

Date: 7.21.24 | Title: Isaiah | Scripture: Isaiah

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

Middle School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.

God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.

God wants us to live for His glory.

God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.

Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies and promises.

High School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.

God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.

God wants us to live for His glory.

God is a righteous judge.

God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.

Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies and promises.

Jesus gave His life for us on the cross and He is the only way for salvation.



MEMORY VERSE

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways,
God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in
these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.”

Hebrews 1:1-2a



THE PROPHETS

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

The prophets warned people that God was going to judge their hard hearts and wicked sins. They held out hope of a time to come when God would make everything right. They foretold a coming Deliverer, who would forgive sin, defeat enemies, and bring in God's perfect kingdom. Isaiah is the first major prophet we have studied, remember the major prophets aren't more important, but are longer books in the Bible. Isaiah has 66 chapters! The first 39 chapters focus on God's condemnation of sin, and the last 27 emphasize God's plan to overcome. Isaiah wrote his book to the Southern Kingdom of Judah between 739 and 700 BC, during the reigns of 4 kings of Judah: Uzziah (d. 740 BC), Jotham (750-732 BC), Ahaz (735 – 715 BC), and Hezekiah (715 – 686 BC). His ministry lasted about 50 years, and the New Testament quotes him more than any other prophet.

Although he lived hundreds of years before Jesus was born, the book of Isaiah offers some of the clearest prophecies about the coming Messiah, especially His birth (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7) and death (Isaiah 53:1-12). The Messiah comes as a ruler and as a servant, in suffering and in victory. Before Jesus came, these contrasting pictures were difficult to reconcile as one Messiah, but He shows how they fit together in Him.

The judgement of God can be found all through the Bible among people who turned from God to their own ways and sought to make a name for themselves, or at the very least, to satisfy themselves at the cost of their disobedience. In Isaiah 22, we find a warning from God regarding the selfish ambitions and pursuits of God's people. God's people had set their hope in themselves and forgotten their Maker and Sustainer of all the good that had come to them. God was reminding them that every ounce of provision, every victory won, and every bit of directional clarity had come from Him. God was rebuking them for neglecting to remember that He was the one behind it all. God reminds us in Isaiah 22:23-25, He is the one who raises up and tears down leaders. In Isaiah 48:11, we see He will not share His glory with another. Isaiah 48:17-18 reminds us, He teaches us the way we should go, if only we would listen.

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Beyond his powerful prophecies, Isaiah was also a social reformer. In Isaiah Chapters 1-12, He foretold the future, but he also criticized God's people on their failure to trust the Lord and cautioned them on the alliances they were making with foreign powers. The ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel had been trying to hold off Assyria for 150 years before Isaiah was born. Their bribes and alliances had failed, and by the time Isaiah became a prophet, Assyria had conquered Israel in 722 BC and was marching through Judah toward Jerusalem.

Under the circumstances, Isaiah made it clear why God had permitted their enemies to draw so near (Isaiah 1:2, 4). Despite His disgust with their behavior, God was not content to leave the people floundering in their sin- He never is. Even as judgement approached, He appealed to them to return (Isaiah 1:18). While God was calling His people to return to heartfelt worship and obedience to the law, He was also using images that pointed to the cross of Christ and the ultimate sacrifice that He would offer to cleanse the hearts of any who would receive Him.

Isaiah painted a bleak picture, but not a hopeless one. God was faithful to raise up prophets to let His people know He was still there, still in control, still worthy of trust. As an example, Isaiah described his own calling (Isaiah 6). God would deliver Judah from Assyria, but in the long run, He was also preparing to deliver the entire world from its biggest enemy, sin, through His Son, Jesus Christ.

In Chapters 13-23, Isaiah mentions the nations that God had used and would use to bring about His judgement. All nine of the nations he mentioned were connected with Israel in some way. Typically, they were condemned because of how they treated Israel, in keeping with the scriptural principle established in Genesis 12:3- Bless Israel and be blessed; treat Israel poorly and be cursed.

