

A Study of the Book of Isaiah

Chapters 1-39: The Book of Judgment and Promises

This Bible study was written by Marilyn Miller, a staff minister at Abiding Word Lutheran Church in Houston. The theological content was reviewed by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Professor-emeritus Armin Panning.

The study has eleven one-hour sessions and is written for mature women who can apply the words of the prophet to their lives and the world we live in.

Lesson 1: Chapters 1-4

Opening Prayer

Introduction to the Book of Isaiah

1. What do we know about Isaiah, the author of this book?
 - His name means “the Lord saves”
 - He lived around 700 BC, during the time of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Judah and Israel were at war with one another during the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz and both nations were spiritually corrupt. Ahaz turned to Assyria for help instead of depending on the Lord. During the reign of King Hezekiah, Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians and disappeared from history. The Assyrians also besieged Jerusalem in 701 BC, but the city was delivered under King Hezekiah as 185,000 men of the Assyrian army were destroyed by the angel of death, forcing Sennacherib to return to Nineveh (see 2 Kings 19 and Isaiah 37 for more detail).
 - With great political chaos going on, Isaiah’s message did not say God would free Judah from oppression and military occupation, but rather he pointed the people to God for refuge from sin, death and hell. God used Isaiah to foretell the birth of Christ and the establishment of his Messianic kingdom through the Savior’s suffering, death, and resurrection.
 - Isaiah is the son of Amoz and a contemporary of Amos, Hosea and Micah. Jewish tradition says Amoz was the brother of King Amaziah, making Isaiah and King Uzziah cousins.
 - In 2 Chronicles Isaiah is named court historian for both King Uzziah and King Hezekiah.
 - He was married and had at least two sons. He most likely lived in Jerusalem and had his greatest influence during the reign of King Hezekiah.
 - His book is full of the promises of a Messiah, often given to us in vivid imagery and superb poetry. He has been called the greatest of the writing prophets because of his writing skills.
 - The book is divided into two parts. Chapters 1-39, often referred to as Isaiah I, were most likely written in early 700’s BC, before the Assyrian army was destroyed (701BC). Chapters 40-66, known as Isaiah II, may have been written in his later years, giving a message of comfort to those under exile in Assyria.
 - Isaiah’s prophecies do not always follow chronologically. Rather they flow in a circular movement of thought, similar to John in the NT, going around a certain topic and coming back to it with additional observations and points of emphasis.
 - According to Jewish tradition Isaiah died a martyr’s death under the wicked King Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, having been “sawn in two” (see Heb 11:37).

- Two messages prevail throughout the entire book: LAW, which condemns Israel's sins in the strongest possible language, and GOSPEL, proclaiming grace, forgiveness, and hope to a faithful remnant.

Chapter 1

Isaiah introduces his first chapter by identifying his writings as a vision from God. Notice his writing style is poetic, figurative, and prophetic, rich in pictures and comparisons.

2. Which of the many descriptions of the people of Israel in verses 1-9 do you find especially contemptible? Why?
3. How do you reconcile verse 15 with the fact that God says he hears and answers our prayers?
4. Why does God ask Israel to "*reason together*" in vs 18? How is this done?

Read Chapter 2

5. Describe the picture of the New Jerusalem that Isaiah sees in vs 2-5.

In verse 6, the words of promise quickly change to words of a terrible judgment for those who do not repent. How does Isaiah describe the last day for the unbelievers in vs 9-21?

Read Chapter 3 and 4

In chapter 3 Isaiah prophesies a terrible disaster that will befall Judea and Jerusalem. This was literally fulfilled 150 years later when the Babylonians invaded the land of Judea. The prophet describes the total lack of order and the shameful depravity of the nation of Judah that will precede this destruction. The first verse of chapter 4 actually closes the prophecy of destruction. Women take over the rule of the city; most of the men have been killed in battle, or taken into captivity.

