

# Seven Bible Studies 2017

## Prophecy

### January 6: Isaiah 1-6 (Wade Stanley)

I hope you enjoy reading Isaiah 1-6 today. Here's a concise reading guide in a Google Doc. Feel free to print. However, please note that the timeline on page 2 is copyrighted.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RRbV-sTFwIlyOlr3NSCP8zLEQwSVa-x2y7I7aWAA3AQ/mobilebasic>

Intro to Isaiah

Isaiah ministered the word of the Lord to Judah and Jerusalem during the days of:

Uzziah: 2 Kings 15, 2 Chronicles 26

Jotham: 2 Kings 15, 2 Chronicles 27

Ahaz: 2 Kings 16, 2 Chronicles 28

Hezekiah: 2 Kings 18-20, 2 Chronicles 29-32

See timeline below

Isaiah touches on the following themes:

Exposing the contemporary depravity of Judah and Jerusalem

Warning the sinning Israelite about the impending judgment of God (including predictions of future calamities and corrections)

Warnings to the hostile Gentile nations

Promises concerning the Messiah and His kingdom

Key Segments in Chapters 1-6

1:12-18: Expresses God's frustration with perfunctory worship offered by a sinful people.

Urges the people to repent and extends a promise of renewal.

2:1-5: The coming glory of the Messiah's kingdom.

4:2-6: The restoration of the nation following her captivity which is ultimately fulfilled in the arrival of the Messiah.

5:1-7: A parable using a vineyard to represent Israel.

6:6-10: Isaiah is commissioned by God as a prophet.

(Timeline in link)

#### **Comment:**

Marc Hermon:

Appreciate this! Very easy just to add to a Prophecy folder in my Google Drive for future study.

#### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:

Nothing new under the sun. What was, is. A lot of "fat hearts" in abundance today!

#### **Comment:**

Christina McClung:

Thank you

## Comment:

Linda Whitworth Davis:

I really appreciate the introduction to the day's reading. It helps me stay on track as I read. Without it I can get bogged down and miss the meaning.

## Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Not sure. It's fine on my end. You should be able to simply click on it to see it. Then you can change the zoom to 200% and see the chart very easily. Under File you can select Make a Copy and then put it somewhere in your Google Drive.

## Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Chapter 6 lets us continue the thought of a refining fire. This is the only place where we read about these fairly mysterious celestial creatures called seraphs. Seraphs mean "fiery ones" and actually are also referred to when the COI encountered the "fiery serpents" and Moses put the bronze "fiery serpent" on the pole. These fiery beings, however, have 6 wings and seem to fly around in the presence of God and call praises constantly. The temple is filled with smoke due to their fiery nature. One of the "fiery ones" pulls a hot burning coal out of the altar and purifies Isaiah's words so he can volunteer to become the Lord's prophet. The scriptures seem to point out that angels are curious about us humans. I have to admit the curiosity goes both ways.

## Replies:

Steven Wright:

So wonderful and amazing how things fit together! Part of the group study at Legend yesterday concerned a discussion of the "Fiery ones" too!

Charles Fry:

Some of these visionary images may be things we can't completely sort out, but the imagery evokes awe and wonder.

Even though the song "Holy, Holy, Holy" has the line "cherubim and seraphim", I would suggest these are probably the same angelic class of beings, the honor guard of God's throne. Ezekiel's description of the living beings that he identified as cherubim in Ezekiel 1 and 10, and John's description of the living beings in Revelation 4, and Isaiah's description of the seraphim (literally fiery ones) in Isaiah 6 are most likely the same entities in different perspectives and circumstances. (Remember too that the cherubim who guarded the garden were associated with a flaming sword in Genesis 3). In Ezekiel the cherubim were bearing the throne of God as He approached Ezekiel in exile; in Isaiah there was consternation around the throne of God, about the plight of Judah and Israel; in Revelation there was the expectation around the throne of the appearance of the victorious Lion/Lamb who had triumphed. In both Ezekiel and Isaiah there was a fiery appearance (Ezekiel 1:13-14) about the beings. In both Ezekiel and Revelation they are calling out "Holy, holy, holy." In all three descriptions they are winged. Six wings are mentioned in Isaiah and Revelation, four in Ezekiel, where they are working as chariot bearers rather than in the throne room. All three visions picture them with eyes, mouths, hands, feet, voices. The features of lion, ox, eagle and man are associated with the beings in Ezekiel and Revelation.

I would guess that the temple Isaiah saw was filled with smoke for the same reason the temple John saw was filled with smoke, namely smoke from the altar of incense on which the prayers of saints are presented (Revelation 8:4). The altar (of incense) before the throne was the source of the coal that touched Isaiah's mouth. Remember that on the Day of Atonement the most holy place was to be enshrouded with smoke from the altar of incense which sat before the ark, before the priest approached the mercy seat, the throne of God between the cherubim.

I am reluctant about directly associating the fiery serpents of Numbers 21:6-7 with the seraphim/cherubim. First because the word fiery in Numbers does modify the word serpent or snake in the Hebrew text, and the word serpent or snake appears nowhere in Isaiah's description. Second because the "fiery serpents" of Israelite experience appear to have been ordinary physical creatures of the desert, like features such as scorpions and lack of water and food (see Deuteronomy 8:15-16), multiplied to plague proportions. Isaiah does reference a serpent's offspring in later visions as flying and fiery in connection with judgment against the nations in Isaiah 14:29 and 30:6, but again in the same context as lions and adders, suggesting that those fiery ones were venomous snakes.

Isaiah is great, both in terms of historical prophecies about the nations, and, most especially, the prophecies of the Christ. Mixed in with the warnings against continued rebellion and self indulgence, the messiah is already foreshadowed in 1:11, 18, 2:1-5, and 4:2-6.

Steven Wright:

I have only connected the "Fiery " part with the serpents of Num 21 being the effects of the Neuro toxins in the venom. With a similar word in the Hebrew to describe bright light (like fire), or ,burning pain.

Marc Hermon:

I'll try to clarify what I was saying. The transliterated word from the Hebrew, "saraph" H8314 which means "fiery ones" is used only seven times in the OT. Twice in Deu 8:15 & Num 21:6 translated as "fiery" as a descriptor of serpents. Three times in Num. 21:8, Isa. 14:29 & Isa. 30:6 as "fiery flying serpents" and twice it is transliterated (English letter for Hebrew letter) as "seraphim" in our reading Isa. 6: 2 & 6 where it seems to mean an angelic type being.

## Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Here is another thought along with a song to stick in your head the rest of the night. It is a significant proof of the deity of Jesus that John the apostle in John 12:41 when referring to Isaiah 6 says, "Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about Him". Then both the seraphim in Is. 6 and the cherubim in Rev. 4 both sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty". The writer of the song that we sing today felt the three Holies in these passages was a reference to God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit and thus the "Trinity" references in the song.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1TG\\_MmiQxU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1TG_MmiQxU)

"Holy, Holy, Holly"

## Replies:

Wade Stanley:

One cool piece of symbolism in Revelation 4:8 is the praise is 3 sets of three. 1. Holy, holy, holy; 2. Lord God Almighty; 3. Who was, and is, and is to come. Those little details are scattered all throughout the throne scenes in Revelation.

Charles Fry:

It's Divine. 😊

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Wade Stanley, for leading our Friday study in prophecy. I had to do a lot of studying outside the reading today. I think this category will be the most difficult for me so I appreciate everyone's comments & Wade's google reading/timeline. Today I'm going to focus on Isaiah's call to service. During Judah's dark hour, God's glory and majesty still filled the earth.

Someone needed to communicate the divine message to the people. After cleansing his heart, Isaiah responded to the Lord's call with the words "Here am I. Send me!" Isaiah was willing to obey God and step out in faith to let God do extraordinary things through Him. We should be ready too. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:15

## January 13 Isaiah 7-11 (John Morris)

January 13, 2017

Isaiah 7-11

Overview

- 7:1-16 – Syria and Israel (i.e., the Northern Kingdom) form a confederacy and threaten Judah (cf. 2 Kings 16:5-6), but God promises the plan will come to nothing and that both kingdoms will soon fall (cf. 8:4).
- 7:17-25 – In time to come, the same nation responsible for Syria and Israel's fall (i.e., Assyria) will also come against Judah, as will Egypt, and create considerable hardship for the people.
- 8:1-2 – God wants the upcoming prophecy to not only be written down, but to be inscribed in the presence of witnesses trusted by the people. When it is fulfilled, they will be able to testify that God's prophet did indeed predict the future.
- 8:3-4 – The child promised in 7:14-16 is born to Isaiah and his wife. This serves as a PART-ial fulfillment of the prophecy. Another Child will FULL-fill the prophecy in years to come.
- 8:5-10 – The coming Assyrian invasion of Judah predicted. "The king of Assyria...will reach up to the neck" (vs. 7-8)—that is, ALMOST drown the nation of Judah. A striking and perfect visual for Sennacherib's invasion in the days of Hezekiah (cf. Is. 36-37).
- 8:11-22 – God instructs Isaiah to trust Him, even though neither house of Israel does. Also, He prophecies of the people's coming suffering and what their response will be—not repentance, but bitterness: "they will be enraged and curse their king and their God" (cf. Rev. 16:11).
- 9:1-7 – But there is hope! Though the nation will be distressed, that distress will not last forever. Israel will rise again...physically, then spiritually. "Messiah is coming!"

- 9:8-10:4 – Would have been nice if this section had been made one chapter. It is a unit unto itself. It concerns the coming destruction of the Northern Kingdom, and is divided into four stanzas, each ending with: “For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still” (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4). God can stretch out His hand for deliverance or destruction, or both simultaneously. And regardless of application, “The LORD’s hand is not shortened” (Is. 59:1). He can reach anyone, anywhere, anytime.
- 10:5-32 – God will use the king of Assyria to punish the sinful houses of Israel, but the sinful king of Assyria will eventually suffer God’s punishment, as well. Note vss. 24-26, where God promises those who dwell in Zion (i.e. Jerusalem) that they have nothing to fear from the Assyrians. This accords perfectly (as did 8:8) with the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem (Is. 36-37).
- 11:1-10 – The Branch, the Prince of Peace, the Root of Jesse is coming! A number of His characteristics, and the characteristics of His reign are here enumerated.
- 11:11-14 –We see similar predictions in Hosea 1:10-11, Amos 9:11-12, Zechariah 10:6-12 (and almost certainly some other places that aren’t coming to mind). Very figurative. Some of this may have had application to the return of the Jewish people after the captivity, but if so, much more is included. Here, Jesus is bringing together Jew and Gentile from all over the world into His kingdom (Eph. 2:14-18; Col. 3:11). Peoples not at peace before are at peace under the reign of the Prince of Peace. Furthermore, in vs. 14, we may be seeing the “conquest” of the gospel among those formerly opposed to God and His people.
- 11:15-16 – Again, this may have applied some to their return to the Promised Land after the captivity, but there may also be a spiritual application. God will remove all obstacles. If you are living in the land of captivity—that is, if you are living in sin, and want to be delivered from the power of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Col. 1:13), the real “the Holy Land” (Zech. 2:12)--God will make it possible! He has broken down all barriers. “Whosoever will MAY COME!”

