

# Isaiah 40-66

## God Comforts His People

### 41 Small Group Bible Studies

By John Edmiston

These studies are designed for personal or small group use and take about 45 minutes to an hour each. The questions are designed to be thought-provoking. There are eight or nine questions per lesson. The studies are interdenominational in nature.

*You will need:*

A good accurate translation of the Bible suitable for research purposes (not a paraphrase)

A study Bible would be helpful

The group leader should have access to a Bible dictionary or a commentary.

Themes: Jesus in prophecy, the folly of idols, ethics, the sovereignty of God, the uniqueness of God, prophecy, justice, the love, mercy and compassion of God, God and Israel.

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## Isaiah 40:1-11 Some Big Themes Get Introduced

Isaiah starts this section by throwing out 4 short snippets of the really BIG ideas that he will then develop through to the end of chapter 66. These are words of comfort for Jews in Babylon and are written for well into the future from Isaiah's day two centuries earlier. Many of the prophecies have multiple references – Jews in Babylon, the time of Christ, the Gospel and Church, and the Return of the Lord.

1. Read Isaiah 40:1,2 – What is God saying to the Jews? Does God stay angry forever? What does this say about our relationship with God?
2. “Iniquity” is sin so weighty that it naturally brings about its own catastrophic punishment (Isaiah 30:13). Iniquity is compared to a bulge in a wall that breaks and brings down the whole wall on those underneath. But God forgives it, see Isaiah 33:24, Jeremiah 50:20, Micah 7:18,19
3. Read Isaiah 40:3-5 and Matthew 3:1-5, John 1:19-34 - How was Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled? How many centuries did it take?
4. How does Isaiah 40:3-5 also point to the Return of Jesus? (Revelation 1:7, Matthew 24:26-31)
5. Read Isaiah 40:6-8 (This is an interaction between Isaiah and God.) What is the stark contrast that it draws between human history and God's eternity? How does it compare with the message of Isaiah 6:8-13?
6. What does it tell us about God's Word and the Gospel? See 1 Peter 1:22-25
7. Read Isaiah 40:9 - What is the “good news”? (Luke 8:1, Romans 10:15) How many different fulfillments does this prophecy have? What does it mean to “behold your God!”
8. Read Isaiah 40:10,11 - What do these two verses tell us about God? About both His severity and His mercy? (see Romans 11:22 which speaks about Jews and Gentiles, not individuals)
9. How is God gentle toward the weak and vulnerable? (Isaiah 42:3, Ezekiel 34:16, John 10:11-16)

## Isaiah 40:12-31 - To Whom Then Will You Liken God?

*These verses involve a lot of analogical thinking, where you have to use analogies, comparisons and inferences to get the point of what is going on. Try to think "what is the background to which this verse is the foreground" e.g. the contrast between created / humanly constructed idols and the Creator God.*

1. Read the whole of Isaiah 40:12-31 – how does it answer the theological question of: "To whom then will you liken God?"
2. Isaiah 40:12-14 is a series of rhetorical questions (questions that are asked just to make a point in an argument, and which have obvious answers). What point is Isaiah making here? What does this tell us about the greatness of God?
3. Read Isaiah 40:15-17 What are the nations like before God? How "big" is God? What does this tell us about world politics and about ancient empires such as Babylon? How important is it to have this divine perspective?
4. Read Isaiah 40:18-20 List at least five of the differences between idols and God.
5. Read Isaiah 40:21-24 How does the eternal God outlast human institutions and empires? How are they like "stubble"? How should this knowledge help us as we pray to God?
6. Read Isaiah 40:25,26 What is God's relationship to the stars? How does this refute Babylonian astrology? Why shouldn't Christians read horoscopes? (Isaiah 47:12-15)
7. How great is God's knowledge of the Universe? How intimate is God's knowledge of the stars? Does He ever fail to keep things going? How does this contrast with the chaotic behavior of the so-called pagan gods?
8. Read Isaiah 40:27,28 - What is Israel complaining about? How was this questioning of God based on an incorrect understanding of God? How can good theology help us?
9. Read Isaiah 40:29-31 How does God strengthen those who have faith in Him? How is God's strength, our strength? See also Galatians 2:20 and Ephesians 3:20,21

## Isaiah 41:1-20 Do Not Fear

*This prophecy seems to jump between Cyrus, Israel and condemning idols, but all along it is declaring the absolute sovereignty of YHWH and His love for His people.*

1. Read Isaiah 41:1-4 as God contends with certain nations by bringing the Persian ruler Cyrus against them. How does this illustrate the sovereignty of God?
2. What claim does God make about His existence (v.4)? See also Revelation 22:13
3. What is the futile response of those who are about to be judged by God? (Isaiah 41:5-7, Isaiah 2:18-22, Revelation 9:20,21)
4. Read Isaiah 41:8-10 What had God done for Israel in the past? How is Israel feeling now? What is God's reassurance to them? And what is His promise to them?
5. Read Isaiah 41:11-13 - How are the wicked often incensed against the righteous (think social media)? Should we be afraid of angry sinners? Who is our help?
6. Read Isaiah 41:14-16 How will God use Israel as part of His process of judging the nations? What do the "mountains" and "hills" symbolize? (Isaiah 2:12-17, Zechariah 4:7, 2 Corinthians 10:4,5)
7. Read Isaiah 41:17,18 How can this be interpreted on BOTH a literal level and on a spiritual level? (Ezekiel 47:1-11, John 4:14, 7:38, Revelation 7:17, 21:6, 22:1,17)
8. Read Isaiah 41:19,20 How has some of this been fulfilled since the reestablishment of the State of Israel? Where does God do His best miracles (v.19)? What are the spiritual lessons here for Christians?
9. How many times does God declare: "I will", "I shall" or "I am" in these 20 verses? What does that tell us about the way that God works?

## Isaiah 41:21-42:9

### *The futility of idols and the glory of the coming Messiah*

1. Read Isaiah 41:21-24 – What is the Lord’s challenge to the idol gods and to those who worship them? What are the idols incapable of doing?
2. How does God regard people who choose to worship idols instead of the Living God (Isaiah 41:24, Deuteronomy 7:25,26)? Does this still apply today (1 John 5:21, Revelation 9:20)? What should we do with idols?
3. Read Isaiah 41:25-29 - What were the idols and astrologers unable to predict? What was God’s evaluation of their so-called wisdom? See also Romans 1:18-25
4. Read Isaiah 42:1-4 and Matthew 12:15-21 What events in the life of Jesus fulfilled this prophecy of Isaiah? What are some of the key characteristics of the Messiah? What should Christians be like as a result?
5. Read Isaiah 42:5 How is God described? How is YHWH related to His Creation?
6. Read Isaiah 42:6,7 How does this passage describe the ministry of Jesus Christ? What incidents in the gospels remind you of this passage being fulfilled? See also Matthew 11:5, John 8:12, Acts 26:18, etc.
7. How did God set Jesus Christ as a covenant for us? Matthew 26:28, 1 Corinthians 11:25, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Hebrews 8:6-13,
8. Read Isaiah 42:8 How does God protect His glory? What are the consequences of this for us as Christians?
9. Read Isaiah 42:9 How does the fulfillment of prophecy help us to have confidence in the power, sovereignty and wisdom of God?

## Isaiah 42:10-25 Two Kinds Of Blindness

*These passages are full of illustrations, analogies and allegories, so put your spiritual thinking cap on!*

1. Read Isaiah 42:10-12 God's praise reaches the ends of the earth and the remote parts of the earth (deserts, islands etc.). How can we carry the gospel to the last, the lost and the least so that Jesus is worshipped? (Psalm 97:1, Isaiah 24:14,15)
2. Read Isaiah 42:13,14 What is God doing here? Why does God restrain Himself in times past? What happens during times of judgment? (2 Peter 3:9,10; Acts 17:30,31)
3. Isaiah 42:15,16 In a previous study we saw that mountains = high and lofty people/ situations and pride that obstruct God (Zechariah 4:6,7). What sort of changes is God making in the world? How is He removing obstructions to the gospel? Who are the "blind" in these verses? What will God do for those without the gospel?
4. Isaiah 42:17 What will happen to those who trust in worldly idols?
5. Read Isaiah 42:18-20 and Revelation 3:17,18 Who are "the blind" in these verses and how are they different from the "blind" in the remote parts of the world? What is the cause of their blindness? What is the spiritual effect of constant disobedience?
6. Read Isaiah 42:21-23 What happens to people who ignore God's instruction? In what are they being "plundered and looted"? How does that teach us to "listen up and obey" in future?
7. Read Isaiah 42:24 How does God give people over to be "plundered" when they ignore the hard and fast rules of His moral universe? What is happening in many areas of society today?
8. Read Isaiah 42:25 What happens when judgment finally comes? Do people understand why they are being judged? (see also Isaiah 1:5,6; 9:13)
9. How does the repentance of "the islands" and the stubbornness of Israel play into the prophetic theme of Romans 11:7-9, 25-27?

