The book of I S A I A H



Student's Guide

This is going to be a great semester!

Remember, our goal in Bible Study is not merely to know more information, but it is to learn from the Lord and be transformed by Him to be more like Jesus. Paul's goal was to present every man complete in Christ. To accomplish this he emphasized the value of the Scriptures as he exhorted Timothy that they are profitable to teach, reprove, correct and train us that we may be adequate, prepared for every good work.

This packet is designed to help you dig into the book of Isaiah (or at least excerpts) and be prepared to study other books on your own in the future. We have not packed it full of questions or our opinions, but have packed it full of space for you to record and reflect on the Lord. Who is He? What has He said and done? How do I respond to Him?... Our hope is that you would spend lots of time in the book and that time would not be driven by the need to fill in answers to our questions, but will be driven by your personal hunger to know God.

Like most things in life: You will get out of it what you put into it.

If you just show up to your Bible study time you will be living off of others (would you let them chew your food for you?). Also, if you spend one day a week on Isaiah (would you eat once a week?), you will be missing out on what you could gain by soaking in it. Here is a suggested way to use your week if you were in Isaiah 5 days:

- Day 1:Pray and **read** through the passage for the week.
- Day 2: Pray and **read** through the passage for the week.
- Day 3: Pray and read through the passage making **observations** and asking questions in the work space provided
- Day 4: Review the passage, **consider** the questions we have asked, **consult** outside resources as needed (Biblegateway, Netbible...).
- Day 5: Focus on how to **apply** the passage to your life.

Then as you come together with others you will be able to discuss the passage and learn from each other. Given the length of the book, you may not get to every question that is raised. However, your group's goal is to help you all grow in Christ likeness.

As with any book it is helpful to read it through as much as you can. Although we will not be able to cover every chapter in our discussions, it would be profitable to read the chapters we are skipping as you can along the way. We will be taking 1-2 chapters each week, and we will get to the major sections of the book. One major difference from 2 Timothy, Mark, and Exodus is that Isaiah, like other prophets, is highly poetic. In light of that see the discussion below about understanding prophets.

Observation: What does it say?

Start by looking for the basics:

Who – Who is performing or receiving the action?

What - What is occurring?

When – When is it occurring? Is there a sequence of events?

Where – Where is the action occurring? Does the location change within the paragraph?

Why - What is the goal or purpose for the action? Who benefits?

How – What is the means or manner for accomplishing the action?

Key Words (especially theologically important terms)

Important Connectives - Indicate relationships within and between paragraphs; such as... after, then, as, until, before, when, now, while, because, for, since, so, therefore, thus, in order that, but.

Grammatical Construction - How does each word function in the sentence?

Verbs - What are the actions? Note the tense of the verb (when is the action performed) Is there a list of commands?

Noun - name of a person, place, thing or quality

Adjective & Adverb - modifies or describes something

Figures of speech - Non-literal language (e.g. "I am the bread of life")

Comparison - Points out the similarities between two or more related ideas, or simply joining like ideas. "...he will be like a tree firmly planted ..." (Ps.1:2-3)

Contrast: points out dissimilarities between thoughts or ideas. This indicator is often easily identified by the use of the word "but.": "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident... But the fruit of the Spirit is...." (Galatians 5:19-23)

Questions - Structure is built around questions posed and answered by the author (or a hypothetical opponent created by the author). "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?" (Rom.6:1)

Repetition: Reiteration of the same word or phrase (when a similar but not exact word, phrase or idea is repeated it is known as continuity)

Progression of Ideas - The movement of ideas from general to particular (Matt. 6:1-18)or particular to gen. (Jas 2).

Cause to Effect - The passage first states the cause and then directly correlates the effects. Romans 1:18-31 demonstrates the cause (rejection of God) and the effect (God gave them over). See also Romans 6:23.

Effect to Cause - Opposite of cause to effect, the author states the effect and then substantiates it by stating the cause. In Romans 8:18-27 Paul describes the effect of longing, and in 8:28-30 he describes the cause, which is our certain future glorification.

Summarization - The author gathers the main ideas he has been trying to communicate and restates them in a summary. For examples see Hebrews 8:1-2 and Joshua 12.



<u>Interpretation: What does it mean?</u>

BIBLE STUDY METHODS

Observation is answering 'what does it say?' In interpretation you are asking 'what does this mean?' Or better 'what does Paul mean here?' As you observe, ask lots of questions like

What does this word mean?