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Messianic Prophecies in Today’s Reading  
(Isaiah has been called “the fifth gospel,” and with good reason!)

- Is. 7:14 (quoted in Mt. 1:23)
- Is. 9:1-2 (quoted in Mt. 4:15-16)
- Is. 9:6-7
- Is. 11 (vs. 10 quoted in Rom. 15:12)

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:

Amen on the, "PART" and the "FULL" on 7:14! And thank you John, for this this good study!

### **Comment:**

Linda Whitworth Davis:

Very helpful commentary. Thanks! Had to do some rereading.

### **Comment:**

Marc Hermon:

Very helpful overview. It's nice to read the paragraph synopsis and then read the verses. Anyone have any thoughts about the "Spirits" in 11:2? Is this describing the Spirit of the Lord as a triune Spirit or is this a listing of the 7 spirits mentioned in Rev. 5:6? (spirit of the Lord, wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge and fear of the Lord.)

## Replies:

Steven Wright:

The Holy Spirit. (Seven fold description - Mnemonic devise for memorization - a Hebrew liturgical thing).

John Morris:

Have never been entirely satisfied with any explanation I've heard on the "seven Spirits." Would love to know for sure what to make of it. Your explanation below is as good as any I've heard.

It would be nice to get some help from Isaiah on the question, though. =) But how does one delineate between Spirits? Is "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding" one Spirit or two? Is it to be understood as distinct from "the Spirit of the LORD" or just a description of Him?

By searching the entire book of Isaiah, one can come up with an assortment of possibilities for the "seven Spirits," all depending on how you break them up. Below is one collection, but I'm admittedly doubtful it's what John was telling us about:

1. "Spirit of the LORD" (11:2; 40:13; 59:19; 61:1; 63:14)
2. "Spirit of wisdom and understanding" (11:2)
3. "Spirit of counsel and might" (11:2)
4. "Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD" (11:2)
5. "spirit of judgment" (4:4)
6. "spirit of burning" (4:4)
7. "spirit of justice" (28:6)

Marc Hermon:

Interesting. I guess we just keep on reading..."For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit" Heb. 4:12

Charles Fry:

Consider that the prophecy of the branch is introduced in 4:2-6. That includes reference to a spirit of judgment and fire. Then Isaiah 11:1-5 resumes the theme of the branch, and the spirit. Note that the Branch does judge with righteousness, etc in v.3-4. This is the character of the spirit previously mentioned in 4:4. So the Spirit of the Lord who rests on the Branch is a Spirit of judgment (4:4, 11:3-4), as well the other 6 characteristics mentioned in 11:2, wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, the fear of the Lord, 7 aspects of the Spirit.

Charles Fry:

Also, remember that the 7 branched lamp stand was a symbol of the Spirit (Zechariah 4:2, 6, 10, Revelation 4:5, 5:6). The 7 branched lamp stand had a central stem or trunk, and the six branches were arranged in pairs, 3 pairs (Exodus 25:32, 35) of branches, like the three pairs of attributes described in Isaiah 11:1-5, with the central branch or

trunk or stem being referenced as the Spirit of The Lord, which is also the Spirit of judgment and fire.

### **Comment:**

Marc Hermon:

Eph 4:4 "one Spirit" but maybe the "perfect" ways in which it is manifested?

### **Comment:**

Thank you, John Morris! Your overview was a great help while reading the chapters. I am gaining a new appreciation for the book of Isaiah with all its Messianic prophecies.

### **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

On our walk today Marc brought attention a fun Bible fact to me. Isaiah's son's name is the longest in Scripture. Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:

"Swift to the spoil -quick to the plunder!"

## **January 20 Isaiah 12-17 (Wade Stanley)**

I hope you find Isaiah 12-17 a profitable study for today. Here is my concise outline of the chapters along with a very brief commentary about the King of Babylon (a.k.a. "Lucifer").

John and I would like to thank Charles Fry for supplying studies for the next three Fridays.

God be with you all.

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## **Isaiah 12-17**

### **Highlights**

Chapter 12: a continuation of chapter 11

- Notice the continued occurrence of "in that day"
- An anticipation of the great joy ushered in by the Messiah and His kingdom

Chapter 13: prophesied judgment of Babylon (see verses 17 and 19)

- Language that typifies the fall of ruling powers: "Indeed the stars in the sky and their constellations no longer give out their light; the sun is darkened as soon as it rises, and the moon does not shine."

Isaiah 13:10 NET

- Compare verses 20-22 with <http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/04/world/meast/iraq-babylon-tourism/>
- Kingdoms rise and fall according to God's will

Chapter 14: assorted judgments against the Gentile nations

- Verses 1-3: restoration of the captive Jews (taken captive by Babylon in 605, 597, and 586 BC; return begins in 536)

- Verses 4-23: judgment of the king of Babylon (more on this later)
- Verses 24-27: judgment of Assyria
- Verses 28-32: judgment of Philistia

Chapters 15- 16: judgment of Moab

Chapter 17: judgment of Syria

### **The King of Babylon**

In many translations, Isaiah 14:12-15 refers to the King of Babylon as Lucifer. Without question, the material preceding and following these four verses deals with the king of Babylon. However, Lucifer has been a traditional name of Satan, which leads to some confusion. So, is the passage talking about the King of Babylon or the Prince of this world? I believe the answer is yes.

The word “lucifer” comes from the Latin Vulgate and means “light bringer” or “shining one.” The Hebrew is “Helel son of Shachar” which is probably a name for the morning star (Venus) or the crescent moon. When translating Isaiah 14:12, the KJV translators retained a tradition that dates back to the third century. Because of Jesus’s statement concerning Satan in Luke 10:18 (“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven”), it was traditionally believed that the figure in Isaiah 14:12 was Satan (lucifer meaning “light bringer” or “shining one”). Since the Latin translations gradually grew to a dominate Western Christendom, Lucifer became another name for Satan. Contextually, though, it is clear that these verses deal with the King of Babylon. He rose bright as the “morning star” but in his pride he fell to the depths of Sheol. The account of King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 is an excellent example of this prophecy’s fulfillment.

Although the passage does address the King of Babylon, I do believe there are Satanic undertones. Several times in scripture, we come across an archetype. Consider the following:

- “For you have said in your heart:  
‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’” ~ Isaiah 14:13-14
- “Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Because your heart is lifted up, And you say, ‘I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods, In the midst of the seas,’ Yet you are a man, and not a god, Though you set your heart as the heart of a god” ~ Ezekiel 28:2 NKJV
- ““Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.” ~ Daniel 11:36-37 NKJV (prophecy of Antiochus Epiphanies, 2nd century ruler of the Greek Seleucid kingdom)
- “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” ~ 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 NKJV

All of these passages share a common thread: a man who exalts himself to a divine position out of an inflated sense of pride. What does Paul say was the sin that caused Satan’s fall? Pride. A pride that endeavored to lift him to a station beyond what God had created. So although these passages deal with the powers of the earth, those powers are certainly inspired and influenced by the Prince of this World.

## Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thanks Wade! And, thanks in advance, Charles Fry! Yes, the symbolic description of Satan and it's association with the proud King of Babylon, speaks to several points with regard to the indentity, motives, and operations of our adversary!

## Comment:

Charles Fry:

Good stuff! In this reading I especially like Isaiah 12:3-4a.

3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord,

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

"In pride the wicked man does not seek Him, in all his thoughts there is no room for God."

Psalm 10:4. Thank you for the commentary, Wade. Prayers for you, John, the congregations in the Philippines and your family in the upcoming weeks. "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

## Comment:

Marc Hermon:

There have been rulers in their pride who have "claimed" to be the great morning star, but it's important to point out that there is only ONE who claimed it and was speaking the truth.

"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." - Rev 22:16

All others, including Satan are lifting themselves up with pride and are just pretenders.

"And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light." - 2 Cor. 11:14

## Replies:

Wade Stanley:

"And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

2 Peter 1:19-21 ESV

## January 27 Isaiah 18-22 (Charles Fry)

Today's reading, for January 27: Isaiah 18-22

Isaiah: "Yahweh is Savior"

Isaiah's special title for The LORD is "the Holy One of Israel" (1:4), a name occurring 28 times in Isaiah.

Isaiah's special message is "Salvation is of the LORD," (12:2-3) using the word "salvation" 26 times.

We are in a section of Isaiah that began with praise in chapter 12, leading into prophecies of judgment of the nations and finally of the world, 12-24, and then again praise and glory for God's justice and mercy, 25-26.

12, joy in salvation, praise and thanksgiving.

13, Babylon to be brought down by Medes and thence uninhabited (about 150 years after Isaiah's death).

14, Babylon & Lucifer, ruler of Babylon, condemned beforehand. Condemnation on Assyria and Philistia as well.

15, judgment on Moab, weeping for these descendants of Lot.

16, more of the oracle concerning Moab's judgment.

17, judgment on Syria (Aram).

18, judgment on Cush (Ethiopia), but also a positive response from them.

19, judgment on Egypt, but again some from Egypt to remain and turn to the LORD, some Assyrians also.

20, imminent downfall of Egypt and Cush to Assyria.

21, doom for Babylon by Media, doom for Edom, seeking refuge in Arabia.

22, judgment on Jerusalem for improper response to crisis, preparing for war rather than repenting. Replacement of an unacceptable steward with one who is suitable.

23, judgment on Tyre and Sidon and their futile mythology, a seventy year span of removal.

24, judgment on the whole world, the corrupt city, but still a remnant remains for the LORD.

25, praise for God's justice, His deliverance, but not all remain to rejoice.

26, praise continued for God's mercy and justice, joy in the resurrection.

18:1-7, judgment on Cush, the upper Nile region below Egypt (Nubia), rulers of Egypt in the 25th Dynasty, 715 B.C.

1-2, who were the Cushites looking to for strength and success?

3-6, how did God deal the arrogant power of Cush?

7, where would the Cushites sometime look, and how would they present themselves?

How should we present ourselves to the LORD?

Chapters 19:1-20:6, judgment on Egypt and Cush.

19:1-25

1-3, who was coming to Egypt and why?

What would He do?

12-15, what had God given Egypt and why?

What could Egypt do about her circumstances?

18-20, who was coming to Egypt?