## Isaiah 43:1-13 The Price of Jewish Redemption and Liberation

*The Jews in Babylon are sent back to Judea, in turn Cyrus gets to conquer Egypt and other nations.*

1. Read Isaiah 43:1,2 What is meant by this, God's opening statement to Israel?
2. How do the promises in verses 1 and 2 above also apply to the Christian life? (Romans 8:28-39)
3. Read Isaiah 43:3,4 How is God showing His love for His people? - [BTW: The "ransom" here is used as a rather loose term meaning that in return for letting the Jews go back to Judea the Persian King Cyrus will get to conquer Egypt and some small North African nations that were not previously part of the Babylonian Empire.]
4. Read Isaiah 43:5-7 Where will God gather the returning Jews from? How is this an example of the multiple fulfillment of a prophecy?
5. "Do not fear for I am with you!" (Isaiah 43:5 see also 43:1,2 and 41:10,14 and also 1 John 5:18, Matthew 28:18-20). How can we live fearless Christian lives? Can you think of some gospel stories involving Jesus that involve this principle?
6. Read Isaiah 43:7 How does this verse apply both to Israel and to Christians? What does it teach us about God's purpose for our Christian lives?
7. Read Isaiah 43:8-10 [There are two groups here. The nations (idol worshippers) in verses 8 and 9, whose witness is futile. And the Jews in verse 10, who are witnesses to Yahweh the One True God.] What is God's purpose for His witnesses and how does it apply to us?
8. Read Isaiah 43:10-13 What do we learn here about the absolute incomparable uniqueness of the One True God?
9. Compare verse 13 "I act and who can reverse it" with John 10:28-30 – What does this tell us about the security of our salvation ?

## Isaiah 43:14-28 Israel Neglected God!

*Context notes:* In verse 14 – the Babylonians were trapped by the Persian King Cyrus who drained the River and accessed Babylon and the ships they had prepared for escape were useless. Also there are two distinct sections here: verses 14-21 Escaping from Babylon, making a way through the wilderness. And 22-28 – Renewing the abandoned covenant with God.

1. Read Isaiah 43: 14-21 where God's redemption is described as an escape from Babylon, through an impassable and impossible wilderness, into a new and amazing relationship with God. How is this true on both a natural level and a spiritual level?
2. What is spiritual Babylon? (Revelation 17:1-5, 18:1-8) and how are we to escape it? (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)?
3. How does God make a path in the wilderness for believers? (Isaiah 43:16-19) And what does He provide for us there? (Isaiah 43:20, Revelation 22:1,17)
4. Read Isaiah 43:14,15,21 Describe the relationship between God and believers. What are the terms used? What do they signify? What does God promise?
5. How can Christians get stuck in the past? (Isaiah 43:18,19) What are we to do instead?
6. Read Isaiah 43:22-28 What is God's complaint with Israel?
7. Compare Acts 17:24,25, Micah 6:6-8 with Isaiah 43:23,24 What does God really want from us?
8. Why does God blot out our sins? (Isaiah 43:25, Ezekiel 36:21-24, Psalm 25:11, Micah 7:18,19)
9. Read Isaiah 43:26-28 and compare this with the curse of the Law in Deuteronomy 28:15-68. How did the disobedience of Israel trigger the curse of the Law? How are we redeemed from the curse of the Law? (Galatians 3:10-14)



## Isaiah 44:1-8 - Water On Thirsty Ground

1. Read Isaiah 44:1,2 Notice the three names of Israel: Jacob (Genesis 25:24-26) which means Supplanter, Israel (Genesis 32:24-29) which means Prince of God, and Jeshurun (Deuteronomy 32:15, 33:5,26,27) which means Upright One. What is the theological significance of these three names in this passage?
2. Parallelism is an Old Testament way of saying the same thing in slightly different ways for reinforcement of an idea. Here it is ..."Jacob My servant and Israel my chosen"... later followed by "Jacob my servant and Jeshurun My Chosen..." What is God trying to say here?
3. What does the first part of Isaiah 44:2 tell us about God's absolute commitment to us?
4. Read Isaiah 44:3 [Notice the parallelism! In verse 3, the first part of the verse is concrete and literal, while the second part is spiritual and theological, but they are saying exactly the same thing!] What is God's promise to His people? Compare it with Acts 2:17,18 and Ephesians 4:10
5. Read Isaiah 44:4,5 How does verse 5 expand on the idea in verse 4? How does the pouring out of the Spirit (v.3) result in spiritual growth (v. 4,5). How do they express their loyalty to God?
6. Read Isaiah 44:6 List all of the ways in which God describes Himself? How would this encourage Israel? How would it help them to overcome any superstitious fear of foreign gods such as the occult gods of Babylon? [Note: Lord of Hosts = "Yahweh of Hosts" (Yahweh tsebha'oth) and means the God who is in charge of spirits, angels, heavenly armies etc. Psalm 103:21. A term associated with God defending Israel in war – 1 Samuel 17:45, Isaiah 1:24]
7. Read Isaiah 44:7,8 What theological challenge is God issuing here? What is God's question to them?
8. In Isaiah 44:8 (in the Hebrew and in some translations) God describes Himself as a "Rock", what does that mean? (1 Samuel 2:2, 2 Samuel 22:2,3, Psalm 31:2,3, 1 Corinthians 10:4)
9. "Do not tremble, do not be afraid..? How does having a correct view of God help us to conquer all anxiety? Philippians 4:4-9

## Isaiah 44:9-28 - Idols Are Nothing, God Is Everything

1. Read Isaiah 44:9-20 What is Isaiah's logic here? How is this a completely devastating argument against idols?
2. What is God's opinion of idols? (Isaiah 44:9,19) What is fundamentally wrong with people who choose to worship idols? (Isaiah 44:17-20, 2 Corinthians 4:3,4)
3. Read Isaiah 44:21 What is God asking Israel to remember? What won't God forget?
4. Read Isaiah 44:22,23 What two things has God done for Israel, that will cause the heavens and all nature to rejoice? How is joy a fundamental part of the way that we should react to God? (Philippians 4:4)
5. Read Isaiah 44:24 How was God involved in Creation? How does this refute polytheism (belief in many gods)? How does it also refute abortion? (Psalm 139:13, Luke 1:15,41)
6. Read Isaiah 44:25 What does God do to astrologers, diviners, false prophets and people who use the occult to make predictions about the future?
7. Read Isaiah 44:26-28 What does God do with His prophetic word given to His servants? What are some of the specific things that God promises that will happen?
8. Isaiah wrote this winning argument against idols nearly 2800 years ago. On one hand we have the blindness and folly of those who worship idols and follow the occult and on the other hand we have the clear testimony of the One Creator God and of His prophets. What is the reason that some people still choose to worship idols today?