6. Do you see any comparison between chapter 3 and our world today?
7. What picture of the Messiah is used in chapter 4?
8. What have you learned about God from these chapters?

Closing Prayer

References:

Braun, John A. *People's Bible Commentary – Isaiah 1-39*. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000. 1-70

Lesson 2: Chapters 5-7

Opening Prayer

Read Chapter 5

1. Do you think the title of this first section of the chapter, “The Song of the Vineyard”, is appropriate? Explain

Name 2 or 3 ways the Lord makes use of a similar picture of a garden or plants in the New Testament.

2. Compare some of the sins mentioned in the six woes in chapter 5 with conditions in our own times.

Read Chapter 6

Uzziah (also named Azariah) died in 740 BC after 52 years as king. This was the beginning of the end; the Israel would fall to Assyria in less than 20 years, and Judah would eventually fall to Babylon. It was in the year of Uzziah’s death that God called Isaiah to be his prophet. Note this calling preceded the messages given us in chapters 1-5, an example of how the book does not always flow chronologically.

3. What are seraphs?

Why do you think they covered their face and their feet?

What were they doing?

What would you be thinking if you were Isaiah?

Isaiah was just a man. How did he get the courage to quickly respond, “Here am I, send me”?

When we enter the sanctuary to worship, we are in God’s House, in God’s presence. What might we do to show him just a bit of the reverence that the seraphs demonstrated?

Read Chapter 7

4. The first nine verses of this chapter reveal how Syria and Israel formed an alliance to attack Judah. Isaiah was commissioned by God to tell King Ahaz of Judah not to worry, since these two enemies would be destroyed. Note that King Ahaz did not follow the LORD, he closed the temple, built idols and even sacrificed his own sons to the gods. Yet God preserved him, at least for a time! What comfort can we take from God’s message to Ahaz?

Even though King Ahaz, in his unbelief rejects the LORD’s offer of a sign, the LORD gives a sign to the house of David anyway. How do we know vs 14 is a prophecy of the virgin birth of Immanuel?

What does the remainder of this chapter tell about the time leading up to the birth of the Messiah?

5. What have you learned about God from these chapters? About yourself?

Closing Prayer

References:

Braun, John A. *People's Bible Commentary – Isaiah 1-39*. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000. 71-108

Lesson 3: Chapters 8-10

Opening Prayer

Read Chapter 8

1. Chapter 8 begins with a prophesy of destruction and plunder, to be fulfilled within a very short period of time. Most thought the destruction of Damascus, a year after Isaiah wrote “his billboard”, was a time to rejoice because an enemy had been destroyed. However God had a different message. The remainder of the chapter is a mixture of hope and comfort for the believers and words of judgment for unbelief. Give some examples of each.

Read Chapter 9:1-7

2. In the future God would honor Zebulun and Naphtali, the area that came to be known as Galilee. Pick out a striking phrase or picture that Isaiah uses in these verses and tell us what it means to you.

Why can we be confident that verse 6 points to the Messiah?

Read Chapter 9:8-10:4

3. God’s merciful promise of a Savior falls on deaf ears. Isaiah recounts four judgments that show how God tries to get the people to stop despising the gospel and its gracious blessings. Notice how each judgment ends with the same words (end of verse 12, 17, 21, 10:4).
What is the message of vs 8-12?

What is the message of vs 13-17?

What is the message of vs 18-21?

What is the message of 10:1-4?

Do you think these judgments are too harsh?

Read Chapter 10:5-34

4. How do verses 5-14 remind us that God is in control of all of history, even what is happening today?
5. What is God saying about the remnant and does it give you, personally, any comfort?
6. What have these chapters taught you about God? About yourself?

Closing Prayer

References: Braun, John A. *People’s Bible Commentary – Isaiah 1-39*. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000. 108-148

Lesson 4: Chapters 11-14

Opening Prayer

Read Chapter 11

1. What picture do you get from verse 1?
2. How does Isaiah describe the kingdom that would come from this shoot?

Read Chapter 12

3. In response to the hope we are given in chapter 11, Isaiah breaks out in a song of praise. In what ways do the words of the first two verses remind us of our own worship services?