Note: the language of Canaan is Hebrew. Many Jews fled to Egypt in the days of Jeremiah, 100 years after this prophecy. A Jewish temple was erected in Egypt (or perhaps 2). Alexandria in Egypt became a center of Jewish scholarship, the source of the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. Remember that Apollos was from Alexandria (Acts 18:24)

19-22, was the future for Egypt totally hopeless? Why or why not?

23-25, what did God have in mind for these nations and when do you think He meant to do this?

20:1-6

What did Isaiah have to do and what was the point?

How do you think Isaiah might have felt about doing this?

What lesson might we learn from Isaiah's mission?

## Chapter 21

21:1-10, Babylon revisited

Why do you think Isaiah would include two statements of judgment on Babylon in this section?

9, where in the New Testament is this referred to, and what does it mean to us? (Rev. 18:2)

6-8, bearing in mind the parallel of verse 9, what do these verses teach us to do?

21:11-12, prophecy against Edom (Esau, Idumaea, Seir)

What do you understand this cryptic prophecy to mean?

21:13-17, prophecy against Arabia

16, what does this prophecy do for Isaiah's authority as a prophet?

## Chapter 22

22:1-25, prophecy against Jerusalem

1-3, what seems to have been the downfall of Jerusalem?

7-13, what steps did Jerusalem take to cope with their weak position?

What steps should Jerusalem have taken to cope with her weakness?

15,20-25, Shebna(youth) replaced by Eliakim(whom God establishes) son of Hilkiah(portion of Jehovah)

(see II Kings 18:18ff about these men)

In whom are the good prophecies about Eliakim completely fulfilled? What about the bad?

### Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Charles Fry! We truly benefit from your knowledge. Thanks for being a great example in diligently studying the Word. I appreciated the chapter-by-chapter headline/summary. It was good to review & look ahead. Additionally, you presented thought-provoking questions. I'd enjoy receiving answers. ;-) For now your chpt. 20 q's: God asked Isaiah to preach for 3 years naked & barefoot. I believe the point was to symbolize the Assyrians would not only overcome Egypt and Ethiopia, they would make all prisoners march into captivity completely naked. It seems Egypt and Cush were Judah's hope and boast. They looked to them for protection from Assyria. If they were hoping and boasting in Egypt and Cush for protection they were not looking to the Lord. Perhaps our lesson from Isaiah's mission is to not have false hope and boasting in men. During hours of need we should look to aid from the Lord.

### Comment:

Wendy Range:

Thank you for the outline; I agree with Ginger in that we benefit from your knowledge (but I should go get my own, right? :)). I'll try to answer an easier question you ask from 22:7-13 (not sure I'll get it exactly right). It seems Jerusalem was coping poorly on two fronts. First, they trusted in the physical, structural protections and schemes rather than the spiritual protections that would have come from faith in the Lord. That's a timeless mistake: trusting in the seen rather than the unseen, and giving credit to ourselves rather than God. Second, they were coping with their weakness by being flippant and proud, rather than sober, reverent, and humble. They completely and rebelliously turn down the Father's pleas for repentance. I'm not sure if they thought tomorrow literally was the day they would die, but they seemed to have no intention of spending another moment from then on pursuing righteousness. :(

## February 3 Isaiah 23-28 (Charles Fry)

Today's reading, for February 3: Isaiah 23-28

Remember, the thoughtful reading of the day's text is the primary purpose of this schedule. This post is rather long, but the reading itself takes only a few minutes, and the description of judgment in 24 with the contrasting praise for God's kindness and justice in 25-26 set the stage for many other prophecies about judgment and redemption.

Isaiah: "Yahweh is Savior"

Isaiah 12-26 Praise, judgment, and praise. (Continued)

23, judgment on Tyre and Sidon and their futile mythology, a seventy year span of removal.

24, judgment on the whole world, the corrupt city, but still a remnant remains for the LORD.

25, praise for God's justice, His deliverance, but not all remain to rejoice.

26, praise continued for God's mercy and justice, joy in the resurrection.

Isaiah 27-35 Redemption, accusations, redemption.

27, the gathering up of the remnant of Israel.

28, contrast between those who wear the LORD and those who are without control. The coming cornerstone, the expectation of produce. Hardship as a tool.

Chapter 23

23:1-18, prophecy against Tyre

4, what is the implied sin of Tyre and Sidon?

8-9, who was responsible for the things that would happen to Tyre?

What was God's purpose in dealing with Tyre this way?

15-18, how long would Tyre be desolate, and what would happen then?

Though Tyre herself would still be corrupt, who would she benefit?

Chapter 24

24:1-23, judgment on the whole earth, the world city

1-3, what would happen to the earth?

Who all would share in the downfall of the earth?

Is this a limited judgment, or the final judgment?

4-13, why does the earth suffer?

What have men done wrong? (esp. v.5 & Heb. 13:20)

According to verse 8 the gaiety will stop; according to verse 11, why will it stop?

What is the point of the illustration in verse 13?

14-16a, who celebrates in the midst of the dying earth and why?

16b-18a, why might the righteous be caught in a conflict of feelings—joy and dismay?

What should the righteous avoid?

18b-20, when was the last time the floodgates of heaven were opened? (Gen. 7:11)

How does the event described here compare to the flood?

Why will this happen to the earth?

When will the earth recover or be restored?

Isa. 24:21-23, who all will be judged and punished by the LORD?

Was this punishment going to occur immediately?

Can you think of another scripture with a description of events that sounds like verses 21-23?

Where will the opposition be after this judgment?

Where will the LORD be after this judgment?

Where will you be?

Chapter 25

25:1-12, praise follows judgment

1-5, what characteristics of God inspire this praise?

6-8, what was God going to prepare and where?

What is this called in the New Testament? (Heb. 12:22-23)

What would be destroyed forever?

9, who's going to be celebrating?

10-12, will everyone celebrate?

Recalling how God said He felt about Moab's suffering (15:5, 16:12), why is Moab the most appropriate example here?

What is "hell" compared to in this passage? (vv10-11)

## Chapter 26

26:1-21, praise continued

1-6, what kind of city lasts and what kind doesn't?

Who is kept in perfect peace?

7-11, what is the advantage of the righteous?

What is the basis for waiting on the LORD (8)?

When does God's servant desire His presence?

Why does it seem useless for God to give good things to the wicked?

12-15, what can the righteous take credit for?

Regardless of what happens to the lords of men, what happens to God's nation?

16-18, when did the LORD's nation come to Him?

Though we may suffer for the name of Christ, what is different about our sufferings and His?

The LORD's people here say they haven't done two different things, what are they?

19-21, what promise awaits the LORD's nation?

What does death accomplish for God's people?

What is on the earth that God is going to deal with finally?

## Chapter 27

27:1, Leviathan, the monster of the sea

Leviathan was a water creature of great might (see Job 41:1) and is sometimes used as a symbol of the wicked one who opposes God, as in Psalm 74:14.

Who in the Bible is identified as a serpent?

27:2-13, deliverance and fruitfulness of God's people

1-6, what kind of a time did Isaiah foresee?

When the LORD blesses and protects His people, what do they become?

What invitation does God issue to the unfruitful?

7-11, what did God intend to accomplish by bondage and captivity and the suffering of His people?

How does God feel about people who lack understanding and why should He feel this way?

12-13, how would the LORD gather His people?

What would accompany the gathering?

What would the gathered do?

## Chapter 28

28:1-4

What was Ephraim (Israel, the northern tribes) wearing for headgear?

What was to happen to Ephraim's beauty and pride?

What social ill went along with the pride of Ephraim?

28:5-6

At the LORD's chosen time, what would be the new headgear for His people?

What all will the LORD be at that time?

In view of the LORD's various roles here, where do we fit in—what role(s) do we have in that day?

28:7-10

Was the abuse of intoxicating substances in Isaiah's day a problem? How can you tell?

What was the consequence of this widespread abuse?

Does substance abuse affect God's people and the proclamation of the gospel today? If yes, then how?

What does verse 10 describe and what did it have to do with the teaching and learning problem of the preceding verses?

28:11-13

What all would happen in fulfillment of this prophecy? (note I Cor. 14:21)

What had God offered but His people had not accepted?

What was the problem of the approach to the Word of God described in vv10,13?

How should we approach the Word of God?

What happens when people's perspective on the Word of God is all bits and pieces, not seeing the unity of theme and purpose?

28:14-15

What was the false security of Jerusalem?

Is there any modern equivalent of this "covenant with death"?

Does dishonesty ever make a good refuge?

28:16-22

Who is this prophecy about?

We understand the prophecy of the cornerstone in a positive way, as Christians (I Pet. 2:6), but what would it mean to those with false security?

What would the coming of Christ, even the promise of that coming, mean for those who rejected the LORD's message through Isaiah?

Why can't you hide from trouble in bed?

What kind of work was God planning to do? What do you suppose it was?

What happens to mockers, in Isaiah's time or ours?

28:23-29

Does a farmer just keep doing the same thing over and over? Why or why not?

What can we say about the LORD's plan and work (recall v.21) from these verses?

According to verse 29 what function does the process of farming, or the course of nature serve?

## Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

I can't believe I have to ask this question but where is Tyre and Sidon today and where was it back in that time?

## Comment:

Lebanon just north of Israel. On the Med. sea, I think David's friend sent cedars by sea down to David. Then they had to haul them over land to build David's palace.

## Comment:

Just looking at cities on this map, you'll see Jerusalem in the lower purple area, Caesarea on the coast. Continuing north along the coast we have Tyre and Sidon and Byblos. These three were major cities of ancient Phoenicia. Tyre and Sidon are in Lebanon today. North of Byblos is Antioch, and then east from there notice Aleppo, which is in northern Syria today, a scene of recent conflict, and south from Aleppo the city of Damascus, the ancient capitol of Aram, the modern capitol of Syria.



When would Jacob be unashamed?  
Who would you like to see responding to God as in verse 23?  
From verse 24, who should we see as potential disciples?

Isaiah 30, the problem and the solution.

30:1-5, looking for help in the wrong place.

What are God's people thought of as?  
Of what value is an alliance that originates apart from God's Spirit?  
Of what value are plans that aren't God's plan?  
Who should God's people consult before taking action?  
Where was Judah looking for help?  
What was wrong with this?  
What value would this worldly alliance hold for God's people?  
What would the outcome of their alliance be?

30:6-7, Egypt's grandeur and emptiness.

What did it take to carry wealth into Egypt and win her favor?  
What value was there in winning Egypt's favor? Why?  
(note on "Rahab", v.7 in NIV and NKJV, "strength" in KJV, the word means insolence, boastful strength, pride. The word is used to describe Egypt as a monster.)

30:8-11, Israel avoiding reality.

What was Isaiah supposed to do and why?  
What was the character of the people Isaiah was talking to?  
In failing to hear Isaiah, whose instruction was rejected?  
What were these people looking for in religious leaders?  
Has this ever happened since?  
What is a true prophet or man of God supposed to do that they wanted to stop?  
30:12-14, false security suddenly gone.