## Isaiah 45:1-13 The Absolute Sovereignty of God Over People

1. Read Isaiah 45: 1-3 and John 3:27 - Where did Cyrus receive tremendous strength and victory from? (The Persian Empire was the largest of its time.) How does God “give” things to people?
2. Read Isaiah 45:1-3,13 and list all the things that God was saying that He would do for Cyrus.
3. Read Isaiah 45:4-6 Did Cyrus know God? Did Cyrus pray to Yahweh? Was Cyrus’ success due to his goodness or piety? How does this challenge some of our religious assumptions? Can God sovereignly use non-Christians for His purposes and can God reward non-Christians in doing so?
4. Read Isaiah 45:4-6 and John 17:3 What does it mean to really know God?
5. Read Isaiah 45:7 in a number of different translations. It is a very puzzling verse. What does it tell us about God? How could it be misunderstood? (see 1 John 1:5 for a correct perspective) How does the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah fit into this picture?
6. Isaiah 45:8 is very poetic and uses the phrases “let the skies”, “let the earth” how must we respond to God’s initiative if salvation and righteousness are to grow in our midst?
7. Read Isaiah 45:9,10 What was God’s response to those who might question Him about His blessing of Cyrus who was “the work of His hands”? How can we be envious about what God is doing with other people? (see Matthew 20:1-16)
8. Read Isaiah 45:11,12 Why does God have absolute authority over people and their destinies?
9. Read Isaiah 45:13 What was God going to do for the captive Jewish people, through Cyrus?

## Isaiah 45: 14-25 A God Who Hides Himself!

1. Read Isaiah 45:14 and Ezekiel 38:1-5,23 - These are the people of the eastern regions of North Africa, who are now solidly Muslim. What would it take for them to bow down to the God of the Jews?
2. Read Isaiah 45:15, Romans 11:33,34 - How “wise” and inscrutable are the plans of God? How is God hidden from unbelievers?
3. Read Isaiah 45:16,20 - What happens to those who create “alternative spiritual paths”?
4. Read Isaiah 45:17 - There are two kinds of Salvation a capital “s” Salvation which is for all eternity and a small “s” Salvation which is something like being saved in battle or from a flood. What is God describing here?
5. Read Isaiah 45:18,19; Amos 9:13-15, Isaiah 65:17-25 - What point is God making here? How does He create flourishing ecosystems? What can we expect if we obey God’s rules for our relationships and for our communities?
6. Read Isaiah 45:21,22 - How many times is the concept “no other God” used in these verses? Through our section today (v. 14-25)? Why is “alternative spirituality” a total fraud? Why does EVERYONE on earth have to turn to the one and only God?
7. Read Isaiah 45:23, Psalm 22:27-31 and Philippians 2:5-11 – how will God get the whole earth to worship Him, and Him alone? How serious is God about this?
8. Read Isaiah 45:24 and Psalm 2 - Who is enraged at God and why? How do we see this rage displayed today?
9. Read Isaiah 45:25, Romans 3:24,25; 1 Corinthians 6:11, 2 Corinthians 5:21 – What does it mean to be “justified” by God?

## Isaiah 46: 1-13 Spiritual Failure and God's Grace

In this chapter the idols turn out to be totally useless failures, and are carried off into captivity. (46:1,2,6,7) At the same time Israel is shown grace despite being transgressors (v.8,12). God demonstrates His sovereign grace to His chosen people with powerful promises and the fulfillment of prophecy.

**Historical note:** *Bel, called Belus by the Greek and Roman writers, is the same as Baal; and Nebo is interpreted by Castell and Norberg of Mercury; the two principal idols of Babylon. When that city was taken by the Persians, these images were carried in triumph.*

1. Read Isaiah 46:1,2 and Colossians 2:8 What happened to the so-called powerful gods of Babylon? Why does idolatry and false philosophy always end up in spiritual failure?
2. Read Isaiah 46:3,4 – What is the promise of God here? How does it apply to us as individuals? To Israel as a nation?
3. Read Isaiah 46:5,9 What is the challenge of the Lord in verse 5? How should this challenge be answered (v.9)?
4. Read Isaiah 46:6,7 How does God ridicule idols? Should Christians point out the faults of cults, false religions and empty philosophies? If so, how should it be done?
5. Read Isaiah 46:8,9 – What were the Jews to remember? How important is it for us to remember the works of the Lord?
6. Read Isaiah 46:10,11 What do these verses tell us about God?
7. Read Isaiah 46:12 What was the spiritual state of Israel? (see also verse 8) What does it mean to be hard-hearted and far from justice?
8. Read Isaiah 46:13 – What will God do for Israel in spite of their terrible spiritual state?

## Isaiah 47 – The Fall of Babylon

**Contextual Note:** *The Chaldeans were a tribe in south-eastern Babylonia noted for their astrology, “daughter of the Chaldeans” means that the Babylonians had become spiritual daughters of the astrologers.*

**Main Point:** How God judges arrogant, wealthy oppressive nations that trust in magic and sorcery.

1. Read Isaiah 47:1-3 What kind of woman is Babylon portrayed as? What happens to her? How does sin lead to utter humiliation in the end?
2. Read Isaiah 47:4 This verse contrasts sharply with the surrounding verses. How are the elect redeemed out of Babylon? (2 Corinthians 6:14-18, Revelation 18:1-5)
3. How are Christians to be separate from the world? There is a saying: “In the world but not of the world.” However, at some points we may need to get out of a certain situation (e.g. working for a dishonest employer). How can we draw the line and make the decision?
4. In Isaiah 47: 5-7 Babylon is portrayed as a merciless harsh and haughty mistress who makes life hard for her servants. How is our attitude toward others important to God? (Luke 14:11, James 4:6, Psalm 18:25-27)
5. Read Isaiah 47:10,11 Why did Babylon feel secure? How can great wisdom and knowledge lead to a false sense of security that rebels against God?
6. Read Isaiah 47:12,13 - What challenge does God hurl at the Babylonian astrologers? How much wiser are those who serve the Lord? (Daniel 1:20, 2:17-28)
7. Read Isaiah 47:14,15 - The astrologers are powerless to prevent the fall of Babylon. We can only manipulate things so far with “witchcraft” before God’s absolute moral laws and total sovereignty take over. How can Christians be involved in manipulative behavior? What should we do instead?
8. Think of the stock market. People are always trying to predict it and manipulate it but mostly they totally fail with their “systems”. How has God created a world that only works “by faith”?

## Isaiah 48:1-11 God vs. Israel

*In these verses God rebukes Israel for its willful stubbornness and unrighteousness, while, at the same time, showing great mercy to them.*

1. Read Isaiah 48:1,2 and Isaiah 1:10-14 What was wrong with the way that Israel worshipped the Lord? How does this apply to our lives as Christians?
2. Read Isaiah 48:3-5 Why did God tell them things long ago? How does the fulfillment of prophecy confirm God's word? (e.g. Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1-6)
3. Read Isaiah 48:6,7 What was God going to do? Why was He going to take this approach? What is God's attitude toward rebellious Israel?
4. Read Isaiah 48:8 What was the spiritual state of the nation of Israel? How long had it been that way? What does it mean by "their ears" had not been open? (Hebrews 5:14, Jeremiah 6:10)
5. Read Isaiah 48:9, Psalm 78:38, Ezekiel 20:21,22 Why does God delay His anger?
6. Read Isaiah 48:10, Proverbs 17:3 and Ezekiel 22:18-22 What was God going to do to Israel?
7. Read Hebrews 12:3-13 and Romans 5:1-5 Why does God discipline Christians? What is the end result?
8. Read Isaiah 48:5,11, Daniel 9:19 and Isaiah 42:8 Why does God act? Why is His glory very important?
9. How can we live for the glory of God? Why should we be very careful to give the glory to God for our success in life? (Acts 12:20-23)

## Isaiah 48:12-22 God's Alternatives

These verses emphasize BOTH God's sovereignty and human choice. Our destiny is formed by our obedience to and interaction with God's will (verses 17-19), while God is absolutely sovereign over the Babylonians.

1. Read Isaiah 48:12,13 God is speaking like a commanding General who calls the Universe to stand at attention. What is God in absolute command of (according to these verses)?
2. Read Isaiah 48:14-16, Luke 4:18 Who is God speaking about here: Cyrus or the Messiah?
3. How does God send Jesus and the Spirit? (John 3:16, Acts 2:32-36)
4. Isaiah 48:15 "and he shall prosper in his way.." How much of our prosperity is because of our own hard work, and how much is by the blessing of God?
5. Read Isaiah 48:17-19 How does God "teach us to profit" and "lead us in the way to go"? What would have happened if Israel had obeyed God? What paths will God open up to us if we choose to obey Him? What will be denied to us if we choose to disobey Him?
6. Read Isaiah 48:20 What was Israel to do now? Was there a risk involved? What is the cost of "leaving Babylon"?
7. Read Isaiah 48:21 How would God provide for the people going back to Israel as they obey Him? How does faith lead to blessing? What is the choice here?
8. Read Isaiah 48:22 Peace =Shalom = The Blessed Life Why is there no peace for the wicked? What does this tell us about choosing to obey or disobey God?
9. How does God interact with the decisions of human beings?



