5v7-10

Melchizedek was a priest-king who blessed Abraham (Genesis 14v17-20)

2. Why does the Lord listen to Jesus in his tears? How do we benefit from Jesus' obedience in the tears?

READ HEBREWS 4v14-16

3. What is our confidence to pray in our need? How will you respond to Jesus, our king, priest and saviour?

DAY FOUR

READ ISAIAH 38v9-14

1. How does Hezekiah interpret his illness?

READ ISAIAH 38v15-22

2. How does he interpret his healing? Why did the Lord restore him?

READ HEBREWS 12v1-12

3. How does the Lord use hardship in our lives? How is Jesus our motivator and enabler? How can this perspective on hardship help you in your current hardships?

DAY FIVE

READ ISAIAH 39

1. What do you make of Hezekiah's attitude?

READ DEUTERONOMY 7v1-6; 17v14-20; ISAIAH 30v1-5; 31v1-3

2. What is wrong with Hezekiah's actions?

READ EPHESIANS 2v1-10

3. Who is our trust in? What riches do we have in him? What else do you need? Where else can you look for salvation/satisfaction/strength?

Why do you think Australians are so distrustful of what our political leaders say?

The threat of Assyrian invasion has been hanging over the people of Judah throughout the first half of Isaiah. This brutal superpower was smashing their way through the Ancient Near East. And now, they are on Judah's doorstep. Hezekiah is king in Jerusalem. It seems that Hezekiah may have precipitated the invasion by rebelling against the Assyrians and refusing to pay them tribute (2 Kings 18v7). In a long section of narrative (with some poetry interspersed), we zoom in on this king, and his interactions with the LORD in his times of need.

READ ISAIAH 36v1-10

1. How does the Assyrian King try to erode King Hezekiah's confidence with this message? What are his reasons?
Later on, check out 2 Kings 18v1-6 for the author's verdict on the removing of high places and altars.

READ ISAIAH 36v11-22

2. How does he now try to erode the people of Jerusalem's confidence in their king?

READ ISAIAH 37v1-20

3. What do you make of Hezekiah's reactions to the messages about the invasion? What are his main concerns?

READ ISAIAH 37v21-38

4. What does God say will happen to the Assyrian king? How does it come true?

5. What are the Lord's reasons for doing this?

Later on, check out 2 Samuel 7v1-17

After scenes of national crisis, we get a flashback to a time of personal crisis for Hezekiah. 10-12 years before the Assyrians turned up, Hezekiah was under a different threat.

READ ISAIAH 38v1-8

6. How does the Lord respond to Hezekiah's tearful prayer?

Later on, compare the stories of signs for King Hezekiah and King Ahaz (Isaiah 7)

READ ISAIAH 38v9-22

7. What does Hezekiah learn about himself and the Lord through his experience?

READ ISAIAH 39

8. What's so bad about Hezekiah's actions here?

Later on, see Deuteronomy 7v1-6; 17v14-20; Isaiah 30v1-5; 31v1-3

There's a parallel between Hezekiah and his nation. He receives a temporary reprieve from his illness, and the nation gets a reprieve from invasion. But Hezekiah dies and leaves the kingdom to his son Manasseh, who becomes one of Judah's worst kings (2 Kings 21). And in 597 BC, Judah is eventually overrun by Babylon, who emerge as the superpower after Assyria (2 Kings 24-25). Judah's exile is not just a result of Hezekiah's actions. He represents the people's long history of idolatry, rebellion and lack of trust in God (2 Kings 17v7-20; Deuteronomy 28-30). Judah's story is crying out for a king who will trust the Lord wholeheartedly and in every way. They need a king like that to defend and lead them.

READ 1 PETER 2v21-25

9. Describe Christ, the King

10. How does he defend and lead us?

growing disciples

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When do you find it hardest to trust the Lord?

How do you know you can trust him? What hope is there in Jesus?



When others are ridiculing the living God, what does trusting God look like for you?

What is your prayer in these times?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God who makes his good plans and carries them out.
- Praise him for acting for his own sake and in faithfulness to his promises.
- Thank God that Jesus entrusted himself to his Father, even as he was insulted and suffering.
- Praise God that Jesus bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness. Thank him that Jesus' wounds heal us. He returns us to God, our shepherd and overseer of our souls.
- Pray that we would know that God is always trustworthy. He promises to save us in Jesus, and he is faithful and powerful to save.
- Pray that our trust in him would grow. Pray that we would humbly trust him in crisis, knowing that even these times are a gift from his hand. Ask forgiveness for taking matters into our own hands or thinking that other people/things can save us.
- Ask that we would trust our faithful God, even when others ridicule him. Pray that our eyes would be fixed on the living God. Pray that all will know that he's the only God, sovereign and reigning in heaven.