What is the mission message and motivation found in this chapter?

For a summary of the marvelous message we have read so far in Isaiah, read pages 162-3 in the People's Bible.

In chapters 1 to 12 there were several prophecies of the coming of the Messianic King. In this next section, chapters 13 to 23, Isaiah continues by prophesying what will happen to each of the ancient kingdoms that *"gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One"* (Ps 2:2).

Read Chapter 13 and 14:1-23

Chapter 13 talks about Babylon, who conquered the Assyrians and then took down Judah and Jerusalem in 586 BC. (We remember Daniel, who was taken into captivity by the Babylonians.) The Babylonian Empire was conquered by the Medes and Persians under Cyrus in 539 BC, as prophesied in verse 17 of this chapter. It never regained its independence, and eventually disappeared entirely as a major power. In chapter 14, the freed Israelites join in the taunt of the king of Babylon.

4. In 13:2 Isaiah says he saw a banner raised over a hilltop, beckoning the people to come. Can you think of other times when God uses the symbol of a banner to lead his people?

Read Chapter 14:24-32

The Assyrians too are crushed, just as the Lord planned. They were defeated at the Battle of Carchemish in 605 BC.

The Philistines, an enemy of Israel since the days they entered the Promised Land, would also be destroyed.

- 5 Chapters 13 and 14 cover hundreds of years of war, death and destruction, prophecies of whole nations being wiped off the face of the earth. Do you find any comfort in the words we have just read?
- 6 What have these chapters taught you about God? About yourself?

Closing Prayer

References:

Braun, John A. *People's Bible Commentary – Isaiah 1-39*. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000. 148-179

Lesson 5: Chapters 15-20

Opening Prayer

In our study today, Isaiah continues prophesying what will happen to each of the ancient kingdoms that “*gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One*” (Ps 2:2).

Read Chapters 15 and 16 – concerning Moab

1. Moab is east of the Dead Sea and traces its origins back to Lot. The Israelites went through their land as they journeyed through the desert to the Promised Land. There was continual hostility between Israel/Judah and Moab. (An aside, we remember Ruth as a Moabite.)

Chapter 15 tells us of sudden disaster with everyone in Moab fleeing, most likely from Assyria, chaos and death everywhere. Chapter 16 starts with advice for the Moabites: become dependent upon Judah, ie, repent, believe and share in the hope of the Messiah (vs1-2). But Moab only wanted temporary relief from their enemies and wanted nothing to do with faith. Verse 5 pictures the Messiah, a rock of safety in the midst of a raging sea. What words or phrases in verse 5 give us a rich promise of hope and peace?

This isn't just a deliverance from earthly problems, but a promise of eternal peace. Moab's rejection of the Messiah moves God to mourn (vs 9-11) for his people.

Read Chapter 17 – concerning Damascus

Damascus was the capital of Aram (Syria today), northeast of Israel, on a strategic trade route. They too were frequent enemies of Israel. Ephraim, in northern Israel, had made an alliance with Damascus against the Assyrians, but the Assyrians captured the entire territory by 722 BC. Thus these words included Ephraim as well as Damascus.

2. In this great advance of destruction, what messages of hope do you see in this chapter?

Read Chapter 18 – concerning Cush

3. Cush was located south of Egypt. They had sent envoys to Jerusalem asking for allies against Assyria. Isaiah sends them back home with a message to all the people of their land. What is this message?

When will this happen?

What is the message of verse 7?

Read Chapter 19 – concerning Egypt

- 4 The idols and gods of Egypt remember the ten plagues and the destruction of the army when the Children of Israel left the country years before, and they tremble. God sent civil war to the land (vs 2), and then a cruel master, Assyria (vs 4). God brought the economy of Egypt to its knees by drying up the Nile (vs 5-10). Their leaders and wise men could offer no help.