Why does he use this analogy?

What does Paul mean when he says we "were dead"?

Answering these questions is interpretation. Remember creativity in interpretation in not a virtue. Start your search for answers within the immediate context. Also, consider what others say now (your small group, pastor...) as well as in the past (commentaries). Your goal is to discern the author's intended meaning.

Apply

Once you have discovered the universal principle(s) from the text, then you move to application. How does this truth connect to my life? By putting your application in words you begin to hold yourself accountable for becoming a doer of the Word.

Some basic guidelines for application are: 1) focus on the main themes expressed by the author; 2) keep it short; 3) make it practical. An example of an application from Matthew 28:18-20 is "Wherever I am, I should proclaim the gospel to all men in hope of making some disciples."

Consider the following questions for application:

- Is there an example for me to follow or avoid? (Genesis 34; Joshua 1:9)
- Is there a sin or error for me to avoid? (1 Cor. 5:1)
- Is there a promise for me to claim? (Heb. 13:5)
- Is there a prayer for me to repeat? (Eph. 3:14-21)
- Is there a command for me to obey? (2 Timothy 2:22)
- Is there a condition for me to meet? (John 15:5)
- Is there a verse for me to memorize?11 (Psalm 119:11)
- Is there conviction from the Spirit to which I must respond? (1 Thess. 5:19)

Relate the application to your various relationships. Ask yourself, How should this application affect my attitudes, thoughts or actions:

• In relationship to God, myself, my family, my Christian friends, my non-Christian friends and the world, my adversary

Create a plan of action:

So, what will I do today, or this week, or this month to implement this application? Who will I ask to hold me accountable? How and when will I evaluate my progress? A plan of action for our application from Matthew 28 might look something like this:

By the power of the Holy Spirit I commit myself to asking my neighbor to lunch this week. I commit to daily pray for his salvation and for the opportunity to present a verbal witness to him during lunch. I will ask my Bible study leader to hold me accountable to initiate this plan by asking me next week if I have followed through.

<u>Understanding the Prophets</u>

The Prophets of the Old Testament are both some of the most beautiful and most challenging parts of Scripture. There are several reasons for this challenge, and I hope that you will end the semester better equipped to understand and apply any of the prophets.

So why are they challenging? One reason is that they are mostly written as **poetry**. When was the last time you had a few minutes to yourself and you picked up some poetry to read? For most of us today, poetry is hard to understand. It is something we had to endure in school, but we would never pick up ourselves. We might say, "Just come out and say what you mean." Still, there is something powerful about poetry, and we actually like it very much. It's just that today our poets play guitars (and I would say that sometimes it takes work to figure out what they mean too). Anyway, a super brief introduction on Hebrew poetry is that the rhyming is a rhyming of ideas. The idea of the first line is either restated, or built on, or contrasted in the next line.

For example Isaiah 1:3 The ox knows his master,
the donkey his owner's manger,
but Israel does not know,
my people do not understand.

The first 2 lines communicate the same idea. Then the second 2 lines communicate the same idea while contrasting with the first 2 lines.

For example Isaiah 3:10

Tell the righteous it will be well with them,
for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds.

Here the idea from line 1 is built on in line 2. Often in the prophets a larger group of these pairs of lines is an oracle. The prophet will introduce "the oracle to ..." In Isaiah this is most used in the section to the nations.

A second challenge is that prophets write about events that happen in various times. Extreme views in this can cause us to miss the great message of the prophets. On one hand some may say all they were writing was for their day and it doesn't apply to us so let's ignore this strange part of our Bible). On the other hand some only think the prophets are writing about future events. Actually they do both and even both at the same time.

They were writing or speaking first to their generation. They were sent to call the people back to God. Often they speak of the sins of the current generation and call them to repent and return to God. The reality of coming judgment and future restoration remind the people of God's justice and grace and give reason to repent.

In the midst of this God also revealed more of the things to come. Some of these things took place in their day, some in the time of Christ, and some wait for His return. These layers can make it hard to understand. With the passages about the future it is helpful to ask how was this fulfilled in Isaiah's day? How was it fulfilled later? And how is it still awaiting fulfillment?