Who is speaking through Isaiah?

What accompanied rejection of the message of God?  
What sort of structure had they built around themselves, and what would happen to it?  
What would remain of the wall of self-deception after reality broke through?  
If there is a lesson in this for today, what is it?

30:15-18, the offer, the answer, the way of God.

Where is God's answer found? What is it?  
Did Israel, or do people generally, like and accept this answer?  
What kind of answers do men, including Israel, often prefer?  
What is the outcome of this kind of ungodly, man-centered answer?  
How does the fate of being left a pole or banner on a mountain differ from Jesus encouragement that we are like a city set on a hill?  
How does the LORD feel about abandoning people to their fate?  
Is the LORD's role in dealing with rebels and backsliders active or passive?  
Where is the blessing found?

30:19-22, the outcome for those who wait on the LORD.

What happens when God hears His people's cry?  
How long does it take for God to respond?  
Was God here promising an end of hardship or something else? What?  
What would God's people who learned to wait on Him be separated from, willingly?

30:23-26, the blessings God had in mind for His people.

What sort of land did God want to give His people if they would cooperate?  
Has the LORD now bound up the bruises (v.26) or is this still ahead? Explain your thoughts.  
What might these promises mean to us, picture for us, if we wait on the LORD?

30:27-33, judgment for most.

What is coming?

How is He coming?  
Who or what is "the name of the LORD"?  
Where does His judgment seem to originate?  
How would the LORD's people feel about the judgment pictured here?  
Whether ancient historical events or the coming revelation of Christ, how does God end up dealing with most people and why?  
What kind of place is the destination of the object of God's wrath?  
What place like this is mentioned in the New Testament?

## Chapter 31

31:1-3, flesh or spirit?  
What was the mistake of going down to Egypt?  
How do people make similar mistakes today?  
Why would help that is "spirit" rather than "flesh" be better?  
What kind of help do we seek?  
31:4-5, a true deliverer.  
Who is the lion under consideration?  
Who can or cannot dissuade the Lord Almighty?  
Just where would the Lord do battle?  
Do you take these verses as an assurance or a warning? Explain...  
There seems to be a reference to the "Passover" in verse 5... in whom is the Passover fulfilled?  
31:6-9, Assyria's demise.  
What did the Lord intend to accomplish for those he called?  
Who claimed responsibility for the fall of Assyria, which wouldn't actually be complete until 612 B.C.?  
Where is the Lord's fire found? What does this mean to us?

## Chapter 32

32:1-8, the righteous king.  
When did a king begin to reign in righteousness, as Isaiah predicted?  
Does the king of righteousness rule alone?  
What do men become under the reign of the righteous king? (v.2)  
How does the description here differ from earlier descriptions of Isaiah's own time? (6:9-10)  
Once again, what does the Lord think of the selfish?  
How can one stand, if not by devising schemes?  
32:9-13, trouble soon.  
What was a problem among the women?  
What would soon shake the prevalent attitude?  
How soon would Isaiah's word be fulfilled?  
How should they be behaving, considering the true state of affairs?  
32:14-20, the source of deliverance.  
How long would the desolation of Israel last?  
When did this really change...or has it?  
What do you think these promises are really about? (note for example v.17 w/James 3:18)  
What are the Lord's people going to be completely separated from?

## Chapter 33

33:1, justice.  
In one sense, when does everyone stop destroying or betraying, and so receive justice?  
What do those who live by the sword die by? What has that to do with this verse?  
33:2-6, a psalm about real treasure.

What is the Lord to his people?  
What is the Lord to those not his?  
What is the problem of those things gained by force?  
What can you find in the presence of God, among his people?  
What makes the treasure available?  
33:7-9, apart from God.  
What happens in the absence of the fear of the Lord?  
33:10-23, how to stand the fire.  
When the Lord arises, what happens to the products of man?  
Who produces the fire that consumes mankind?  
Who is afraid of the fire?  
Who can withstand or escape the fire kindled by sinful man?  
How does such a person deal with evil and temptation?  
What will such a person see, and not see?  
In describing Zion, why does he mention ships that won't sail there?  
What do we call this Zion spoken of here?  
Who is (was) suffering from loose rigging and a shaky mast?  
What are some things that will be missing in Zion?

### **Comment:**

Steven Wright:

A lot of "Leonine" reference in this passage, and, "Ariel" of 29:1 and, "Zion" of 33:20 are the same; aka. Jerusalem

### **Comment:**

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Charles Fry, for Isaiah posts these past weeks while John & Wade were away. Your wealth of knowledge is appreciated! Thanks for engaging everyday - it's a great encouragement.

### **Comment:**

Charles Fry:

Looking forward to a post in this Isaiah slot from Wade or John next week!

## **February 17 Isaiah 34-39 (John Morris)**

Reading for February 17, 2017

ISAIAH 34-39

Sorry for this being so late. It was already going to be an evening post, admittedly, but technical difficulties delayed it further.

Today's reading closes out the first section of Isaiah. Isaiah's organization parallels the Bible's — 66 chapters, divided into two parts of 39 and 27, respectively. The second part may have come late in Isaiah's life, and is noticeably different from the first. But Wade will get us started on that next week, God willing....

Chapters 34-35

These chapters constitute a single, distinct prophecy. It begins (chap. 34) with an assurance of future judgment on Israel's enemies—a general conclusion, of sorts, to all the denunciations

that have thus far accumulated: Syria and Samaria (chaps. 7-8), Assyria (chap. 10), Babylon (chaps. 13-14, 21), Moab (chap. 15-16), Damascus (chap. 17), Ethiopia (chap. 18), Egypt (chap. 19), and Tyre (chap. 23) (not an exhaustive list)—with special emphasis placed on Edom. The prophecy then turns its attention (chap. 35) to what would succeed that judgment, namely, the coming of Christ and His kingdom!

- 34:1-4 - The end of the national ‘powers that be’ (i.e. “the mountains,” “the host of heaven,” etc.) IS coming. In the sixth seal of Revelation, the Holy Spirit revisits the figurative language used here (Rev. 6:13-14).
- 34:5-7 – Along with the aforementioned nations, Edom will also not escape the judgment of God. God will make a sacrifice of them, as with Gog and Magog (Ezek. 39:17ff).
- 34:8-15 – More concerning Edom’s promised destruction. God, who alone can take vengeance, will do so “for the cause of Zion”—that is, because of Edom’s sins against Israel (e.g. Ps. 137:7). The nation’s ruin will be complete, its land becoming a waste, emptied of its people, and overrun by animals. Interestingly, there are 11 varieties of animals listed: (1) “pelican” (2) “porcupine” (3) “owl” (4) “raven” (5) “jackals” (6) “ostriches” (7) “wild beasts of the desert” (8) “wild goat” (9) “the night creature” (10) “arrow snake” (11) “hawks.” See Is. 13:19-22 for very similar predictions concerning Babylon.
- 34:16-17 – The predictions concerning Edom being overrun by animals WILL come to pass.

But the ruin and waste that will prevail in Edom are now figuratively set in striking contrast to the beauty and glory that will prevail in the coming kingdom of Christ.

- 35:1-2 – In the kingdom of Christ, even the desert will rejoice and blossom. The fabled beauty of Lebanon, Carmel, and Sharon are used as symbols of the glory and beauty of God’s blessings in Christ.
- 35:3-4 – These read as exhortations to those in the kingdom. One of the blessings we have in Christ is each other. We’re there to encourage one another to fight the good fight of faith and trust in the living God. The Hebrew writer quotes vs. 3 in making this very point (Heb. 12:12).
- 35:5-7 – More figurative language concerning the blessings of being in Christ, but also a likely allusion (vss. 5-6) to Jesus’ miracles which helped usher in the kingdom.
- 35:8-10 - “I know the Lord will make a way for me.” He’s made a “Highway” for us (compare 11:16), a clear path to life if we’ll walk in holiness. And though “this life is filled with sorrow and trouble here below,” in Christ, we are able to find joy even in our troubles, and comfort even in our griefs (vs. 10).

## Chapters 36-39

In these chapters, Isaiah inserts a narrative for which we can find parallel accounts in 2 Chron. 32 and 2 Kings 18:13-20:19. It details Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah, and his ultimate failure to capture Jerusalem, thus fulfilling prophecies uttered earlier in the book (Is. 8:7-8; 10:24-25). It also records for us Hezekiah’s “near death experience,” and events leading up to a new prophecy concerning Babylon’s future role as Judah’s judge. Below are a few highlights.

- 36:7 – A statement that has always stood out to me. True, some of those altars and high places that Hezekiah had destroyed probably WERE devoted to God. But they were not sanctioned by God. In this way, the Rabshakeh’s apparent flawed understanding of true

religion reminds me of how pure and undefiled religion continues to be misunderstood today. “Jesus said, ‘Judge not!’” “Christianity is a religion of love!” etc. Yes, but...

- 37:1-4 – I am moved by Hezekiah’s faith, his call for the prophet’s prayers, and his conviction that God was well able to silence the blasphemers. And, of course, God did. God rewards faith: “Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria...” (37:21ff).
- 37:36-37 – The demise of Sennacherib’s invasion force, and the end of his hopes of taking Jerusalem. Interestingly, Sennacherib’s own history of his invasion of Judah is available for us to read. It can be found on the Taylor prism, a six-sided clay prism, dated 704-681 BC, and inscribed in Assyrian cuneiform script. In the account, Sennacherib boasts of his victories over many cities in Judah (agreeing with the Biblical record), but must admit that, though he besieged Jerusalem, he never succeeded in taking it: “I made Hezekiah a prisoner in Jerusalem, like a bird in a cage” [but I couldn’t enter the cage! My addition. =) ].
- 38:7, 22- “And this is the sign....” “What is the sign....” Lots of signs in Isaiah. See chaps. 7, 19. 20, 37, 38, 55 and 66.
- 39:8 – At first reading, this might sound like a self-centered response, like Hezekiah caring only for the fact that trouble wouldn’t come in his times. But that would be misunderstanding him. Hezekiah knew from the law of Moses (Lev. 26:27-35), that if the nation were going to be carried away, it was because of continual sin, and therefore would be just and deserved (hence his statement in vs. 7, “The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good!”). Secondly, he doesn’t just say that “At least there will be peace in my days,” but “At least there will be peace and TRUTH in my days.” Hezekiah was glad not only for the peace that would prevail during the remainder of his life, but for the reason for that peace—he would make sure God’s truth would continue to be honored. In light of these things, Hezekiah’s sentiments are noble and just.