What is the sudden shift that takes place in verses 16-22

What is the highway between Egypt and Assyria?

Read Chapter 20 – concerning Egypt and Cush

This chapter calls us back to the earthly world, where there are enemies and war and prisoners of war, where Assyria will conquer Egypt and Cush. The Lord asked Isaiah to walk around in his underwear for 3 years and Isaiah did it without shame because following God's commands is never shameful. Isaiah was dressed as a prisoner of war, as a sign of the impending downfall of Egypt and Cush. Those in Jerusalem saw Egypt and Cush as their allies against Assyria but Isaiah's message was much different. And still the people refused to repent and believe.

- 5 What have these chapters taught you about God? About yourself?

Closing Prayer

References:

Braun, John A. *People's Bible Commentary – Isaiah 1-39*. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000. 179-210

Lesson 6: Chapters 21-23

Opening Prayer

Read Chapter 21 – concerning Babylon, Edom and Arabia

- 1 The oracles in this section are difficult and vague, but all reference the invader from the desert described as a storm. The first part of the chapter talks about “*the desert by the Sea*”, i.e., Babylon. Isaiah sees an aggressor, the Medes and Persians, attacking Babylon and causing it to fall. Babylon was proudly built on the Euphrates River and they thought no one could ever breach their fortified city. Yet, the Medes and Persians diverted the river and, in 539 BC Cyrus captured and sacked Babylon (vv 1-10).

Seir is a synonym for Edom, the homeland of Esau’s descendants. “*Dumah*” is a Hebrew word meaning “silence.” Edom will become as silent as death itself (vv 11-12), never emerging in the morning.

The Dedanites were an Arabian tribe. Kedar was home to Bedouin tribes. These people also would be attacked and killed.

Does it bother you that we can’t pinpoint exactly to what these oracles refer?

Read Chapter 22 – concerning Jerusalem

- 2 Commentators warn of difficulties identifying the exact event Isaiah describes, but it is clear that Jerusalem too would be destroyed. Why might Jerusalem be called “the Valley of Vision?”

Which words or thoughts in this chapter help us understand why Jerusalem, too, is included in these oracles of destruction?

Go back and read 1:5-9. How do those words help us understand verses 22:13-14?

Read Chapter 23 – concerning Tyre

- 3 Tyre was the commercial and economic center of the world and was known for its exceptional harbor. The merchants of the city were rich and influential. It was an island city and endured many attacks from the Babylonians (600 BC), Alexander the Great and finally the Crusaders in 1125 AD conquered but did not destroy the city. Isaiah sees the harbor destroyed and the nations speechless in astonishment but we can’t be certain if Isaiah sees a snap shot of a number of these attacks or one in particular.

After a time, Tyre would be allowed to return to trading, but now the activity would bring blessings to God’s people. Of note, the temple in Jerusalem was rebuilt after the Babylonian Captivity using cedar from Tyre, and Paul also found a small group of believers in Tyre as he returned from his 3rd missionary journey.

How do verses 17-18 compare with 19:23-25?

How does verse 18 compare with Matthew 5:5?

- 4 What major points have you taken away from these chapters (13-23) about the judgments against the various nations?

A summary of chapters 13-23: (from Braun, pages 237-8)

- Ten judgments, emphasizing God's justice, were revealed against Jerusalem's neighbors and against Jerusalem itself, each introduced with the word "oracle." Ten is a number of completeness and it tells us God completed his judgment against these nations. The judgments point to the day of final judgment.
- Repeatedly God is shown as the God of history who controls the fate of all nations. He holds nations accountable for their actions
- As God punishes the world for its evil, the strong and descriptive word "wail" is used several times – 13:6, 14:31, 23:1,6,14
- Three times Isaiah recorded his personal reaction to the judgments. In 15:5-9 his heart cried out over Moab; in 21:3,4 he doubled over in pain when he saw the destruction of Babylon; and in 22:4 he refused consolation when he saw what would happen to Jerusalem
- Even through all of this, God's grace is still at work. We remember the highway of unity in faith from Egypt to Assyria (19:19-25) and Tyre's wealth used as a blessing for the people of God (23:18). We especially remember the lament of the LORD's heart as people do not respond to his continued warnings.