## Isaiah 49:1-13 The Lord, The Redeemer

A description of the Messianic Redeemer

1. Read Isaiah 49:1-3 Colossians 1:24-26 How is the Messiah “God’s secret weapon”?
2. Read Isaiah 49:4,5 and 2 Corinthians 4:9-13 How do prophets, pastors, missionaries and other servants of God feel at times? What is God’s promise to them?
3. Read Isaiah 49:6 and Luke 2:29-32 How is the Messiah to be for all nations?
4. Read Isaiah 49:7 and Philippians 2:5-11 How did this verse become a true prophecy of the life of Jesus Christ?
5. Read Isaiah 49:8, Matthew 26:28, Hebrews 8:6, 12:24 How was Jesus given as a covenant to the people?
6. Read Isaiah 49:9,10 and 2 Corinthians 4:4-6 What does the Messiah do for His redeemed ones? Why should this verse be interpreted allegorically / spiritually? How do these verses apply to Christians?
7. Read Isaiah 49:11,12, Luke 3:4,5; John 14:6 Who comes to the light of the gospel? What does God do to enable this to happen?
8. Read Isaiah 49:13, Psalm 96:11-13, 2 Thessalonians 2:16,17 What is God’s assurance to exiled Israel?

## Isaiah 49:14-26

“I have engraved you on the palms of my hands...”

A response to Israel’s complaint.

1. Read Isaiah 49:14, Psalm 42:7-11 What is Israel’s complaint? Have you or someone you know ever felt that they have been completely forgotten by God? What happens when we adopt a short-term view of God’s actions and justice?
2. Read Isaiah 49:15,16, Genesis 8:1, 9:15,16; 19:29 How much does God remember Israel and His elect? What about the persecuted Church?
3. Read Isaiah 49:17,18 What does God promise? How do we see this coming true today?
4. Read Isaiah 49:19, Job 42:10 How does God promise increase after decrease? How can we apply this to our lives, ministries etc.?
5. Read Isaiah 49:20,21 & 54:1-3 “Where did these come from...” God has imperceptible solutions. He works in ways we cannot see. Have you ever been totally surprised by one of God’s solutions? Also, how does God work to enlarge our territories?
6. Read Isaiah 49:22, 1 John 3:1-3 God calls the nations to Israel – and also into His eternal Kingdom. How are we sons and daughters of the Living God?
7. Read Isaiah 49:23, 60:5,11; 61:6,7 How does God take us from being dishonored to being honored? What is the benefit of waiting upon God? What happens if we take a short-cut instead?
8. Read Isaiah 49:24,25, Luke 11:21,22 Ephesians 6:10-18 How does God defeat tyrants? How is the salvation of our children a matter of winning a massive spiritual battle with a “strong man”?
9. Read Isaiah 49:26, Lamentations 2:20, 4:10 - The siege of Jerusalem was terrible and involved people eating their own children out of starvation. This would be repaid on the enemies of Israel. How does God’s justice “come around” eventually?

## Isaiah 50 “But The Lord God Helps Me....”

Sometimes the Christian faith is a dynamic process with many factors in play all at once.

1. Read Isaiah 50:1 Romans 8:1,2,31-39 Why was Israel “divorced” from the land and sent into exile? What ruptures our relationship with God? How does this change in the New Testament because of the work of the Cross?
2. Read Isaiah 50:2,3 God replies to the accusation that Israel went into exile because He (YHWH) was too weak and the Babylonian gods were stronger. What is God’s answer? How important is prayer and intercession?
3. Read Isaiah 50:4, 1 John 2:20,27 How does God instruct Isaiah? How does this apply to us?
4. Read Isaiah 50:5,6; Matthew 5:39, 26:67 How does the Suffering Servant (the prophet Isaiah / Jesus Christ, both are in view) obey God during severe trials and humiliation?
5. Isaiah 50:7-9 How does God help and vindicate His afflicted and persecuted servants? What is the spiritual attitude of the Suffering Servant?
6. Read Isaiah 50:9 What eventually happens to the enemies of the Gospel?
7. Read Isaiah 50:10 What is Isaiah exhorting believers to do? What should be our attitude during tough times? How do we do this? How is faith-filled longsuffering involved?
8. Read Isaiah 50:11, Proverbs 3:5,6; 16:3,9 Romans 1:21,22 What is dangerous about walking “in our own light” during times of darkness and turmoil?

## **Isaiah 51:1-11 Hope For Those Who Seek After God**

1. Read Isaiah 51:1,2 and Genesis 1:28 – What are some of the similarities? What does it mean to be fruitful and multiply and to have dominion? How does God’s blessing accomplish this?
2. Read Isaiah 51:3 How does God comfort Zion? (Zion is spiritual/ideal Israel.) What is the end result of this work of God? What emotions are present once God has done it?
3. Read Isaiah 51:4,5 What does God mean when He says, “Pay attention to Me my people?” How could these verses be used to encourage overseas mission?
4. Read Isaiah 51:6 How does this verse help us to have a right perspective on life? What does it tell us about the difference between the material world and the spiritual world?
5. Read Isaiah 51:7,8 “What are we to remember during times of persecution? How are we to cope with feelings of fear and dread? What will happen to the enemies of the gospel?”
6. Read Isaiah 51:9,10 What is the prophet Isaiah calling out for God to do? How do believers often wish for God to do the great miracles of old?
7. Read Isaiah 51:11 What emotions should accompany being ransomed and redeemed? How does this verse apply to both Jews and Christians?
8. Go through Isaiah 51:1-11 and list all of the emotions mentioned, then discuss the role of emotions in the Christian life (as a reaction to the work of God).

## Isaiah 51:12-23 – The Recovery of Zion From The Wrath of God

1. Read the whole passage (Isaiah 51:12-23) and try to figure out the overarching theme. What is God saying here as a whole?
2. Read Isaiah 51:12,13 What is God's question to the Israelites? How do circumstances make us forget about God? How is God trying to change their perspective on their situation? Has God ever tried to get you to change the way that you look at life?
3. Read Isaiah 51:14 What is God's promise here? How could it be spiritually interpreted? What is the "pit" spiritually? What is meant by "bread" spiritually? (Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4, John 6:35)
4. Read Isaiah 51:15,16 In what terms does God describe His power? What has He done for Israel (verse 16a)? How would this give a courageous perspective to the people of God?
5. Read Isaiah 51:17,21,22 What is God saying to Israel about the "cup of wrath"? What is the wrath of God?
6. Read Isaiah 51:18-20 What terrible things happened when Israel experienced the wrath of God?
7. How is God's judgement of wrath turned away from Christians? (Romans 5:9, 8:1,2; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 5:9)
8. Read Isaiah 51:23 What happens to those who "add extra" to the punishment that God inflicts upon people? How is it human nature to "kick those who are down"? What should be our attitude instead? (Job 19:21, Matthew 5:7)

## **Isaiah 52:1-12 Israel's Redemption From Babylonian Captivity**

1. Read Isaiah 52:1 What is happening to Jerusalem / Zion? How are the literal and the spiritual interpretations intertwined here? Who are the uncircumcised and the unclean? (See Romans 2:24-29)
2. Read Isaiah 52:2 How do we have to take personal action to shake off the past, and get out of our captivity if we are to be spiritually free?
3. Read Isaiah 52:3 and Romans 6:23 – What is the cost of our salvation? What does this say about those who relate giving with blessing (Acts 8:18-20)?
4. Read Isaiah 52:4,5 What is the history of the oppression of the Jews? Why do the righteous always have to deal with oppression and injustice? What will God do?
5. Read Isaiah 52:6 What is God's promise of intimacy with His People?
6. Read Isaiah 52:7-9 and 40:9 What is going on here? What is the good news for the exiled Jews? For Christians?
7. Read Isaiah 52:10 How does this verse relate to the Great Commission? Why should Christians have a gospel vision that is greater than just their local area?
8. Compare Isaiah 52:11 with Zechariah 2:6,7; 2 Corinthians 6:17 and Revelation 18:4 – What is the impression that you get? What is a "Babylonian lifestyle" and how are we to avoid it?
9. Read Isaiah 52:12 How does God enable us to make major life transitions if they are part of His will?

## Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12 The Suffering Messiah

1. Read Isaiah 52:13-15 How does this describe the three phases of Jesus' ministry, the time of fame, the crucifixion, and His time as Heavenly High Priest as the gospel spreads?
2. Read Isaiah 53:1 "Who has believed our report?" What are some of the different responses possible to a gospel about a suffering Servant?
3. Read Isaiah 53:2,3 What was the appearance and personality of Jesus like (in the eyes of the world)? Was Jesus a natural leader before His baptism in the Jordan? (see also Matthew 13:54-56).
4. Read Isaiah 53:4-6 These verses describe what is known as the substitutionary atonement. That is, Jesus took our sins, disease, and anguish upon Himself at the Cross. Make a list of the various things that Jesus took upon Himself, what did He do for us who believe?
5. Compare Isaiah 53:4-6 with 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 4:25, 5:6-21 and 1 Peter 2:24 – What are some of the things that you learned about Christ from these verses?
6. Read Isaiah 53:4 How did people react to their Savior? How are we often offended by the people whom God sends to help us grow spiritually (e.g. the prophets)?
7. Read Isaiah 53:7 and 1 Peter 2:23 What should our reaction be when we are persecuted for our Christian faith? Why is this difficult?
8. Read Isaiah 53:8,9 How unjust was the Cross? How was this strange prophecy fulfilled?
9. Read Isaiah 53:10-12, Philippians 2:5-11 and Hebrews 12:1,2 What was God's strange plan for Jesus and how do we often have to suffer prior to spiritual victory?

## Isaiah 54:1-17 Comfort For The Afflicted

*In this chapter Israel is portrayed as a deeply afflicted woman who has been abandoned, is barren, is a widow and who has no children of her own. Instead of barrenness a covenant of peace and protection is established and there is great multiplication, expansion and blessing.*

1. Read Isaiah 54:1 How does God's grace compensate for our human weakness and for life's unfairness? (See Luke 16:25)
2. Read Isaiah 54:2,3 What is the woman to do with her tent? Why? What is this a symbol of? How can we apply it to our Christian life?
3. Read Isaiah 54:4,5 Why is the woman to be free of shame? Who is her new Husband? (see also Ephesians 5:25-27, Revelation 21:2,9)
4. Read Isaiah 54:6-8 Describe the relationship between God and Israel. What stages did it go through?
5. Read Isaiah 54:9,10 and Genesis 8:20,21, 9:11-16 What do these verses tell us about God's covenants and how they operate to preserve and save us?
6. Read Isaiah 54:11,12 What does God do for Jerusalem? What is the spiritual significance of this?
7. Read Isaiah 54: 13 How is this fulfilled in the New Covenant? (Hebrews 8:10-12, John 6:43-46)
8. Read Isaiah 54:14,15 Evil does come against Christians, but it is not "from God". (1 Corinthians 10:13). What are God's promises in this situation?
9. Read Isaiah 54:16,17 This is a complex thought and illustration. How does God create weapons and what is their purpose? What happens when they are turned against His people?



## Isaiah 55:1-13 A Great and Free Salvation

1. Read Isaiah 55:1-2, John 6:26,27, Revelation 21:6, 22:17 What is God inviting us to? What is the cost of salvation (for the believer)? How does the heavenly economy work? How can we get caught up in materialism and neglect our salvation?
2. Read Isaiah 55:3, John 5:24,25 - Underline the verbs (action words) here. What are the three things we must do if we are to enter into God's everlasting covenant?
3. Read Isaiah 55:4,5 These promises apply to: David, Israel, the Messiah, and Christian believers, each in different ways. How does God glorify those who believe in Him?
4. Read Isaiah 55:6, and Matthew 7:7,8 What does it mean to seek the Lord?
5. Read Isaiah 55:7 – What does God ask us to do as part of being pardoned by God? How do we forsake our sins in thought and deed? What is real repentance?
6. Read Isaiah 55:8,9 and 1 Corinthians 2:12-16 and Romans 12:1-2 What do these verses tell us about God's thoughts and our thoughts? How can we have the "mind of Christ"?
7. Read Isaiah 55:10,11, Hebrews 4:10-12, John 10:35 What do these verses tell us about the power and efficacy of God's prophetic word? How then are we to apply this principle in our lives?
8. Read Isaiah 55:12 What is the picture that Isaiah is painting about Israel's return from Babylon? How does this apply to Christians coming back into God's will?
9. Read Isaiah 55:13, and Genesis 3:17-19 What is God signifying by the change in vegetation? How is God glorified by His ability to change a curse into a blessing? (see also Galatians 3:10-14)

## Isaiah 56 - Preserve Justice!

1. Read Isaiah 56:1, Isaiah 1:16-19 and Micah 6:6-8 What sort of lifestyle should be the “new normal” for godly Christians? Why is this sometimes missing from preaching today?
2. Read Isaiah 56:2 mentions two huge priorities:
  1. Devotion: worship, keeping Sabbaths and
  2. Lifestyle: not doing any evilHow should Christians combine both right worship and right living?
3. Read Isaiah 56:3-8, Galatians 3:26-28, Colossians 3:11, Ephesians 2:11-22 How is God including new groups of people such as eunuchs, foreigners and so on? How does God tear down barriers between people?
4. Read Isaiah 56:4, 6 On the other hand, what does God require of those being included? Does God “include” the wicked and the lawless without repentance? (Matthew 7:21-23, 1 Corinthians 6:9,10)
5. Read Isaiah 56:7 and Mark 11:15-19 How does Jesus make God’s temple a house of prayer for all nations? Why was this a very radical teaching to the Jews? What did Jesus cast out of the Temple? What is necessary if our churches are to become houses of prayer for all nations?
6. Read Isaiah 56:8, John 10:14-16, John 11:51,52 How is Jesus always adding new kinds of people to His Church? Is anyone kept out because of their race or gender or social status? (Revelation 22:17) How can we improve the hospitality of our churches?
7. Read Isaiah 56:9-12 [Note: watchmen and shepherds denote Israel’s leadership especially prophets, priests and kings] What had gone wrong with the leadership of Israel? In verse 10, what was wrong with the watchmen (prophets) who were supposed to warn people? In verses 11 and 12 what was wrong with the shepherds (priests and kings)?
8. Read Isaiah 56:9, 2 Kings 9:30-37, Revelation 19:17,18; What was God going to do to the corrupt leaders? How does God devour those who have become corrupt and have neglected to do justice?
9. Discuss: “God wants justice yet God wants to include everyone.”

## Isaiah 57:1-13 Life In A Time of Great Wickedness

Today (Friday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2019) is Right-To-Life Day which aligns very well with this passage.