A third factor that makes prophets challenging is that we are unfamiliar with the setting they are writing in. This can be helped by reading the history books that parallel them in time or by reading the background section in a commentary. For Isaiah, 2 Chronicles 15-25 covers this time period. Still even with reading these there will be places and names that are unfamiliar and a Bible dictionary can help with these.

In short, after Solomon died in 931BC the kingdom was split into 2 parts: Israel in the north and Judah in the south. The northern kings were all bad and promoted the worship of idols and foreign gods. In 722BC they were taken into captivity by Assyria. The southern kings were a mixture of good and evil. Finally they were taken into captivity in 586BC by Babylon.

Isaiah writes to the people of Judah from before Israel was taken into exile to about 687BC. His message is one of rebuke to the people of God who have turned away from the Lord and will one day face their own exile. One commentator divides the book into 3 parts: 1-35 judgment from God, 36-39 historical interlude, 40-66 salvation from God. Hopefully, as we go you will grow in confidence in understanding Isaiah. The prophets are rich portions of the Bible, and it is my hope that by this look at excerpts from Isaiah you will be motivated and equipped to study other prophets as well.

ISAIAH 1



Read the Passage

RECORD YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS HERE.
WHAT STICKS OUT TO YOU? WHAT IS CONFUSING?

Digging Deeper

1. AFTER YOU HAVE SPENT TIME IN THE PASSAGE, THIS SECTION WILL GIVE A FEW QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER. THIS CHAPTER INTRODUCES THE SETTING OF ISAIAH. FROM VERSE 1, WHAT CAN YOU GATHER ABOUT WHO, WHAT, WHEN?

2. WHAT IS GOD'S COMPLAINT AGAINST JUDAH AND JERUSALEM?

3. DESCRIBE THE PEOPLE'S CONDITION.



5. WHAT DOES GOD CALL THEM TO DO?

6. WHAT DOES HE SAY HE WILL DO?



Read the Passage

RECORD YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS HERE. WHAT STICKS OUT TO YOU? WHAT IS CONFUSING?

Digging Deeper

1. WHAT DOES ISAIAH SEE?

2. CONTRAST KING UZZIAH (2 CHRONICLES 26:16-23) AND THE LORD.

3. WHAT IS ISAIAH'S RESPONSE? WHY?

5. DESCRIBE THE WORK GOD CALLS ISAIAH TO (9-13).

6. SEE JOHN 12:37-43. NOTE THE PRONOUNS. WHO DOES JOHN SAY ISAIAH SAW?

WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE LORD IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DOTLEARN ABOUT PEOPLE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT IS MY RESPONSE TO THIS PASSAGE? WHO WILL I TELL?

ISAIAH 7:14, 9:1-7, 11:1-10 lesson 03

Read the Passage

RECORD YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS HERE.
WHAT STICKS OUT TO YOU? WHAT IS CONFUSING?

Digging Deeper

1. OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY OF FUTURE EVENTS OFTEN HAD A NEAR FULFILLMENT THAT APPLIED TO THE ORIGINAL AUDIENCE AS WELL AS SOMETIMES MULTIPLE DISTANT FULFILLMENTS. SEE IF YOU CAN DETERMINE WHAT WAS FULFILLED IN ISAIAH'S DAY, WHAT WAS FULFILLED IN THE MESSIAH'S FIRST ADVENT, AND WHAT AWAITS THE RETURN OF CHRIST.

- ISAIAH'S DAY (SEE 8:3-4)
- RETURN FROM EXILE (SEE EZRA 2:1-2, 3:1-2, MT 1:12)
- 1ST ADVENT
- 2ND COMING

2. HOW AND WHERE ARE THESE PASSAGES USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT? (I.E. MATTHEW 1:23, 4:15-16, ROMANS 15:12)



3. TAKEN TOGETHER, WHAT SORT OF PORTRAIT DO THESE PASSAGES REVEAL OF THE MESSIAH?

WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE LORD IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT IS MY RESPONSE TO THIS PASSAGE? WHO WILL I TELL?
WITH THE TRUE TO THIS I AGO TO WITH WILL THELE:

Before Lesson 4

CHAPTERS 13-23 DEAL WITH THE NATIONS SURROUNDING JUDAH. FOR THE SAKE OF TIME, WE HAVE SKIPPED THEM THOUGH IT **WOULD BE GOOD TO READ THROUGH** THEM. THE NEXT SEVERAL CHAPTERS COME BACK TO FOCUS ON JUDAH AND WE ARE LOOKING AT 24-25 AS A SAMPLE OF THIS SECTION. THESE 2 CHAPTERS DESCRIBE THE LORD'S JUDGMENT AND BANQUET TO COME.