- 5 What have these chapters taught you about God? About yourself?

Closing Prayer

References:

Braun, John A. *People's Bible Commentary – Isaiah 1-39*. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000. 210-238

Lesson 7: Chapters 24-27

Opening Prayer

Today's study goes beyond the more specific judgments presented in the previous 11 chapters to the end of time and the final judgment of the world. Some modern day scholars have challenged Isaiah's authorship of this section because the content is so different than other parts of the book. However, vs 1 says "See, the LORD", vs 3 says " the LORD has spoken", and the way the author puts his readers into the middle of the action with vivid pictures are all similar to other parts of Isaiah's writing. These chapters also provide an important conclusion to the preceding 11 chapters. Ancient traditions, along with many other scholars, agree Isaiah wrote these chapters and the message of these chapters is not inconsistent with the Bible as a whole. It is not wise of us to get caught up with such arguments so much that we overlook the message of these chapters.

We could refer to this as "Isaiah's Apocalypse," similar in some of its pictures to John's Revelation. The style of writing is in symbolic, figurative language, using comparisons to illustrate concepts that often go beyond human understanding.

Read Chapter 24

- 1 The picture that Isaiah paints for us when he uses words like "lays waste ... devastate ... ruin ... scatter" is not one of beauty or comfort. Verse 5 says the earth is going to be destroyed because the people have disobeyed God's laws, violated his statutes and broken their promises. How is this possible if God wrote his laws in men's hearts and Paul says we have a natural knowledge of God?
- 2 Who is Isaiah talking about in verses 14-16?
- 3 Isaiah says "I waste away! Woe to me!" (vs 16) Every bit of his strength leaves him as he sees what the judgment holds for unbelievers. How is that day described for us?

But as believers, our hope rests in God's promises of the glory of the New Jerusalem (vs 23), where even the sun and moon are paled by the glory of God with his saints.

Read Chapter 25

- 4 Isaiah bursts into a song of praise as he sees a glimpse of the perfect bliss of heaven. Evil has been forever destroyed (v2); the poor and needy have found a perfect place of refuge (vv 4-5); a heavenly banquet has been prepared (v 6); death has been conquered (vv 7-8). "*Let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation!*" (v 9) This chapter layers law (or its consequences) and gospel one on top of another. Can you give some examples?

- 5 Look at the last words of verse 8. Of what do they remind you?
- 6 Let's read together the first verse of the chapter. What does this verse mean to you, especially in light of the many words of law in this chapter?

Read Chapter 26

- 7 Yet another song is on Isaiah's lips. In anticipation of this final victory over all the forces of evil, he pictures the land of Judah as the land of salvation for all nations, where those who are faithful to the LORD will live forever, enjoying in peace and safety the salvation which God has prepared for them. "The LORD" is used twelve times in this chapter. What special meaning does it have?
- 8 Scan through this chapter and identify some of the ways "The LORD" is used.

What is the "perfect peace" mentioned in verse 3?
- 9 How might you find use for verse 12 when sharing your faith with a friend?

Read Chapter 27

- 10 The chapter opens with God's judgment, using his fierce, great and powerful sword. But then he gives encouragement to the believers and tells them to sing. Notice in verse 4 he says he is not angry – toward the faithful, God is only grace and tenderness! What hope does he hold out for the unbeliever in verses 4b-5?
- 11 Isaiah sees Israel (the church), under God's special care, filling the earth with its fruit. But verses 6-8 say the church will also experience warfare and exile, will experience the fierce blast of the east wind. What is the message of verses 6-8?