## Comment:

Charles Fry:

I appreciate your thought on Hezekiah's attitude in 39:8. I've been rather more critical of Hezekiah's sentiment there. A number of translations render the passage "there will be peace and security" in my time. I've been inclined to view this visit from Isaiah as a rebuke, connected to the pride mentioned in 2 Chron 32:24-25, and to equate Hezekiah's thought with that of Eli in 1 Sam 3:18 (which wasn't the response God wanted from Eli). However, I see that the Septuagint translators understood Hezekiah's thought in the more positive way.

(NETS) 8 Then Hezekias said to Esaias, "The word of the Lord that he has spoken is good. Let there now be peace and righteousness in my days."

## February 24 Isaiah 40-44 (Wade Stanley)

I ran out of time to finish notes for Isaiah 40-44. Here's what I have. If you have questions about chapter 44, just ask below. Happy reading.

### Chapter 40

#### Verses 1-11: Messianic

- Verses 1-2: this message is intended to comfort Judah and Jerusalem following the Babylonian captivity (“For she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.”)
- Verse 3: a forecast of John the Baptist

- Verses 3-5: exalted valleys, lowered hills, the crooked made straight are all metaphors that talk of the potential for reconciliation and justice from God through Jesus
- Verses 6-8: the passing nature of the world vs. the eternal nature of God's word
- Verses 9-11
  - "good tidings": Septuagint, "euaggelizo"; to declare or announce the good news (gospel)
  - Verse 10, "the Lord God": one of the numerous OT references to the divine nature of the Messiah
  - Verse 10, "His reward is with Him": compare with Revelation 22:12
  - Verse 11, "He will feed His flock like a shepherd": compare with John 10:1-4; 1 Peter 2:25 and 5:4

#### Verses 12-31: Magnifying the nature and virtues of God

- Verses 18-20: the first of many comparisons of the true and living God with idols
- Verse 22: helpful passage with apologetics
  - God "sits above the circle of the earth": an indication that the earth is not flat
  - "Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain": heavens are described this way a number of times in scripture; universe is expanding from a central point outward in every direction, or "stretching" if you will.
- Verses 27-31
  - Verse 27: Israel claims that God is unaware of what is happening to them and will not give them justice for the wrongs they have endured.
  - Verse 28: God has not fallen asleep; He knows what has happened to Israel.
  - Verses 29-31 are empowering: If we wait on the Lord, we will gain strength to endure.

### **Chapter 41**

#### Verses 1-7: A message to the Gentile nations

- Verse 1, "coastlands": descendants of Japheth (see Genesis 10:2-5); generally regarded as the nations that ring the Mediterranean Sea.
- Verse 2, "one from the east"
  - God has raised up a foe from the east
  - Assyria, Babylon, Medes, and Persians all come from the east
- Verses 5-7: The foes from the east threatened the Gentile nations of the Mediterranean, but they turned to their idols rather than repent.

#### Verses 8-16: Israel does not need to fear these foes

- Verses 8-9: God's help is predicated on his relationship with Abraham and His subsequent promises.
- "Fear not..": verses 10, 13, and 14
- Verse 10: God will be their strength -- remember 41:29-31
- Verse 14, "you worm Jacob": highlights the weakness and seeming insignificance of the Israelite nation
- Verse 15: "I will make you into a new threshing sledge with sharp teeth"
  - "Mountains...and...hills": not to be understood literally; represents large and small nations
  - By God's power, Israel would grind her enemies into nothing

#### Verses 17-29: Israel is a spiritual wasteland

- At first glance, verses 17-21 appear to be literal, perhaps referring to a drought.
  - But why does God extend compassion to only the poor and needy?
  - Poor and needy: metaphor for those who are spiritually thirsting
  - God will satisfy the soul's longing, a theme that will be restated throughout the ensuing chapters.

- Verses 21-24: a challenge to the false gods
  - God is without counselor or instructor; He is the source of justice knowledge and understanding; He has revealed all from the very beginning (40:12-14, 21)
  - Can false gods (verses 22-23):
    - “Show the former things, what they were”?
    - “Declare to us things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter”?
    - “Do good or do evil”?
  - Therefore, God concludes, “you are nothing, and your work is nothing” (verse 24)
- Verses 25-29, “I have raised up one from the north”: Babylon
  - Verse 26, “Who has declared from the beginning...”: in other words, who else has predicted the attack from Babylon?
  - Verse 28: the righteous are scarce among the children of Israel
  - Verse 29: recapitulation of verse 24; those who worship idols are as meaningless and worthless as the idols themselves.

## **Chapter 42**

### Verses 1-12: Messianic

- Verse 1: an important verse for Gentiles; one of a number of passages forecasting the inclusion of Gentiles in the kingdom of the Messiah
- Verses 2-3: quoted in Matthew 12:16-20; a beautiful passage about the gentleness and lowliness of the Messiah
- Verse 4: He will not fail nor be discouraged
  - “Till He has established justice in the earth”: see 40:3-5; all crooked ways will be straightened; Jesus is God’s arbiter of justice
  - “The coastlands...”: another reference to the Gentile nations of the Mediterranean
- Verse 5: the description of God is the basis for the promise made in verses 6-7
- Verses 6-7: Promises the Father makes to the Messiah
  - “Give You as a covenant to the people”: the Messiah would be central figure in a covenant
  - Messiah was intended to open blind eyes and rescue prisoners
- Verse 9: compare with the challenge given to idols in 41:21
- Verses 10-12: those across the earth will praise God for what He accomplished through Jesus Christ

### Verses 13-25: God confronts the idols and the idolaters

- Verses 13-15: God has restrained His wrath for a time, but the moment for action quickly approaches
- Verses 16-22
  - The blind and deaf: those in Israel who have followed after idols
  - God will demonstrate the folly of idols; by the time of the Messiah, the Jews had purged idolatry
- Verse 19, “My servant”: not the servant at the beginning of the chapter but Israel (see 41:8)
- Verse 20: their sin has deceived and blinded Israel; they are unable to see their true condition
- Verse 22: idolatry has left Israel destitute, vulnerable, and captive
- Verses 23-25
  - Why was Israel left in the condition described in verse 22? For the sake of chastening
  - “Yet he did not know....Yet he did not take it to heart”: their hard-heartedness hindered the chastening of the Lord

## **Chapter 43**

### Verses 1-15: Words of comfort to Israel in the midst of the Babylonian captivity

- Verse 1

- In these chapters, God constantly brings us back to His role as Creator; here, He reminds Israel that He created humanity
- Another “fear not” -- compare with 41:10,13,14
- Verse 2
  - No calamities shall destroy the nation
  - “When you walk through the fire...”: literally fulfilled in the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (Daniel 3:21-26)
- Verse 4: God talks of His love for Israel and His willingness to do anything to preserve the nation.
- Verses 5-6
  - Another “fear not”
  - The captive Jews will be free to return to their homeland
- Verses 8-9: Can anyone among the nations make claims similar to God?
- Verses 10-13: God is unique and true and sovereign; it is His will to reclaim Israel and no nation can either stand in His way or carry out this task.
- Verses 14-15: God will redeem Israel from Babylon

Verses 16-28: God promises renewal but Israel’s treachery makes her unworthy of His mercy

- Verses 16-17: The promises that follow are predicated on these truths about God.
- Verses 18-21
  - God calls Israel to forget the past and look to a future of renewal
  - This seems to be Messianic
  - “Behold, I will do a new thing”
  - Building a road in the wilderness, bringing water to parched ground and to a parched people, and the whole of creation honoring God are all typical promises found in Messianic prophecies
- Verses 22-24: God offers hope to a people that have spurned His good graces
- Verses 25-28
  - God will forgive their transgressions if they repent
  - He challenges Judah to defend their conduct; but He sees no reason to stay His hand from punishing

**Chapter 44**

Verses 1-8: Messianic

- Verses 1-2
  - God entreats the descendants of Jacob to hear Him
  - “Jeshurun”: another name for Israel
  - “Jeshurun is a term of affection derived from the Hebrew verb יָשַׁר (yashar, "be upright")” (NET notes on Deuteronomy 32:15)
  - Also occurs in Deu 32:15; Deu 33:5; Deu 33:26.
- Verse 3-4
  - “Pour water on him who is thirsty”: God will satisfy the spiritual longings of man
  - Notice that water is poured and the Spirit is poured. This must be a reference to the Spirit’s role in the covenant of Christ (see John 7:37-39).
- Verse 5: under this covenant all would belong to the Lord, all could identify themselves with the house of Israel
- Verses 6-7: another proclamation of God’s uniqueness and sovereignty set forth as a challenge to the false gods worshipped by His people and their neighbors
- Verse 8: another “do not be afraid” because their God is a rock

Verses 9-22: the folly of idolatry exposed

- Verses 9-11: Idolaters are ignorant of their true state; if they understood, they would be ashamed.

- Verses 12-17: man worships gods made from the same materials over which they have dominion and that they use for utilitarian purposes.
- Verses 18-20: their deceived hearts prevent them from seeing the folly of their ways.

Verses 23-28: rejoicing in the true and living God

- Verse 25: sounds a lot like 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
- Verse 26: another promise to the future generations of captives who will see Jerusalem destroyed and Judah laid waste by the Babylonians
- Verse 28: it was Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, who released the first wave of captives to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (see 2 Chron 36:22-23, Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah)

Comment:  
Butch O'Neal:  
Thank you, Wade.

Comment:  
Charles Fry:  
Splendid content, thanks, Wade.  
I love the songs, "The Shepherd's Song" from 40:11 and the chorus of "Teach Me Lord to Wait" from 40:31.

The Maranatha Singers version of "The Shepherd's Song" can be found here:  
<http://worshipsong.com/songs/songdetails/shepherd-s-song>  
"Shepherd's Song"

Comment:  
Marc Hermon:  
Isaiah 44 is a scathing mockery of ludicrous idol worship.

Comment:  
Ginger Hermon:  
Wow! Thanks, Wade Stanley. Your notes were a tremendous help. I really like how you described Isaiah 40:29-31. It's Empowering: if we wait on the Lord we will gain strength to endure.

## **March 3 Isaiah 45-50 (John Morris)**

Reading for March 3, 2017  
ISAIAH 45-50

ISAIAH 45:1-13: CYRUS IS COMING

• 1 – “to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut” – a prediction of how Cyrus would be able to conquer Babylon in 538 BC, some 150 years later. The Euphrates River ran through the city of Babylon, and was flanked by gated walls, allowing the people access to the River by day, barring would-be intruders from the city by night. The gates were left open the night of Cyrus’ sneak attack, and his men were not only able to walk under the outer walls through the drained riverbed of the Euphrates (which they had temporarily drained into a nearby lake), but were then able to march right into the city! All this is recorded by Herodotus, who also, interestingly, mentions the party that Belshazzar was having that night (Herodotus 1.191; Dan. 5:1-4).