1. Read Isaiah 57:1-2 What is Isaiah's answer to the premature death of the righteous in times of evil? How does that apply today, to Christians? (Philippians 1:21-24, Acts 7:54-60)
2. Read Isaiah 57:3-5 What is the reaction of the wicked when they see the righteous? What is the lifestyle of the wicked? What sins are they committing? What are they doing to their children? Is this like life in the USA today?
3. Read Isaiah 57:6-8 How extreme is Isaiah's language? Could we preach like that today? Why was it necessary to be so tough?
4. Read Isaiah 57:6-8 Who were the Israelites making a pact with when they sinned? How does sin and rebellion put us in the Devil's camp?
5. Read Isaiah 57:9,10 How persistent were they in their sin? How much effort were they expending? What was the spiritual significance of their Molech worship (1 Corinthians 10:18-22)
6. In the light of 1 Corinthians 10:18-22 – Are all religions worshipping the same God?
7. Read Isaiah 57:11 How does fear and anxiety make idolaters out of people? Why do people trust in statues, magic charms, amulets, bracelets and idols?
8. Read Isaiah 57:12,13 But how effective are these things on the Day of Judgment? Even huge collections of them?
9. Read Isaiah 57: 13 (last part) - Who IS able to stand on the Day of Judgment? Why is the fear of the Lord ultimately better than the worship of idols? (See also Isaiah 26:3,4)

## Isaiah 57:14-21    God Dwells With The Contrite

1. Read Isaiah 57:14 Who is God instructing here? Who is the hinderer and the obstacle maker (1 Thessalonian 2:18)? How does God remove life's obstacles?
2. Read Isaiah 57:15, 61:1-3, 66:1-2 and James 4:6 Where does God dwell? What attitude brings God close to us?
3. Read Isaiah 57:16, Psalm 78:38-39; 103:9-16 Why is God merciful to us?
4. Read Isaiah 57:16 Why does God have regard for the human spirit? See also Isaiah 42:5, Numbers 27:16, Zechariah 12:1, Hebrews 12:9
5. Read Isaiah 57:17 What gets God angry? (see also Isaiah 5:8,9 Micah 2:2,3 Ephesians 5:3-5, Colossians 3:5) How addicted were they to their devious materialism?
6. Read Isaiah 57:18,19 What are God's divine plans for the backslidden nation of Israel? How does this apply to some Christians?
7. Read Isaiah 57:18,19 and Ephesians 2:14-17 How does God create peace and for whom does He make full Shalom (Isaiah 26:3)
8. Read Isaiah 57:20,21, Jude 1:12, Proverbs 4:16,17 What are some of the emotional and spiritual characteristics of the wicked?
9. Read Isaiah 57:20,21; 48:22, 2 Kings 9:22, Romans 3:12-18 What kind of people never receive God's peace in their lives? Why?

## Isaiah 58:1-14 True Fasting

1. Read Isaiah 58:1,2 What did God tell the prophet Isaiah to do? What was the spiritual state of Israel at the time? How do prophets “declare to people their sins”?
2. Isaiah 58:3-5 What was wrong with the fasting and other religious practices of the Jews at this time?
3. What happens when we separate our lifestyle and ethics from our religious practices so that they are compartmentalized into two separate compartments, e.g. “It’s just a business decision...”?
4. Read Isaiah 58:6,7 What kind of fasting does God want?
5. Read Isaiah 58:8,9 What are the blessings that God promises that people will obtain when they stop judging and gossiping?
6. Read Isaiah 58:10,11 What are the blessings promised to those who help and comfort the afflicted?
7. Read Isaiah 58:12 How does social justice lead to restored communities and flourishing ecosystems?
8. Read Isaiah 58:13,14 What are the blessings promised to those who observe the Sabbath, taking time out from the hurry of life to be with God and with others? How important is it to have sacred times and spaces? How does modern life push sacred space to the margins?
9. What is the difference between a legalistic Sabbath and a true Sabbath? (Matthew 12:10-13, Luke 13:10-17, Hebrews 4:9-11)

## Isaiah 59:1-11 Sin Separates Us From God

Most of the sin mentioned here is “structural sin”, the combined sin of an entire nation. Today’s structural sins would be abortion, infanticide, economic injustice, racial discrimination, oppression, corrupt banking laws etc.

1. Read Isaiah 59:1-2, Jeremiah 5:25, Proverbs 15:29 Why was God refusing to answer the prayers of the nation of Israel?
2. Scan the table below that lists 18 Reasons For Unanswered Prayer, and discuss the reasons why God does not answer prayer.
3. Read Isaiah 59:3,4, Ezekiel 9:9,10 What was wrong with Jewish society during Isaiah’s time?
4. Read Isaiah 59:5,6, Revelation 19:8, Zechariah 3:1-7 Our righteous deeds are our clothing before God, but Israel’s deeds were as “spider’s webs” and were toxic and inadequate. Why is practical righteousness, such as integrity, important for the saints? (true Christians)
5. Read Isaiah 59:7,8, Mark 7:21-22 Here we see a discussion of our lifestyle and choices, using symbols such as: feet, walking, running, roads, ways and paths. How do our thoughts and our choices (v.7) determine our paths in life? What happens if we choose a wrong or crooked path?
6. Read Isaiah 59:9, Amos 5:18-20 What were the devastating spiritual consequences of a society that, as a whole, had continually chosen the wrong paths in life? How did this make life miserable for everyone?
7. Read Isaiah 59:10, Deuteronomy 28:15, 28,29 What had happened to their moral and spiritual perception? What about their spiritual life? What was sin doing to them?
8. Read Isaiah 59:11, Ezekiel 7:14-18, Psalm 32:3,4 What adjectives would you use to describe the final spiritual state of sinful Israel?

## 18 Reasons For Unanswered Prayer

There are four basic categories of reasons why your prayers are not answered other than "the sovereignty of God". These are: A) Spiritual sins such as doubt, hypocrisy, pride, flippancy etc. B) Treating others badly - rudeness, unforgiveness, malice, anger, wrath, divisiveness. C) Major sin - things categorized as "doing evil" (1 Cor 6:9,10) D) Praying amiss - lack of persistence, not fasting, not using Jesus' name etc.

<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Solution</b>
James 1:5-8	Doubting God	Deciding to believe what God says and acting on it.
James 4:2	Not asking God in the first place but trying to obtain it by quarreling.	Ask God in prayer for your needs.
James 4:3	Asking wrongly e.g. for worldly pleasures.	A distinct separation from the world/not loving it.
1 Peter 3:7	Treating your wife in an inconsiderate manner.	Living with her in an understanding way.
1 Peter 3:12	Doing evil	Be righteous.
1 Peter 4:7	A flippant attitude to holy things.	Being serious and watchful.
Matthew 6:5,6	Hypocritical attention-seeking.	Pray in private to God not publicly for show.
Matthew 6:7	Using vain repetition (e.g. like Buddhist prayer wheels etc.).	Pray concisely knowing that God is hearing and knows your needs.
Matthew 18:19	Lack of unity especially among Christian leaders.	Agreement & fellowship.
Mark 9:29	Some situations need fasting as well.	Spiritual discernment and a disciplined life.
Mark 11:25,26	Unforgiveness	Forgive whoever has offended you from the heart.
Luke 18:1ff	Lack of persistence	Do not lose heart or give up.
Luke 18:9ff	Spiritual pride	Humble yourself before God.
1 Timothy 2:8	Wrath/anger	Live peaceably in prayer.
1 John 5:14	Not according to God's will (God's broad moral will is meant here)	Ask within the bounds of Scripture.
John 15:7	An erratic life that seldom "abides" in God.	Abide in Jesus words and let them abide in you.
John 14:13,14	Not asking "in Jesus name" i.e. asking in the will and clear purposes of Jesus and with His designated authority.	Ask in Jesus's will for God's purposes with a sense that the authority comes from God not you.
John 16:26,27	Not believing in Jesus.	The Father loves those who believe in his Son and will answer their prayers as a result.

## Isaiah 59:12-21 The Lord Turns Up!

1. Read Isaiah 59:12,13 What are the spiritual sins of Israel? How do they contrast with the typical OT sin list based on the law of Moses?
2. Read Isaiah 59:14,15a Here spiritual qualities are “personified” and treated as humans. What was the moral state of Israel? How could you use personification to describe the spiritual state of our society today?
3. Read Isaiah 59:15b,16 and Isaiah 63:3-5 How does God always take the initiative for salvation?
4. Read Isaiah 59:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Romans 13:12 and Ephesians 6:10-20 What is the armor of God? What is it used for?
5. Read Isaiah 59:18, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10, Revelation 20:12,13; Matthew 16:27, Hebrews 12:25-29 Here we see God’s intense fury, which is something we almost never mention. What would it be like if God just forgave everyone for everything so there were absolutely no consequences for doing evil?
6. Read Isaiah 59:19, Zechariah 4:6,7 God storms in – in revival. A mighty global revival will take place. Wind= Spirit (same word “Ruach YHWH”) bringing people to God from both the East and the West. Discuss revival. Let us stop and pray that God arrives “like a stream driven by a mighty rushing wind” among us!
7. Read Isaiah 59:20 and Romans 11:25-32 What does this tell us about the destiny of the Jewish people? Remember Paul is writing *after* the Cross.
8. Read Isaiah 59:21, Hebrews 8:6-13 What is God’s covenant with the Redeemed?
9. Can you see a prophetic sequence of Redemption here? God initiates salvation, judges the wicked, sends a revival, saves Israel, sends forth His Spirit? Where else in Scripture / the Christian life is this sequence found? What does it tell us about how God acts and who God is?