While God has no anger with his people as he purifies them over and over again, the closing words of this chapter also say he has no compassion for his enemies as he turns them over to their sins. On the last day, the difference between believer and enemy will be very clear as the separation is made, one by one.

- 12 What have these chapters taught you about God? About yourself? About the trials that you face in life?

Closing Prayer

References:

Braun, John A. *People's Bible Commentary – Isaiah 1-39*. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000. 238-287

Lesson 8: Chapters 28-30

Opening Prayer

Again we see the word “woe”. Isaiah does announce woe to many people, but he also includes many words of comfort to God’s people. Braun says it well “The law and gospel are opposite yet companion revelations of the same God - the one announces judgment upon all those who do not believe, while the other announces grace and mercy for all humanity and invites all to believe.” (pg 288)

Read Chapter 28

- 1 Chapter 28 begins with a description of Samaria, the luxurious and indulgent pride of Ephraim, being destroyed by a fierce hailstorm, destructive wind, driving rain and a flooding downpour. This is assumed to be pictures of the invasion by the Assyrians. Notice the pictures that result from this destruction in verses 3-4.

But once again we are told there is a remnant who will see the LORD as their glorious crown and salvation.

- 2 Now Isaiah shifts to those left behind, and to the Southern Kingdom. What message is given in verses 7-10?

What happens to those who continue to turn away from God?

This is not only a message for those at the time of Isaiah, but we see it repeated in Matthew 23:37 and still today.

Have you ever put more trust in your friends, your job, your money, your position, your doctors, than in God to solve a problem? How did that work for you?

- 3 What is the tested, precious cornerstone that Isaiah talks about in vs 16? (see also 1Peter 2:4-8, Ephesians 2:19-20, Romans 9:33)

Which stones are added to the building? Which are discarded?

4. What is God’s strange and alien work in verse 21?

The chapter ends with Isaiah imploring the people to listen and trust that God has a plan for their salvation.

Read Chapter 29

5. Compare the leaders of the city of Jerusalem that Isaiah describes in 29:2-3 with David as he conquered Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 5:6-10.

Notice the pictures Isaiah uses to describe how low Jerusalem will fall in verse 4. Verses 5-8 once again promise deliverance for the believers. We look at Jerusalem, not as the geographic city, but as all the faithful people of God. Those who persecute the church will only be as effective as a dream. They can never alter the reality of God's plans. How does this message give you comfort even today?

6. Why did God respond to the unbelief of the people by sending them into a deep sleep so they could no longer understand?
7. Are we to see this as God turning against his people forever?

Read Chapter 30

- 8 We begin a 3rd chapter today, and a 3rd woe, this time to the obstinate children, those who no longer seek help and deliverance from the Lord but look to worldly alliances, in this case Egypt. The people carry their riches through dangerous land to pay for utterly useless help, instead of asking God, who gives us his deliverance out of love and with no fee attached! Compare this trip to Egypt with the celebration of the Passover.

Why do you think God asked Isaiah to write this down?

- 9 We see a progression in these chapters: in 27 the leaders mocked God and his message, in 28 the people could no longer understand the gospel message, and now in chapter 30 they tell God to be quiet because they only wanted to hear pleasant things, things they wanted to hear. This chapter, like others of Isaiah, blends the harsh message of the law with the sweet message of the gospel. Why do we need to hear both, and not just the "pleasant things"?
10. Read verse 18-19 again. Why is turning to God instead of ourselves one of the most difficult things we are asked to do?

Let us draw strength and power from God's grace and the words of spiritual and physical renewal that Isaiah uses in verses 19-26.

11. The people Isaiah was writing to saw only the immediate deliverance from their enemies but failed to see the eternal spiritual blessings God was offering. How does looking past today and into God's promises of eternal life help us through our day to day troubles?
- 12 What have these chapters taught you about God? About yourself?