- 2 – “I will break in pieces the gates of bronze” – the gates around the city, as well as those along the river, were of bronze (Herodotus 1.179-180).
- 3-4 – Three times God emphasizes that He called Cyrus by name. This ability to prophecy with specificity highlights God’s omniscience and ability to see the future.
- 8 – Compare to Hos. 10:12. A beautiful metaphor for the condition of the nation of Israel upon their return to the Promised Land, a return enabled by Cyrus (vs. 13).
- 13 – Cyrus’ command to allow the exiles to return and rebuild the city predicted (see 2 Chron. 26:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4)

#### ISAIAH 45:14-25: GOD ALONE SAVES

- 14 – After speaking of the return to Israel, the prophecy now seems to look forward to the coming of the Messianic kingdom, and its inclusion of the Gentiles (see notes on Is. 11:12-16)
- 18 – “I am the LORD, and there is no other.” For the sixth time in this section of the book God affirms that there is “no other” God. Altogether, He states this nine times in Isaiah (all found in chapters 44-46).
- 23 – “That to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath.” Language applied to Jesus in Phil. 2:10-11. Jesus IS God!

#### ISAIAH 46:1-13: GOD HAS REAL POWER. IDOLS HAVE NOTHING.

- 1 – “Bel” and “Nebo” were Babylonian/Chaldean deities: “BELshazzar” “NEBuchadnezzar.” These gods were powerless, and would not be able to save them from the coming Persians (vs. 11).
- 5-7 – More on the contrast between God and the idols.
- 11 – “a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country” – Just like Nebuchadnezzar had been described as an “eagle” by Jeremiah (49:22) and Ezekiel (17:3), so Cyrus is now described as a “bird of prey.” Nebuchadnezzar came to Judah “from the north” (Jer. 6:22); Cyrus will come to Babylon “from the east.”

#### ISAIAH 47:1-11: BABYLON WILL BE HUMBLLED

- 1-3 – Babylon is metaphorically depicted as a woman of royalty, accustomed to luxury, being called down from her throne to the dust and reduced to the lowest labor (“take the millstones and grind the meal”). Furthermore, she is exposed to embarrassment and shame.
- 6 – Babylon had been God’s chosen instrument to punish Judah, but Babylon had been excessive and merciless, even toward the elderly. Jeremiah lamented this fact (Lam. 5:12).
- 7-8 – “I shall be a lady forever.” “I am, and there is no one else besides me....” Sounds a little like Babylon’s greatest king (Dan. 4:30). Bob Dylan called it “the disease of conceit.” 1 Cor. 10:12- “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”
- 9 – “in a moment, in one day” (see Dan. 5:30-31)

- 10 – “Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you” – “Knowledge puffs up” (1 Cor. 8:1)

#### ISAIAH 47:12-15: THE OCCULT OFFERS NO HOPE

• 12-13 – “enchantments...sorceries...astrologers...stargazers...monthly prognosticators....” Sounds like the lists in Daniel (2:2, 48; 4:7; 5:7) of all those who Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar turned to for help. Ezekiel gives us additional information about how Nebuchadnezzar made decisions: “For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver” (Ezek. 21:21). God sarcastically encourages the Babylonians to make use of all this “help,” to see if it will save them from the judgment He has promised.

- 14-15 – They will not even be able to save themselves, much less you!

#### ISAIAH 48:1-8: FULFILLED PROPHECY SHOULD FOSTER FAITH IN ISRAEL

• 1-2 – Israel talked like they were faithful servants, but their devotion fell far short of their declarations.

• 3-5 – Because of the hardness of Israel’s heart, God had predicted events far in advance of their fulfillment, so that when the fulfillment came, the nation would know HE was at work in the affairs of men, not idols.

• 6a – You, Israel, have witnessed the undeniable fulfillment of My prophetic predictions. Will you not testify to this truth?

• 6b-8 – Still more future events are being revealed right now—that is, Cyrus’ coming and your subsequent deliverance from Babylon. Israel, you could not have known about any of this until just now, because: “The secret things belong to the LORD our God” (Deut. 29:29).

#### ISAIAH 48:9-22: ISRAEL SHALL RETURN

• 9 – It is not because of any merit on Israel’s part that God will spare them complete annihilation. He will spare them and bring them back for His name’s sake and His praise. And this is not self-seeking on His part. For the world to be saved, God’s glory must remain intact. God was merciful to Israel, so that the nations could see His compassion, and come to know Him.

• 10-11 – God also punished Israel with the captivity for His name’s sake. The captivity purged Israel of much of its wickedness and idolatry—wickedness and idolatry that was profaning His name.

• 14-15 – What God has promised concerning Cyrus will be accomplished.

• 18-19 – God laments the sins of Israel that forced Him to punish them with the captivity, and also the losses that came about as a result.

• 20-21 – But the return from Babylon will come to pass! Happy days are on the horizon! And just as God provided water for the nation when it wandered in the wilderness toward the Promised Land the first time, so God will supply all needs on this second migration back home.

- 22 – This statement almost leaps off the page. It seems to come out of nowhere, as it speaks to things so very different from what we’ve just been reading. Perhaps that is why it is there. We must ever keep in mind that God’s good things are only for those who serve Him.

#### ISAIAH 49:1-26: THE MESSIAH WILL BE A LIGHT TO ALL PEOPLE

- 1 – The chapter begins with Jesus speaking to the “coastlands,” the Gentile nations that surround the Mediterranean that Wade commented on last week (see his notes on 41:1).
- 6 – I love this verse! God said it was too small a thing for Jesus to save only Israel. God had BIGGER things in mind. We are thankful He did.
- 8 – Quoted by Paul in 2 Cor. 6:2
- 19-21 – The Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) will be too populous for the Promised Land!
- 23 – “Kings shall be your foster fathers....” Though the kingdom is made primarily of those not highly esteemed by the world (1 Cor. 1:26-29), some even among royalty will make Christ their king and His people their people (Rev. 21:24).
- 25-26 – This promise is sure. The nation WILL be delivered from captivity, and God will bring confusion on her enemies, both physical and spiritual. Even now, as the enemies of the church seem to be growing stronger and more numerous, we can have confidence that God will be the final victor and will share the victory with us (Zech. 14:3-5; Rev. 20:9-10).

#### ISAIAH 50:1-3: WHY THE JEWS WERE PUNISHED

- 1 – God depicts Himself as the husband of His people (comp. 54:5; Jer. 3:14), and states that He has divorced the nation. He also states that she is responsible for having sold herself into slavery.
- 2-3 – This has happened because the people did not respond to God when He called to them through the prophets. It has NOT happened because He lacked the power to deliver them. He is the maker of the earth and the heavens!

#### ISAIAH 50:4-11: THE MESSIAH SPEAKS

- 4 – Jesus’ words and wisdom are from God, and are for “him who is weary” (comp. Mt. 11:28- “you who are weary and burdened” (NIV)).
- 5 – Jesus obeyed the Father (Heb. 10:7).
- 6 – “I gave My back to those who struck Me” (Mt. 27:26; Mk. 15:15; Lk. 18:33; Jn. 19:1); “My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard” (the New Testament gives no additional detail about this); “I did not hide My face from shame and spitting” (Lk. 17:32).
- 10 – The one who walks in darkness should trust in the LORD who will give him light.
- 11 – The wicked kindle their own light, which pales in comparison to the light God gives, as sparks pale in comparison with the sun. “It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jer. 10:23), but many try anyway. For their stubborn refusal to trust in the LORD, the hand of the Messiah (our final judge, Mt. 25; 2 Cor. 5:10) will give them torment. These last two verses remind me of the closing of Psalm 2: “Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.”

## Comment

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, John! Very helpful to me!

## Comment

Ginger Hermon:

Well, it only took me 3 months to miss a day. :( Got home last night & unfortunately my earth suit was too worn out for Friday's reading. Thankfully, through everyone's encouragement and a new day provided by God, I was able to catch up. So glad we have this group on FB. Helps to keep me accountable. John Morris - You are an excellent teacher! Thank you for assisting with our reading this week. What a blessing you are to the Kingdom! Really appreciated you pointing out this info: "I am the LORD, and there is no other." For the sixth time in this section of the book God affirms that there is "no other" God. Altogether, He states this nine times in Isaiah (all found in chapters 44-46). God Alone Saves!

## Replies:

John Morris:

What an encourager you are, Ginger Hermon. Thanks for that shot in the arm!

## March 10 Isaiah 51-55 (Wade Stanley)

Good morning everyone. Here are my notes from Isaiah 51-55. I think I have offered explanations for the more challenging passages. If I missed something, please let me know.

After starting chapter 53, I decided to not offer too many comments. This allowed me to complete the assignment for this week. I also know that chapter 53 is the most familiar passage in Isaiah.

Feel free to comment below if you so desire.

### Chapter 51

Verses 1-2: God reminds Israel of their humble beginnings

- This is a call to the faithful
- Remember your humble beginnings -- hewn from a rock, dug out of a hole
- God did not call an entire nation, He called Abraham alone

Verse 3: Isaiah promises comfort and renewal for the people of God.

Verses 4-8: Messianic

- Verses 4-5: elements of the gospel
  - Law proceeding from God
  - Justice will become a light
  - Righteousness is near
  - Salvation has gone forth
  - The coastlands (Gentiles) will wait upon the Lord
- Verse 6 is a definite allusion to the judgment of the world

- Verses 7-8: He tells the faithful to endure because their righteousness will outlast the wicked

Verses 9-11: Isaiah urges God to act

- Verse 9: he calls upon God to vanquish the enemies of Israel as He did in former times
- Verse 10: reference to the crossing of the Red Sea
- Verse 11: the joyful restoration of Jerusalem and Judah following captivity

Verses 12-16: God calls to His people to remember

- Verses 12-13: reminiscent of Matthew 10:28; their irrational fear of man has caused them to forget their Creator
- Verse 14: the captive will not remain in custody for long
- Verses 15-16: another reminder that God is Creator, that He has called them, that He will preserve them, that He has spoken to them through the prophets

Verses 17-20: Isaiah issues a “wake up call” to Jerusalem

- Verse 17, “drunk at the hand of the Lord”
  - God has permitted His people to embrace idolatry; consider
  - Isaiah compares their spiritual state with inebriation (see verses 21-22); compare with Deuteronomy 28:15, 28-29 and Psalm 60:3
- Verse 18: a total leadership vacuum
- Verse 19: Isaiah cannot comfort the guilty as they face destruction, famine, and sword

Verses 21-23: God calls out to the spiritually inebriated

- Verse 22: Jerusalem has reached its drink limit
- Verse 23: God will not abandon His people entirely
  - He will not excuse them from the consequences, but the consequences will not entirely destroy them.
  - The cup will be turned over to their adversaries who thought they would utterly destroy Israel; compare with Jeremiah 25:17-29 and Isaiah 49:25-26

Isaiah 52

Verses 1-2: Isaiah urges Jerusalem to repent and make herself ready for the coming of the Lord.