## Isaiah 60:1-11 The Glorified and Restored Israel

1. Compare Isaiah 60:1-11 with 1 Kings 10:14-29 and note the similarities and the differences. When does this spiritual revival of Israel take place? (Romans 11:25-27)
2. Read Isaiah 60:1, John 1:9, 8:12, 12:46, Ephesians 5:8, James 1:17, 1Peter 2:9, 1John 1:5-7, 2:8-10  
How is the concept of "light" interpreted in the Scriptures?
3. Read Isaiah 60:2a and Matthew 4:16, Psalm 82:5, Ephesians 4:17-20, Isaiah 5:20  
What is spiritual darkness? What are some of the causes of spiritual darkness?
4. Read Isaiah 60:2b,3 and Matthew 5:14-16, 10:26-31 How is Israel (In the Old Testament) and the Church and Christians (in the New Testament) the light of the world?
5. Read Isaiah 60:4,5 How does it feel to have sudden prosperity after a long time of difficulty? In addition, what is the connection between spiritual revival and later material prosperity?
6. Read Isaiah 60:6,7 How do the nations respond to the presence of God in the midst of a spiritually revived Israel?
7. Read Isaiah 60:8,9 What is being referred to here? How are people returning to Israel "flying like a cloud" and does Isaiah's prophecy imply they would be brought back on aircraft, thus seeing nearly 3000 years into the future? How many prophecies have come true since the end of World War 2?
8. Read Isaiah 60:10,11 How does the mercy of God drive both spiritual revival and material prosperity? What would happen to us if God was NOT merciful?
9. Read Isaiah 60:5, 11; 61:6, 66:12 and Zechariah 14:14 What is the wealth of nations? Who does this wealth end up with?

## Isaiah 60:12-22 Israel Gets A Major Upgrade!

1. Read Isaiah 60:12, Genesis 12:3, and Zechariah 14:12-19 What eventually happens to those who oppose Israel once Israel is again obedient to God?
2. Read Isaiah 60:13,14 How might the Islamic world have a change of heart about Israel?
3. How is the heavenly city Zion mentioned in the Bible and how is it a prophecy with multiple fulfillments: Isaiah 60:14, 62:12; Psalm 87:3; Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 3:12; 14:1
4. Read Isaiah 60:15 How does Israel “receive an upgrade”? Notice how the thought “Instead of X, you will get Y” is used throughout this section [Isaiah 60:11-22]. How does God determine the quality of our existence?
5. Read Isaiah 60:16-18 These verses continue the theme of Israel (God’s people) receiving a major upgrade. What areas of life are covered? Is God interested in our prosperity?
6. Read Isaiah 60:19,20 and Revelation 21:21-27 Where are we now? In which biblical “age”? How do God’s transformational principles work from age-to-age? What is the light of Israel?
7. Read Isaiah 60:21, Ephesians 1:7,11-14, 2:10, Matthew 15:13 Why did God “plant Israel”? Why did God create the Church? Are there things in society that God does not “plant”?
8. Read Isaiah 60:22 How does God amplify the power and productivity of His faithful saints?
9. “He will do it quickly, in its time” – How does God have precise times and seasons for events to happen in? How can God do something quickly once the timing is appropriate?

## **Isaiah 61:1-11 The Lord Restores The Righteous**

1. Read Isaiah 61:1-4 and Luke 4:18,19 How does Jesus fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah?
2. What happens when the Spirit of the Lord comes upon someone? Numbers 24:2-9, Judges 3:10, 6:34, 11:29; 1Samuel 10:6,10, Acts 2:17,18
3. Read Isaiah 61:2,3 What happens to the quality and tone of life and spiritual existence when the Spirit of God is poured out through the Messiah? It is not just about us, what is the final purpose of this? How is God glorified when we experience peace / Shalom?
4. Read Isaiah 61:4 What does God do to the “waste places” of our lives, both physically, and spiritually?
5. Read Isaiah 61:5, 6 and 1 Peter 2:5,9 How are Christians also a “royal priesthood”?
6. Read Isaiah 61:7 and Romans 5:11, 14:17, 15:13 What in the gospel brings about everlasting emotional transformation?
7. Read Isaiah 61:8,9 and Zechariah 8:13 How does God take captive Israel in Babylon, from being a curse, to being a blessing? Does this happen to Christians as well?
8. Read Isaiah 61:10 and Luke 1:46-55 How can we rejoice and exult in God our Savior?
9. Read Isaiah 61:11, John 15:1-8 and Mark 4:26-32 How is the Kingdom of God a place of natural, gradual spiritual growth?

## Isaiah 62:1-12 The Coming Salvation of Zion

Quickly glance through the article on Zion – the holy city, and the heavenly city....

1. Read Isaiah 62:1 Note the Hebrew parallelism that equates Zion with Jerusalem. What is the prophet declaring? What are God's plans for Jerusalem?
2. Read Isaiah 62:2,3 Notice the repeated statements "you shall be" ..... This says that God has a definite destiny for Jerusalem that will be achieved despite her sin, mistakes and self-will. The salvation of Zion is never in doubt. How does this apply to our Christian destiny?
3. Read Hebrews 12:22-24, 1 Peter 2:6, Revelation 3:12, 14:1, How are Christians part of Zion? How do the promises of Isaiah 62 apply to us? (2 Corinthians 1:20, Ephesians 1:3)
4. Compare Isaiah 62:4,5 with Revelation 21:1-5 Who is Zion married to? Why does God use human marriage as a metaphor here? What does that tell us about God?
5. Read Isaiah 62:6,7 Ezekiel 33:1-9 What was the role of a watchman? How important are intercessors who "watch and pray" (Mark 13:32-37 KJV) Why do we have to "remind God"?
6. Read Isaiah 62:8,9 God promises Israel that they will never work in vain. That what they earn, they will get to keep and to enjoy. How does this apply to the Christian life? How can we pray against financial predators?
7. Read Isaiah 62:10, Psalm 56:13, Isaiah 35:3 - What does it mean to "remove the stumbling stones"? How can we do that so that people are able to come into the Kingdom of God? (Luke 17:1-4)
8. Read Isaiah 62:11, Revelation 22:12, Ephesians 4:7-11 How does the triumphant saving Christ distribute gifts and rewards to those who are "in Zion"?
9. Read Isaiah 62:12, 1 Peter 1:17-21 How are we "the redeemed" and the "chosen"?

## Isaiah 63:1-9 God Avenges Israel

1. Read Isaiah 63:1 (note: Edom was a traditional enemy of Israel and Bozrah was its capital city, it was also the land of Esau and was associated with the color red) Who is doing the marching? How powerful is He? What does He claim about Himself?
2. Read Isaiah 63:2,3; Joel 3:13-16; and Revelation 14:19,20 & 19:11-16 Why do you think a winepress is used as a symbol of utter devastating judgment? When does this “winepress” battle of total judgment take place?
3. Read Isaiah 63:4, 34:8, Luke 11:45-52, 21:22, and Revelation 6:9-17 How does it make you feel that God has set “times of vengeance” for the persecution of the saints and prophets, the Jews, and of the Christian Church. Why doesn’t God just “zap them immediately”?
4. Read Isaiah 63:5 Luke 18:7,8 Why was there no one to help Jesus? Do you think that, by this time, the whole world might be under the control of the Anti-Christ?
5. Read Isaiah 63:6, Revelation 14:9-11, 17:1-6, 18:1-6 What are the “nations” / Babylon drunk with? What does God do in response?
6. Read Isaiah 63:7, Lamentations 3:22-24, Psalm 108:1-6 What is meant by the “steadfast love” of the Lord? How does it operate? Is it deserved? Can we earn it?
7. Read Isaiah 63:8, Romans 11:1-6 How does God choose His children?
8. Read Isaiah 63:9, Zechariah 2:8 How does God have deep affection for the Redeemed?
9. How is God fierce in both love and judgment? How does the idea of a fierce and passionate God fit with your theology? How does this refute the idea of a mild, weak, apathetic, and passionless God?