Closing Prayer

References:

Braun, John A. *People's Bible Commentary – Isaiah 1-39*. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000. 287-335

Lesson 9: Chapters 31-33

Opening Prayer

For the fourth chapter in a row, Isaiah begins with the word “woe”. We wonder how those people could be so dense that they didn’t “get it”; then we look in the mirror.

Read Chapter 31

- 1 With Assyria on the move, Judah is facing a military challenge and they look for a military solution. Why do you think Isaiah used these two names for God in verse 1?
2. In verses 2-3, what are some of the arguments Isaiah uses in an attempt to get the people to look to God?

Notice the picture Isaiah gives us in the sermon that follows. The law - God is seen as a lion who will not give up his prey even though shepherds scream and shout; God will not go back on his word just because people say it isn’t fair or because they complain. The gospel – God will protect those who believe just as a he did at the time of the original Passover. The call to repentance – the response of God’s people to the preaching of the law and the gospel is seen in vs 6-7.

Read Chapter 32

- 3 The first 8 verses talk about a spiritual renewal; a time when Christ rules in the hearts of men; a time when there is learning and God is honored; a time when the righteous are honored. Isaiah isn’t talking about life in heaven, because he says there are still fools and there is still suffering. Rather, he is talking about the blessings God gives his people on this earth when a nation turns to him and gives him the honor that he is due.

Why do you think Isaiah appeals to the women?

In verse 14 and following, Isaiah jumps beyond earthly chronology to a spiritual world and shows what happens when the Holy Spirit gathers souls to himself. While believers are blessed here on earth, they will experience the full measure of peace and righteousness in heaven.

Read Chapter 33

- 4 The opening verses are a warning to Assyria. They laid siege to Jerusalem and held on until everyone in the city was near death. But God made the soldiers hear the approach of a great army and they fled, leaving all of their belongings behind. (2 Kings 7:3-16) The people of Jerusalem plundered what they left behind just like “a swarm of locusts.” How could we use Isaiah’s prayer in verses 2-6 in our own lives?

Beginning with verse 7, we see how the Assyrians return and are at the gates of Jerusalem. Everyone is frightened, crying, hiding. But we know that God once again saved Jerusalem by sending an angel of death into the Assyrian camp to kill 185,000 soldiers during the night and the remainder of the army retreated (2 Kings 19:35). Notice how Isaiah compares the great army to nothing more than straw in a fire (11-12). How will remembering this single-verse story help you when there are seemingly insurmountable problems in your life?

5. Isaiah asks everyone far and near to take notice of what God has done (vs 14). How do you think unbelievers would respond to the way God saved Jerusalem?

How do you think believers respond to the way God saved Jerusalem (vs 15-16), and saves us also from every trial we face?

Isaiah finishes this chapter looking beyond Jerusalem to a city of festivals and joy, peace and plenty, where the LORD, our Messiah, is our judge, lawgiver and king. The ship described in verse 23 is the church. What can we learn from Isaiah's picture?

6. What does the closing phrase of this chapter "and the sins of those who dwell there will be forgiven" mean to you?
7. What have these chapters taught you about God? About yourself?

Closing Prayer

References:

Braun, John A. *People's Bible Commentary – Isaiah 1-39*. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000. 335-364

Lesson 10: Chapters 34-35

Opening Prayer

Chapters 34 and 35 present a complementary message to conclude the previous chapters of woe. They direct our attention to the end of time with two contrasting pictures. Chapter 34 talks about the day of the Lord's vengeance and chapter 35 talks about day the glory of the Lord will be seen.

Read Chapter 34

- 1 The chapter begins with an invitation for the entire world to listen to God's announcement of judgment. Why? Because he is angry with all nations, not just one or two (vs 2). He is the God of the Universe, not a regional God. From the next verses, how do we know Isaiah is talking about the end of the world? (Also see Matthew 24:29 and Revelation 6:12-14)

Once again Edom is singled out. They were a long time, hostile enemy of God's people and the two countries engaged in many battles throughout the centuries. On a spiritual level, the conflicts with Edom represent a battle between believers and unbelievers. Why do you think Isaiah goes into such graphic detail?