- Verse 1:
  - A time is coming when the adversary will not touch Jerusalem
  - Most likely applies to the spiritual Jerusalem, the city of the Messiah
  - “Put on your beautiful garments”: compare with Revelation 21:2
- Verse 2
  - Sitting in the dust emblematic of repentance
  - A call to joy and liberty

Verses 3-6: God bemoans the plight of His people

- Verse 3, “you shall be redeemed without money”
  - Most likely refers to their liberation from captivity
  - The passage has strong Messianic undertones as well; reminiscent of 1 Peter 1:18-19
- Verses 4-5: Israel’s sordid history is a litany of failed leadership
- Verse 6: God will do something for His people that will make His name known among them.

Verses 7-12: Isaiah rejoices in the salvation of God

- In this section, the intended audience is mixed.
  - Some parts are Messianic, some are intended for those in captivity.
  - However, the messages for the captives can be spiritually applied to those who live in the Messianic age.
- Verse 7: quoted by Paul in Romans 10:15

- We often quote Romans 10:17 to demonstrate that the word of God is the source of faith.
- In context, Paul is urging Christians to take the message of the gospel to Israel.
- Verse 8: those who see the messengers on the horizon will rejoice
- Verse 9: the good news of Jesus is the message of comfort to Zion
- Verse 10, “all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God”: Matthew 28:19-20
- Verses 11-12: at face value, these verses seem to apply to the captives.
  - God urges Israel to depart from the midst of their captors and purify themselves from the taint of association with idolatry (compare to 48:20 as well as Jeremiah 50:8, 51:6, 51:45).
  - The return to Jerusalem was gradual
  - Reminiscent of 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, note especially verse 17
  - Also compare with Revelation 18:1-7

Verses 13-15: Messianic; God describes His Servant, Jesus

- The chapter break is deceiving; this section belongs with chapter 53.
- Verse 13, “Behold my servant”
  - The same servant described in 42:1
  - “...he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted”: points to the glorification of the Messiah upon His ascension to the right hand of God
  - Compare with Psalm 2:6-9 and 110:1-2
- Verse 14: foretells the physical abuse suffered by the Messiah at the hands of His persecutors; chapter 53 will expand this further
- Verse 15
  - “...sprinkle many nations”: see 1 Peter 1:2, Hebrews 10:22
  - “...for that which was not told them they see...”: see 1 Corinthians 2:6-9

#### Chapter 53

- Verse 1: a continuation of the thought in 52:15 concerning the kings of the earth.
- Verses 2-3: the humble origins and life of the Messiah
  - Verse 2, “like a root out of dry ground”: the line of descent from David to Jesus was no longer regarded
  - Verse 2 also talks about Jesus’s plain and common appearance
- Verse 3: the rejection, loneliness, and sorrow at the hands of man suffered by Jesus
- Verses 4-6: Jesus suffered and died for our sins
- Verses 7-9: the solitude and injustice suffered by Jesus in life and death
- Verses 10-12: His suffering was not in vain.

#### Chapter 54

It appears that the entire chapter is dedicated to the Messianic kingdom.

- In the middle of an extensive passage about the Messiah
  - Messianic elements in 52:7-12
  - Detailed descriptions of the Messiah, His mission, and His suffering in 52:13 - 53:12
  - The darkness of 53 is followed by rejoicing at the salvation accomplished by the Messiah in 54
- Paul quotes Isaiah 54:1 in Galatians 4:27 and says it applies to the covenant of Christ via the promise to Abraham and “his seed”

Verses 1-3: God calls His people to celebrate the renewal of His people and the expansion of His kingdom.

- Verse 1: compare with Galatians 4:21-31
  - “Children of the desolate”
    - The children of Sarah, the children of the freewoman, the children of promise, the children of Jerusalem above, Mt. Zion

- The church
- “Children of the married woman”
  - The children of Hagar, the children of the bondwoman, the children of slavery, the children of earthly Jerusalem, Mt. Sinai
  - Those who remain under the Old Covenant
- Verse 3, “your descendents will inherit the nations”
  - The universality of the Messianic kingdom
  - Compare with Isaiah 60:10-13 and 61:5-9

Verses 4-10: God has redeemed His people from reproach and He promises that His favor will endure.

- Verses 4-8
  - Applies to the Jews: God will redeem them from captivity and restore His relationship with them, culminating with the arrival of Jesus and the kingdom of God.
  - Applies to Gentiles: they would no longer be “strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”
- Verse 9, “the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth”
  - Affirms a worldwide, and not a localized, flood event in the days of Noah
  - If this is not true, then God’s promise of renewal in this passage is false
- Verse 10, “covenant of peace”: see Colossians 1:19-20 and Ephesians 2:14-18

Verses 11-17: A message to Jerusalem, Messianic

- Verses 11-12
  - “foundations...pinnacles...gates...walls” all point to Jerusalem
  - Not literal Jerusalem, but spiritual Jerusalem; compare with Revelation 21:10-21
- Verse 13,
  - “all your children”: the children of Jerusalem; see comments on verse 1
  - “taught by the Lord”: compare with another Messianic prophecy in 2:3 as well as John 6:45
- Verse 14
  - “In righteousness you shall be established”: compare with 2 Peter 3:13
  - No fear or terror: Hebrews 2:14-15, Hebrews 12:20-24
- Verses 15-17: Jerusalem above is protected from her enemies

Isaiah 55

Verses 1-5: the conclusion of an extensive stretch of Messianic prophecies

- Verses 1-2: compare with John 4:10-14, 6:26-33, 7:37-39
- Verse 3, “make with you an everlasting covenant...David”: clear reference to Jesus and covenant He would inaugurate
- Verse 5: another reference to the inclusion of the Gentiles

Verses 6-13: urging the captives to return to God

- Verses 6-7: now is the time for repentance; it will not last forever
- Verses 8-9: it is impossible for us to fathom the mind of God
- Verses 10-11: with an analogy, God illustrates how His word will accomplish its purpose; a great passage to bear in mind when we are sharing the gospel with others!
- Verses 12-13: the liberation of His people will be an occasion for great rejoicing

## **Comment:**

Steven Wright:  
Thanks Wade!

## Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Wade, in particular for the comparisons!

## Comment:

Marc Hermon:

It's amazing how much information was given about the coming Messiah so that people wouldn't miss him. Isa. 53:9 is one of my favorites. "He was assigned a grave with the wicked, (died with thieves) but given a grave with the rich in his death. (Joseph gave him his tomb).

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Wade, I cannot thank you enough for these notes. This is the first I've studied Isaiah all the way through so I am very blessed to have your & John's guidance. I am surprised Marc did not bring attention to Isaiah 53:7 (a favorite verse for us both) It's a great scripture to memorize & equip ourselves with when we are tempted. "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open His mouth." I really need to work on being silent before men, just as our Lord was.

## March 17 Isaiah 56-61 (John Morris)

Reading for March 17, 2017

ISAIAH 56-61

### CHAPTER 56

- 56:1-2: Salvation is approaching! Though this probably looks, in the short term, to the nation's deliverance from Babylon, it ultimately heralds the coming of "the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Mt. 6:33). And since all that is coming, the people should repent and live in obedience, putting themselves in a proper frame of mind to receive the blessings that are coming. This harmonizes with the stated purpose for John the Immerser's work (Lk. 1:16-17).
- 56:3-8: A figurative and very memorable description of the inclusiveness of the coming kingdom, also described as God's "house" (56:5)—in other words, His temple (comp. Eph. 2:21). Foreigners (Gentiles), who had no place among God's chosen people, and eunuchs, some of whom were excluded from the Jewish assembly (Deut. 23:1), are now welcomed, honored, and their worship accepted...provided they are obedient (comp. Ac. 10:35). Note that vs. 7 is quoted by Jesus during His second and final cleansing of the temple: "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves'" (Lk. 19:46).
- 56:9-12: A less pleasant part of this chapter. God calls the beasts of the field to come and devour the blind, ignorant, dumb, sleeping, lazy, greedy leaders of His people (comp. Jer. 12:9). Who are these devouring beasts? Likely, the Babylonians. And how will the leaders respond to this warning? Let's party! (vs. 12). Reminds me of Amos 6:3-7.

### CHAPTER 57

- 57:1-2: An amazing couple of verses. God calls attention to the fact that the righteous are dying. How, we are not told. Perhaps this is prophetic of the coming persecutions of

Manasseh (2 Kings 21:16), or it may speak instead (or also) of the righteous dying premature deaths in other ways. Whatever the case, there is a trend of the righteous dying prematurely, and God points out that no one is noticing this phenomenon! Through death, the righteous are escaping the present and coming evils (for the faithful, there are things worse than death), and the evil are not taking it to heart.

- 57:3-10: More on Judah's sins. Here an idol, there an idol, everywhere an idol, idol. They had objects of worship in groves of trees, in valleys, under the clefts of rocks, by streams, on mountaintops, even behind doors and doorposts. Additionally, Judah, in her harlotry, went to great lengths to seek help/favors from others nations (vs. 9), rather than trust in the living God ("even descended to Sheol" probably expresses how they sought far and wide for foreign aid). And though all this sinning resulted only in fatigue and futility, at no point did the nation ever see the hopelessness of it all, and sorrow for their sins.

- 57:11-13: The nation "lied" to God by breaking their promise to remain faithful to Him (Ex. 19:8). God asks, "Is it not because I have held My peace from of old that you do not fear Me?" (vs. 11). Reminds me of Eccl. 8:11. Vs. 13 is the clincher. The idols will ultimately just be dust in the wind. Those who trust in God will inherit His blessings.

- 57:14-19: An order is given to prepare a path by which God's purposes and His people can advance (vs. 14). God gives grace to the humble (vs. 15), and though He was rightfully angry at the sinful nation, He will not stay that way forever. The sin of the people is regarded by God as a sickness which He will heal (vs. 18), and what was lost will be restored (God's good favor, the land, the temple, the priesthood, the worship, etc.). By blessing them in this way, and thus prompting them to give thanks, He will "create the fruit of the lips" (comp. Heb. 13:15).

- 57:20-21: While the righteous enjoy peace, "the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest." Compare vs. 21 with Is. 48:22.

## CHAPTER 58

- 58:1: God commands Isaiah to make a proclamation concerning the people's sin.

- 58:2-12: The people gave the appearance of wanting to follow after God (vs. 2), engaging in fasting, but then wondered why God did not respect their prayer and fasting (vs. 3). The answer lay in the fact that their fasting was not accompanied by godly living. God tells them what kind of life should accompany a fast (vs. 6-10), and promises that He will guide and guard them when they so fast. Furthermore, "[t]hose from among you shall build the old waste places," etc. (vs. 12). God would bring a repentant portion of the people back from captivity to rebuild the temple, their homes, the wall, the streets. And their success in that work would not go unnoticed by those observing them (comp. Neh. 6:15-16). Might just add that when we repent, even if after years of destructive sinning, God enables the rebuilding of what was broken down. We can rebuild lives, marriages, relationships, character, even abilities. And this work of God in us will not go unnoticed (Mt. 5:16).