In Chapters 28-35, Isaiah then turned his attention back home, giving 6 specific warnings to Israel and Judah. (Isaiah 28:1; 29:1, 30:1, 31:1, 32:1, 33:1) In the midst of this warning came wonder (Isaiah 35:1-2). God wanted to reason with His people, to draw them back to Him, but even when they refused, He remained faithful to His promises to Abraham and David.

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Isaiah 40 begins with welcome words after 39 chapters of convicting predictions of doom: “Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” says your God. (Isaiah 40:1-2) “Comfort” replaces “woe” as the key word. Isaiah’s shift in emphasis parallels the change between the Old and New Testaments. The first 39 chapters deal with the law, Israel’s failure to keep it, and the judgement that resulted. The last 27 focus on God’s love and grace, and the first chapter in this section connects directly to the beginning of the New Testament, with John the Baptist quoting Isaiah 40:3 in Matthew 3:3. What’s more, the last 2 chapters in Isaiah speak of the new heaven and earth (Isaiah 66:22).

Isaiah was foretelling the return of Israel from captivity in Babylon- approximately a century before Babylon even rose to power, but after the condemnation that would come Israel’s way, God would eventually comfort them by clearing a straight path to bring them back home. It seemed far off, Isaiah gave an alternate perspective in Isaiah 40:6-8. Creation will eventually lose its battle to regenerate itself, and great rulers come and go, civilizations rise and fall in an instant. God’s Word is our anchor, it is the only thing that “stands forever.”

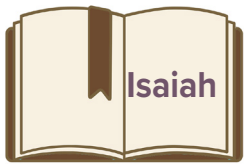
In Isaiah 49-57 we see the heart of God’s purpose for you is servanthood. Its concept comes up in different ways in Isaiah, with different servants- Jacob, Abraham, David, King Cyrus, and Jesus. In each case, Israel’s savior served God’s purpose. There are 4 sections in Isaiah called Servant Songs (Isaiah 42, 49, 50, and 52-53). They focus on the Messiah, the Ultimate Servant, Jesus Christ. Jesus came to show God’s heart, treating people with gentleness, compassion, and encouragement.

Though Israel had blown it- both in the sin that would lead to captivity in Babylon, and later in failing to receive their Messiah when Jesus came- God wasn’t through with them yet. He still isn’t. Isaiah reaffirmed God’s ongoing protection and preservation of His people (Isaiah 59:19-20; Isaiah 62:12).

Israel’s future splendor was built on the healing work of the Messiah (Isaiah 61:1-2). The millennium will accomplish two purposes: first, to redeem creation from the curse of the fall and the judgement of God. The second reason is to fulfill God’s promises to Israel- specifically, His pledge to David that he would have a spiritual and material kingdom, a throne on Mount Zion from which his descendant, the Messiah, would rule (2 Samuel 7:16).

Afterward, Jesus will defeat Satan for good and usher in a new heaven and earth (Isaiah 66:22). Israel’s best days- and yours as a believer in Christ- are yet to come.

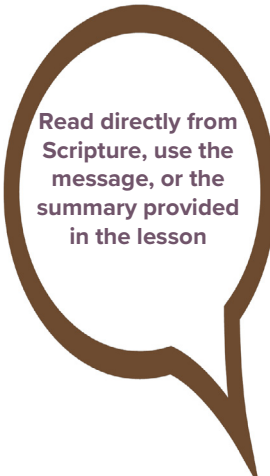
LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY



Tell the story: Use the Background Info for Leaders, the summary below and The Biggest Story Storybook Bible-What Isaiah Saw as you teach today's lesson.

TELL THE STORY

A couple of decades after Jonah, a prophet named Isaiah spoke to the kingdom of Judah. He had seen a vision of what would happen to the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the capital city of Judah. Isaiah told the people of Judah about this vision. He warned that God's judgment was coming to the people. God would punish the guilty.



Read directly from Scripture, use the message, or the summary provided in the lesson

God's people had chosen to turn away from Him and worship idols and false gods like their neighbors did. God always judges sin. Isaiah said that God's judgment was coming for the nations around Judah.