What do you think it would be like to have "the measuring line of chaos and the plumb line of desolation" (vs 11) spread across our country?

- 2 Notice that the judgment is coming from the LORD, the God of covenant grace. How is God's wrath related to his love?

What does it mean to you that God would fight this hard to save you?

The end days will bring great destruction. If anyone doubts this, what does Isaiah instruct them to do in verse 16?

Read Chapter 35

As we read this chapter, let's look for the comparisons outlined for us by Braun (page 365):

<i>Chapter 34</i> <i>The Day of Vengeance</i>	<i>Chapter 35</i> <i>The Splendor of Our God</i>
<p>All nations come to listen</p> <p>The Lord is angry</p> <p>Stars and sky will be dissolved</p> <p>Blood from slaughter will bathe the landscape</p> <p>Edom will burn and lie desolate</p> <p>Nothing will be left to call a kingdom</p> <p>Desert creatures will inhabit the land</p> <p>The scroll of the Lord will verify the truth of God's judgment</p>	<p>The land will burst into bloom</p> <p>Encouragement is given to the feeble</p> <p>The blind, deaf, lame, and mute will be changed</p> <p>Burning sand will become bubbling springs</p> <p>A safe highway will be there for the redeemed</p> <p>The redeemed will enter Zion with singing</p>

- 3 Discuss the huge difference in what that day will bring to those who live by the law and are condemned by the law, and those who live by the gospel, no longer subject to the law. Take note of how someone who is blind, lame, feeble, or in fear for their life might see these words of comfort and promise.
- 4 What does the picture of the crocus bursting into bloom convey to you?
- 5 Compare the message of this chapter to Luke 7:22
To John 14:6

To John 7:38-39
- 6 What have these chapters taught you about God? About yourself?

Closing Prayer

References:

Braun, John A. *People's Bible Commentary – Isaiah 1-39*. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000. 335-364

Serendipity Bible for Groups, 4th Edition, Littleton, CO: Serendipity House, 1998. 993-995

Lesson 11: Chapters 36-39

Opening Prayer

King Sennacherib of Assyria conquered city after city as he approached Jerusalem. King Hezekiah set about preparing Jerusalem for a long siege (2 Chronicles 32). At the same time he sent a message to Sennacherib asking him to withdraw and in return he would give him whatever he asked (2 Kings 18). The temple was stripped of all the gold and silver and the treasury was emptied and sent to Sennacherib. But the Assyrians didn't keep their end of the bargain and continued their march toward Jerusalem.

Read Chapter 36

- 1 The Assyrian field commander tells Hezekiah's men that their position is hopeless and tries to get them to surrender. How does Satan use the same type of reasoning to bring us to a crisis of faith?

Read Chapter 37

- 2 What truths about God does Hezekiah confess in his prayer?
- 3 What do we learn about God in his response to Hezekiah's prayer?
- 4 Compare God's response to Hezekiah's prayer in the temple, to his response to Sennacherib's prayer to his god.

Read Chapter 38

- 5 In this chapter we get a glimpse of Hezekiah when faced with death. He responds in prayer. What does this teach us about God and our prayers?
- 6 What do we learn about death from Hezekiah's psalm, verses 10-23?

Read Chapter 39

- 7 How does the Hezekiah we see in this chapter compare to the man described in the previous chapter?

This brings to a close Isaiah I: The Book of Judgment and Promise. We can certainly see the constant repetition of promise and judgment, promise and judgment. Isaiah II, chapters 40-66, is known as The Book of Comfort and is filled with promises of our Messiah.

- 8 What have these chapters taught you about God? About yourself?

Closing Prayer

References:

Braun, John A. *People's Bible Commentary – Isaiah 1-39*. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000. 380-413