Read the Passage

RECORD YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS HERE.
WHAT STICKS OUT TO YOU? WHAT IS CONFUSING?

Digging Deeper

1. WHAT EVENTS DOES GOD FORETELL IN CHAPTER 24?

- 2. WHAT REASON DOES HE GIVE FOR THESE?
- 3. HAS THIS HAPPENED YET?
- 4. CAN YOU THINK OF OTHER PASSAGES THAT DESCRIBE THIS TIME? SEE 2 PETER 3:3-10



6. WHO IS THIS FOR?

WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE LORD IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT IS MY RESPONSE TO THIS PASSAGE? WHO WILL I TELL?

Read the Passage

RECORD YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS HERE.
WHAT STICKS OUT TO YOU? WHAT IS CONFUSING?

Digging Deeper

CHAPTERS 36-39 ARE AN EXTENSIVE NARRATIVE SECTION THAT SHED LIGHT ON THE EVENTS OF HEZEKIAH'S REIGN. FOR OUR DISCUSSION, WE WILL FOCUS ON 36-37.

1 DESCRIBE THE SITUATION IN CHAPTER 36.

- 2. WHO DOES RABSHAKEH REPRESENT? HOW DOES RABSHAKEH VIEW THE LORD?
- 3. HOW DOES HEZEKIAH RESPOND TO THE CHALLENGE?



5. IF YOU WERE WATCHING THESE THINGS HAPPEN, HOW WOULD IT CHANGE YOUR VIEW OF THE LORD?

6. LOOK BACK AT THESE VERSES: 6:1,5; 9:7; 11:1; 36:4, 14-15. WHAT IS A COMMON THREAD?

WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE LORD IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT IS MY RESPONSE TO THIS PASSAGE? WHO WILL I TELL?

Before Lesson 6

CHAPTERS 40-66 ARE A PARTICULARLY RICH PORTION OF SCRIPTURE THAT LOOK PAST THE PRESENT THREAT OF THE ASSYRIANS AND THE FUTURE THREAT OF THE BABYLONIANS TO A TIME BEYOND CAPTIVITY. SOME DIVIDE IT INTO 3 SECTIONS OF 9 CHAPTERS. WE WILL LOOK AT CHAPTERS IN EACH OF THESE SECTIONS.

ISAIAH 40



Read the Passage

RECORD YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS HERE. WHAT STICKS OUT TO YOU? WHAT IS CONFUSING?

Digging Deeper

1 WHAT IS THE MAIN IDEA IN EACH PARAGRAPH?

1-2

3-8

9-11

12-17

18-20

21-26

27-31



3. THERE ARE LOTS OF	CONTRASTS DRAWN H	HERE. WHO OR V	VHAT IS SMALL?	WHO OR
WHAT IS GREAT?				

4. WHAT SHOULD THE AUDIENCE DO IN LIGHT OF THIS CHAPTER?

,
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE LORD IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT IS MY RESPONSE TO THIS PASSAGE? WHO WILL I TELL?



Read the Passage

RECORD YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS HERE. WHAT STICKS OUT TO YOU? WHAT IS CONFUSING?

Digging Deeper

1 THESE ARE 3 OF THE 4 SERVANT SONG PASSAGES. WHAT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SERVANT ARE FOUND IN EACH PASSAGE?

CH 42

CH 49

CH 50

2. FROM ISAIAH'S VANTAGE POINT, WHO IS THE SERVANT? (WHAT POINTS TO ISRAEL? WHAT POINTS TO ANOTHER?)



3. AS WE SAW IN THE EARLIER MESSIANIC PASSAGES (7-11), THERE ARE SOME ASPECTS OF THESE PICTURES OF THE SERVANT THAT HAVE NEAR FULFILLMENT AND SOME THAT SEEM TO POINT BEYOND TO A FUTURE FULFILLMENT.

HAS THE SERVANT COME?

WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE LORD IN THIS PASSAGE?	
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE IN THIS PASSAGE?	
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE?	
WHAT IS MY RESPONSE TO THIS PASSAGE? WHO WILL I TELL?	