Then he said that judgement was coming to Judah too. Judah's enemy- the Babylonians- would come into Jerusalem and take over the city. The people would try to get away, but they would be killed or captured.

Isaiah told the people to repent. In his vision, Isaiah saw that instead of turning back to God, they ignored His warning. They danced in the streets and said, "Let's eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" Isaiah warned the people, saying, "This will all happen, just like God said."



The people of Judah would be punished for their sin, but Isaiah also brought them a message of hope. God's people would be captured by the Babylonians, but one day they would be set free.

Put the events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc...

Through Isaiah, God told His people to listen and obey. God would punish their sin because He wanted what was best for them. God would act for His glory and their good. "When you escape from Babylon," Isaiah said, "Go tell the good news of what God has done for you."



THE PROPHETS

Re-tell the Bible Story: put events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc.

Attributes of God: Use the attributes of God list and determine the characteristics of God that we see in today's story. How can knowing these characteristics of God to be true, change the way we live in Christ?

Share the GOSPEL:

Isaiah is called the messianic prophet because of his emphasis on God's Anointed One: He spoke of the virgin birth of the Messiah in Isaiah 7:14, prophesied both Christ's birth and His coming kingdom in Isaiah 9:6-7, and alluded to His atoning work on the cross in Isaiah 53. Salvation, mentioned 31 times in the book, is a major theme.

One of the main places we see the scarlet thread of redemption in Isaiah is in the often repeated word servant. While it sometimes refers to David (Isaiah 37) or the nation of Israel (Isaiah 41), most often it describes the Messiah. In four passages known as "the Servant Songs" (Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:14-53:12), we see the work and calling of God's ultimate servant, Jesus Christ.

God sent Isaiah to warn of His coming judgement. A greater day of judgement is coming when God will judge sin for a final time. Jesus came to die on the cross and rise again. Everyone who repents of sin and trusts in Jesus will be safe from God's judgement and have eternal life.

The messianic focus of so much of Isaiah's prophecies shows us that it was always God's plan to make the most precious and powerful of sacrifices to bring His people- both Jews and Gentiles- back into relationship with Him.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - god is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.

QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

“Storying” Questions: As you ask these questions, have your students find the answers in the actual verses of scripture instead of recalling them from your re-telling of the story. We always want to encourage all of our students to go directly to God’s Word over a commentary on or summary of scripture.

1. What does God’s warning to the people of Judah teach us about sin? See Romans 6:23
2. How did God show patience with the people of Judah? See Romans 2:3-4
3. Does God want everyone to repent? Why See 2 Peter 3:9
5. What does this story teach me about God?
6. What does this story teach me about the Gospel?
7. What does this story teach me about myself?
8. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
9. Are their promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
10. How does this story help me to live on mission better?



THE PROPHETS

PRAYER PROMPTS

God thank you for constantly pursuing your people! We do not deserve Your relentless love! You are merciful and gracious and never give up on us! Help us to follow You and love You with our thoughts, desires, and actions.

IF TIME ALLOWS:

Help the students in your group practice memorizing the books of the Bible:

- Torah: Genesis-Deuteronomy
- History: Joshua-Esther
- Poetry: Job-Song of Solomon
- Major Prophets: Isaiah-Daniel
- Minor Prophets: Hosea-Malachi
- Gospels: Matthew-John
- Paul's Letters: Romans-Philemon
- General Letters: Hebrews-Revelation

MISSIONS EMPHASIS:

For the months of August, September and October we will be collecting money for the Connie Maxwell Children's Home. Please visit their website for pictures and descriptions of some of the services they offer that you can share with your group. A generous donor will match all of our donations. Encourage your class to collect money and donate it in the giving funnel in the upstairs lobby. Students can donate with their families as they arrive, or you can go together as a class on the way back to the Worship Center at the end of SS.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

Work on memorizing this weeks verse with the students in your group. You can use the first letter of each word in the verse to help with this. For example, the unit verse would look like this:



Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?



Application Questions

LOOK OUTWARD

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and in the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?