- 58:13-14: If they will put God first in their lives, He promises they will enjoy His blessings (Mt. 6:33).

## CHAPTER 59

- 59:1-8: Judah has become a land of rampant iniquity. The people hands are covered in blood, possibly alluding to child sacrifices (Ps. 106:38). They are liars, violent, unjust, and others whom they involve in their sin are destroyed ("They hatch vipers' and...he who eats of

their eggs dies” (vs. 5)). Their prayers are not heard by a holy God (vs. 2), and theirs is the lot of the wicked: “whoever takes that way shall not have peace” (comp. 48:22 and 57:21).

- 59:9-19: In vss. 9-11, we hear the people speak about their circumstances, the consequences of sin (note the transition from “they” in the preceding verses to “we” and “us” in these). In their condition of spiritual estrangement, the people seek to remedy their problems themselves, but without success. Like those who are blind, they grope for a wall to give them orientation, but are unable to find their footing. Like groaning, moaning animals, they bemoan their sad state. Hopelessness has set in. The days before the nation’s fall were dark and difficult, and fraught with disappointment. Without God, there was no one to save them! In vss. 12-15a, Isaiah and/or the people admit the reality of the nation’s sins, and in vss. 15b-21, God determines to intervene. God was displeased with what was happening not only inside the nation, but outside the nation, as well, among the Gentiles. Metaphorically dressing Himself in garments that should sound familiar to us (comp. vs. 17 with Eph. 6:17, 17 and 1 Thess. 5:8), God, thus prepared, will repay His enemies both inside and outside Judah, and His work of judgment will be so striking that His name will be glorified among peoples in the east and west (vs. 19).

- 59:20-21: Once again, after promising to punish His enemies, God promises to send the Messiah, the Redeemer. In vs. 21, the “you” is singular, so it seems God is speaking to the Messiah rather than the nation (the “them” of vs. 21). If correct, here God promises the Spirit to the Jesus (cf. 42:1; Mt. 3:16), that His words will be in Jesus’ mouth (cf. 50:4; Jn. 15:1), and that those words will not depart from the Jesus’ mouth, nor from the mouths of the His descendants. Who are the Jesus’ descendants? Christians! This is why Jesus is called the “Everlasting Father” (Is. 9:6), and why He called the disciples “little children” (Jn. 13:33), and promised them that He would not leave them orphans (Jn. 14:18).

## CHAPTER 60

Here begins what has been called the most optimistic portion of the book (chs. 60-62). After learning of the Redeemer’s coming (59:20), we now are informed about what wonderful changes He brings.

- 60:1-2: The feminine singular pronoun indicates God is speaking to Zion, His people. Their day has come. They are told to “arise” (perhaps indicating they are in a lowly place--sorrow and repentance), because the “light” and “glory” of God are about to shine down on them (which would include, among many other blessings, the forgiveness of sins!).

- 60:3-5a: The Gentiles are attracted to Zion (the church), which now shines the light of Christ into a dark world. Even kings are drawn to the truth. People from all over the world are flowing into the kingdom (comp. 2:2-3), and this causes those in the kingdom to beam with joy (vs. 5a).

- 60:5b-9: The wealth of the world is flowing into Zion. But not camels, dromedaries, silver, gold, incense, flocks, and rams, literally. Those coming into the kingdom are bringing their best—that is, what God requires. And they are figuratively laying it on the altar of God (vs. 7), offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God (1 Pet. 2:5).

- 60:10-14: Here the subject matter of the previous two sections is combined. Foreigners (Gentiles), former enemies of God’s people (vs. 14), will help in the construction of Zion (vs. 10), and the best that the Gentiles have to offer will be poured into the construction of God’s temple (vs. 11, 13). The gates of Zion will never be shut, so that the flow of new converts is never obstructed (vs. 11).

• 60:15-18: God promises His blessings to Zion, the church. Zion of old was forsaken and left desolate for a time, but that will never be true of the church. The new Zion will be an upgrade on every level when compared to its predecessor. Gold will replace bronze, silver will replace iron, bronze will replace wood, etc. This new covenant is a better covenant established on better promises (Heb. 8:6). In the church there is peace, safety, salvation, and praise (vs. 18).

• 60:19-22: The subject of light that started the chapter is revisited. These verses do not say that there will be no sun or moon, only that they will not serve as the sources of light in the new Zion. In the church, the LORD is the light. In these verses, especially, we begin to see what may be a blending of the blessings of the church on earth, which is a temporary colony of heaven, with the blessings of the future glorified church, the new Jerusalem (the two may have less distinction in God's mind than they in ours): "For the LORD will be to you an everlasting light" (vs. 20; Rev. 21:23); "And the days of your mourning shall be ended" (vs. 20; Rev. 21:4); "Also your people shall be righteous" (vs. 21; 2 Pet. 3:13).

## CHAPTER 61

• 61:1-3: Vss. 1-2a were read and proclaimed fulfilled by Jesus in Nazareth (Lk. 4:18-19).

• 61:4-7: More about the nature of the kingdom of the Messiah. As predicted in 58:12, the kingdom of God will typified by rebuilding what was before broken down. The restored (Christians) will be restorers (perhaps, Peter had some of this in mind in Ac. 3:21). Again, Gentiles are mentioned as having a place in the coming kingdom. God reveals, also, that members of the Messiah's kingdom will be priests (vs. 6) (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

• 61:8-9: For the 14th and final time, God begins a declaration with, "I, the LORD." God requires justice in those who serve Him, and He will bless those in the kingdom to such an extent that all will know that they are, in fact, "the posterity whom the LORD has blessed."

• 61:10-11: Here, perhaps, the church speaks in the first person. She is rejoicing, clothed in salvation and righteousness, certain that the LORD will cause righteousness and praise (to Him) to appear before the eyes of the world. The world is not righteous and does not praise God, but it witnesses both in the church. And if souls have eyes to see and ears to hear, they will be inspired to join the bride in both!

## Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

John Morris: Thank you - once again - for an excellent commentary on chapters from Isaiah. I really appreciate this verse: Isa 61:10, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." We are to put on the "Robes of Righteousness" in order to get ready for the coming of Jesus Christ. Rev. 19:7, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."

## March 26 Isaiah 62-66 (Wade Stanley)

Isaiah 62-66

Good morning all. Next week, we begin the book of Jeremiah, a book that you should find quite relevant in our times. For the present, we finish with five glorious chapters from Isaiah. If you have been keeping up with the reading, you will see the familiar themes of repentance,

captivity, restoration, and the Messianic kingdom are recapitulated. You will also notice in these chapter some familiar phrasing for both heaven and hell.

Enjoy the reading!

#### Isaiah 62

Jerusalem would no longer suffer the ignominy of captivity and oppression at the hands of her enemies. The Lord will restore glory to Zion, an occasion which demands rejoicing and joy. The whole chapter is a promise of restoration that is ultimately fulfilled with the coming of Christ and the advent of His kingdom (aka Jerusalem and Zion) upon earth.

Verses 1-5: Jerusalem will one day shine as a beacon of righteousness to the nations of the Gentiles.

Verses 6-7: The watchmen of Jerusalem will not cease to declare God's good works.

Verses 8-9: Jerusalem will enjoy the harvest of God's blessings once again.

Verses 10-12: Jerusalem is to prepare for the approach of salvation from God.

#### Isaiah 63

Verses 1-6: Isaiah questions and the Lord answers

This passage certainly has Messianic undertones: God's judgment is depicted as a winepress is echoed in Revelation 14:18-20 (most likely a proleptic representation of the final judgment of mankind)

Also has relevance to the faithful Israelite who is suffering the consequences for the nation's long history of spiritual infidelity; God will execute vengeance on those who sought Israel's annihilation.

Verses 7-13: Isaiah and God recall Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

Notice the tenderness of God toward His people in these verses; juxtaposed with the fierce wrath expressed in the previous verses

Verse 10: rebellion grieves the Holy Spirit (see Ephesians 4:30)

Verses 14-19: Isaiah intercedes for Israel, crying out for God's mercy

#### Isaiah 64

Verses 1-7: Isaiah contrasts the goodness and severity of God and mourns the spiritually destitute state of the nation.

Verses 8-12: Isaiah pleads again for God's mercy, anticipating the destruction and woes suffered by the future generation led into captivity.

#### Isaiah 65

Verses 1-7: God articulates his frustration with Israel

Verse 1 refers to the Gentiles (quoted in Romans 10:20); reminiscent of Hosea 1:10, Romans 9:24-26, 30

Verse 2 refers to Israel and is quoted by Paul in Romans 10:21

Israel has scorned the love of God with their never-ending idolatry

Verses 8-12: God will not utterly destroy the nation, but much of it will perish for their perpetual infidelity

Verses 13-25: Messianic; a vision of the blessings ushered in by the redeeming work of Jesus

Verses 13-14: "My servants" are representative of those who follow "My Servant" (42:1); God will satisfy every longing of those who follow after the Christ and will give them reason to rejoice

Verse 15: the name of Israel will no longer be unique to the biological descents of Abraham  
Compare with Romans 9:6

"Call His servants by another name": at Antioch they were first called Christians in Acts 11:26

Verse 17: compare with 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1

Verses 18-19: Jerusalem represents the heavenly city

Verses 20-25: Not to be taken literally; the Jerusalem to come will transcend death, sickness, transience, vanity, etc.; a place of bliss and peace where man dwells in communion with God

Isaiah 66

Verses 1-2: foreshadows the spiritual nature of the kingdom to come; man cannot build a dwelling place for God; He delights in the living sacrifice

Verses 3-5: those who have sown to the flesh will reap corruption

Verses 7-24: Messianic

Verses 7-11: Zion and Jerusalem are figurative of the church as it exists in both heaven and earth

Verses 12-17: the righteous will rejoice at salvation; wrath awaits the wicked

Verses 18-21: the righteous will be taken from among the nations to serve God in His temple (once again figurative of the church)

Verses 22-24: the kingdom to come will be eternal; the wicked will perish in everlasting fire

## Comments:

LuAnn Woody:

It is like a treasure hunt reading Isaiah. You see the little gems that pop up later in the New Testament. Thanks!

## Comments:

Steven Wright:

Thanks Wade!

## Comments:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Wade Stanley, John Morris & Charles Fry for leading our studies in Isaiah. I have a new-found appreciation for this book. Isaiah gives such strong proof that the Bible came from God. Jesus fulfilled the prophecies in Isaiah exactly.