ISAIAH 52:13 -53:12



Read the Passage

RECORD YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS HERE. WHAT STICKS OUT TO YOU? WHAT IS CONFUSING?

Digging Deeper

1 THIS 4TH PASSAGE ADDS TO THE PORTRAIT OF THE SERVANT FROM LAST WEEK. WHAT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SERVANT ARE FOUND HERE?

2. WHAT IS THE SERVANT'S TASK?

3. HAS THE SERVANT COME?



5. READ PSALM 22. WHAT ARE THE SIMILARITIES? DIFFERENCES?

WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE LORD IN THIS PASSAGE?	
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE IN THIS PASSAGE?	
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE?	
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE?	
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE?	
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE?	
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE? WHAT IS MY RESPONSE TO THIS PASSAGE? WHO WILL I TELL?	

ISAIAH 55



Read the Passage

RECORD YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS HERE.
WHAT STICKS OUT TO YOU? WHAT IS CONFUSING?

Digging Deeper

1 THERE ARE 2 OFFERS OR INVITATIONS HERE (1-5, AND 6-13). WHAT ARE THE 2 OFFERS? WHO ARE THEY OFFERED TO? WHAT IS REQUIRED TO RECEIVE THE OFFER?

2. LOOK BACK AT THE COVENANT WITH DAVID IN 2 SAMUEL 7. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COVENANT WITH DAVID?

1	WHY DOES HE EXPL	AINI THAT "HIS WAVS	ARE HIGHER	"2
ᇽ.	WITE DOLUTE LAFE	AIN HIAT HIS WATS	ALL HIGHER.	!

5. WHAT IS HIS WORD INTENDED TO PRODUCE?

6. IN WHAT WAY WILL HIS WORD BEAR FRUIT?

WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE LORD IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT IS MY RESPONSE TO THIS PASSAGE? WHO WILL I TELL?

Read the Passage

RECORD YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS HERE. WHAT STICKS OUT TO YOU? WHAT IS CONFUSING?

Digging Deeper

1WHAT IS THE PROBLEM DESCRIBED HERE?

2. OF THE SIN DESCRIBED HERE, WHAT IS PRESENT IN OUR DAY? IN YOUR LIFE?

3. WHY DID GOD INTERVENE? WHAT DID HE DO?



5. WHAT DOES VERSE 21 TELL ABOUT GOD'S COVENANT?

6. IF THIS CHAPTER WAS ALL YOU HAD, WHAT COULD YOU COMMUNICATE ABOUT THE GOSPEL?

WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE LORD IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT IS MY RESPONSE TO THIS PASSAGE? WHO WILL I TELL?

Before Lesson 11

BEFORE DIVING INTO OUR SECTION FOR
THE WEEK, NOTICE THESE VERSES: 60:1-3,
61:1-2, 63:10-14, 64:1-6 AND 65:15. THESE
LAST CHAPTERS HAVE MORE TO SAY
ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE NEW
HEAVENS AND EARTH.

ISAIAH 65:17

-66:24



Read the Passage

RECORD YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS HERE. WHAT STICKS OUT TO YOU? WHAT IS CONFUSING?

Digging Deeper

1HAS THIS PART OF ISAIAH'S PROPHECY BEEN FULFILLED?

2. HOW DOES ISAIAH DESCRIBE THE NEW HEAVENS, NEW EARTH AND NEW JERUSALEM?

3. WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE TO LIVE THERE?

5. WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE FOR HIS ENEMIES?

WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE LORD IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT DO I LEARN ABOUT THE FUTURE IN THIS PASSAGE?
WHAT IS MY RESPONSE TO THIS PASSAGE? WHO WILL I TELL?
WHAT IS MY RESPONSE TO THIS PASSAGE? WHO WILL I TELL?
WHAT IS MY RESPONSE TO THIS PASSAGE? WHO WILL I TELL?

Review

REVIEW THE SECTIONS WE HAVE COVERED AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

FULLOWING QUESTIONS:
1 AFTER STUDYING THROUGH PARTS OF ISAIAH, HOW IS GOD REVEALED IN THIS BOOK?
2. WHAT ARE HIS REBUKES TO HIS PEOPLE?
3. WHAT DOES HE FORETELL? WHY DOES HE TELL THEM THESE THINGS?

4. HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO US TODAY?