

rockypc SERIES COMPANION 2026
WEEKS 7-9

THE HOLY GOD

ISAIAH

*growing
disciples*
sacrifice. serve. speak

THE HOLY GOD

ISAIAH

growing disciples
sacred space

AUTHOR, DATE, GENRE

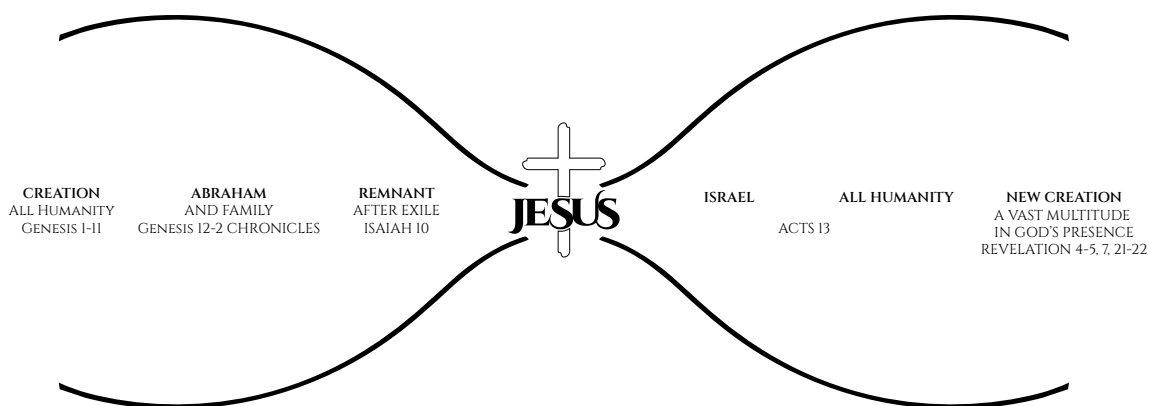
The Prophet Isaiah lived in the city of Jerusalem, in the southern nation of Judah, during the reigns of 4 kings (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah — 1v1). This means he proclaimed God's word to them at some point during their reigns from 783 BC to 686 BC. Even though Isaiah lived before Judah was exiled 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.*

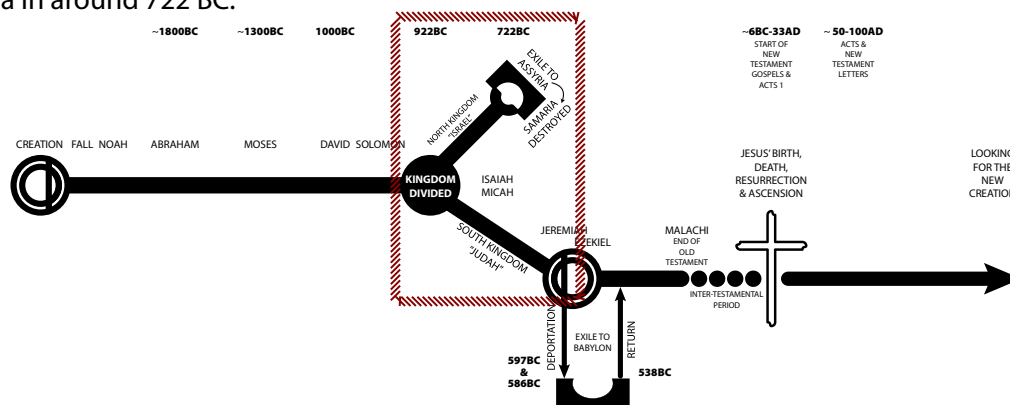
The wordplay in Hebrew is the God looked for *mishpat* (justice) but found *mishpach* (bloodshed); for *sadaqah* (righteousness) and instead found *sa'akah* (cries of the oppressed). While we can't see all of these word plays in our English translations, we can get a sense of the beauty and rhythm of 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.



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 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.'

Psalms 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

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.



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.