## Isaiah 63:10-19 Isaiah Laments the Spiritual State of Israel

*To lament is to outwardly and openly express **deep regret, grief, or sorrow**. We can lament through words or actions. Lamenting is a common theme in the Bible. In fact, there is an Old Testament book named Lamentations.*

1. Read Isaiah 63:10 What did the Jewish people do wrong? What was God's response? What does it mean to: "Vex the Holy Spirit?" (Matthew 12:31,32; Acts 5:1-4, 7:51, Ephesians 4:30,31; 1 Thessalonians 5:19, Hebrews 10:29) Which of these sins against the Spirit did Israel commit? (1 Thessalonians 2:15,16)
2. Read Isaiah 63:11-13 What is being recalled here? How does it help us when we recall all the lovingkindesses of the Lord to us and to our nation? (Psalm 77:11,12)
3. Read Isaiah 63:14 How does the Holy Spirit give people rest? What is the illustration here? (Matthew 11:28-30, Hebrews 4:3-11)
4. Read Isaiah 63:15 How does Isaiah express his utter spiritual desolation? Have you ever felt like this?
5. Read Isaiah 63:16 "Yet you are our Father.." This is a very dramatic verse. What is Isaiah doing here? What claim is he making on God? How can we make such claims on God during prayers of intercession?
6. Read Isaiah 63:17 – This is a very difficult verse about God hardening people's hearts! There are three views:
  - A. That God has designed a Universe where people's hearts can be hardened by sin and this law is so strict that it can be said that God hardens people hearts.
  - B. That God deliberately and sovereignly hardens people's hearts whether they want them hardened or not and that we have no choice in the matter.
  - C. Both of the above but at different times. Mainly we have a choice.(Exodus 10:1, 14:8 Joshua 11:20, Psalm 95:8, Mark 6:51,52; John 12:40, Acts 28:25-28, Ephesians 4:18, Hebrews 4:7)
7. Read Isaiah 63:18,19 Can you hear the sadness in Isaiah's voice as he cries out about a dispossessed and rejected people: Is it OK to talk like this to God? To express such negative feelings about where things are at?

## Isaiah 64:1-12 An Appeal To God For National Revival

1. Read Isaiah 64:1,2 What is the “tone” of the prophet’s question? Also, what is he asking God to do? Have you ever felt like this?
2. Read Isaiah 64:3 Have you ever seen an “awesome work” of God? Here Isaiah looks back to the Exodus and the ten plagues and to Mt. Sinai. What would be an awesome work of God today?
3. Read Isaiah 64:4 What does it mean to “wait upon God”? (Psalm 62:1, 130:5) How do we do this?
4. Read Isaiah 64:5 The first half of the verse contrasts strongly with the last half. What is Isaiah trying to get across? How is our relationship with God affected by our disobedience?
5. Read Isaiah 64:6,7 Zechariah 3:1-5, Philippians 3:7-11 What is the spiritual state of a person who is religious but who is without Christ? How do we become righteous?
6. Read Isaiah 64:8, Jeremiah 18:10, Psalm 119:73 What are the three metaphors that Isaiah uses to illustrate the relationship between God and Israel? How do these relate to the idea that God creates national destinies? How might this apply to the various nations of the world today?
7. Isaiah 64:9,10 2 Chronicles 36:19-21 What happens when God judges national sin? Why is the prophet sad at the righteous judgment of God?
8. Read Isaiah 64:11,12 The severity of God can be terrifying, at least it was to the prophet Isaiah. How many empires have come and gone because of the judgment of God? How many places, once great, now stand in ruins? How can this teach us to fear the Lord?
9. Read Jeremiah 7:1-16, Acts 7:48, 17:24 The destruction of the Temple was particularly shocking. Surely it should be spared! What was God’s view of His Temple? How does that relate to church buildings today?

## Isaiah 65:1-12 Spiritual Rebellion

1. Read Isaiah 65:1 and Romans 10:19-21 God seeks out all people, even those who do not seek Him at all! What does this tell us about the nature of God? (Also see the three parables of lost things in Luke 15)
2. Read Isaiah 65:2, Romans 10:21 Who is God talking about? What is His initial posture toward them? What is their attitude to God's offer of salvation?
3. Read Isaiah 65:3-5, Proverbs 6:16,17 What is the attitude of people who are spiritually rebellious? Why does this offend God?
4. Read Isaiah 65:6,7; Jeremiah 16:18, Ezekiel 11:21, 22:31 What happens when God finally runs out of patience with such spiritual rebels?
5. Isaiah 65:8, Amos 9:8,9; Matthew 24:22, Romans 9:27-29, 11:5 This is the doctrine of the Remnant, even when God judges harshly He often saves a chosen remnant of the people. Why does God do this? How does this demonstrate His very great mercy and grace?
6. Read 2 Peter 2:4-10 Do the remnant vanish before the trial / judgment or are they left standing AFTER the trial/judgment?
7. Read Isaiah 65:9,22 Romans 11:5-7 Who are the "chosen"? What do they possess?
8. Read Isaiah 65:10 What are the benefits of being those who "seek God"? Achor means "Disaster or Trouble" so what is implied here? See Joshua 7:24-26, Hosea 2:15
9. Read Isaiah 65:11,12 "for when I called, you did not answer"..... What is the end result of spiritual stubbornness? What does it mean to choose that which the Lord delights in?



## Isaiah 65:13-25 The Glory of God's Servants

*This passage foretells of a time on earth that is radically different, but is not yet the eternal state because 1. There are sinners and 2. People do die (but they live very long lifespans) so it seems to support the idea of a Millennium where Satan is bound for 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-3)*

1. Read Isaiah 65:13,14 and Malachi 3:16-18 "My servants shall... but you will...." At the moment we do not see much difference in prosperity between those who serve God and those who do not, but in this future time, the distinction will be clear. Why is it tricky to measure God's favor and blessing in terms of material prosperity?
2. Read Isaiah 65:15, Revelation 2:17, 3:12 What is the idea of a new name? Who in the Bible got "another name"? (<https://godwords.org/name-changes-in-the-bible/>) In Isaiah 65:15, whose name becomes a curse? Whose name becomes a blessing?
3. Read Isaiah 65:16,17, 66:22; Revelation 22:1-5 and 2 Peter 3:11-13 What things are not remembered any more? What happens to the painful, cursed, fallen world?
4. Read Isaiah 65:18,19 How are we to rejoice over God's future Creation? Why is the "end of the Story" the most important part? (Matthew 16:26, Luke 16:22,23)
5. Read Isaiah 65:20-22 What will happen to the human lifespan in this time of blessedness and favor? What will be different about the nature of work?
6. Read Isaiah 65:23 and Matthew 19:27-30, 22:30 We find the blessed people during this age are bearing children and having descendants, so how is it different from the eternal state? How does this support the idea of a Millennium and the restoration of all things?
7. Read Isaiah 65:24, Psalm 91:15 and 1 John 5:14,15 What is the difference between prayer in the broken world and prayer in the age of blessing? Are there places and times when prayer is much easier?
8. Read Isaiah 65:25 What do each of these animals symbolize? How can animals represent certain aspects of human nature e.g. wolves, foxes, pigs etc.? How is this to be interpreted spiritually (not literally)? Who is both the Lion and the Lamb?
9. Read Isaiah 65:25, Matthew 10:16-18 How does God's Perfect Shalom tend towards total harmlessness and trust? Why is that not the case now?

## Isaiah 66:1-14    Peace Like A River

1. Read Isaiah 66:1 and Acts 7:48-50, 17:24    What do these verses tell us:
  - a) about who God is , and
  - b) about how we are to worship Him?
2. Read Isaiah 66:2, Luke 18:13,14, Philippians 2:12 - Who does God take notice of? What is to be our attitude toward the Almighty?
3. Read Isaiah 66:3,4 and Micah 6:6-8    What does the Lord do to those who are only outwardly religious? What does he think of their temple sacrifices? What were they doing wrong that displeased God?
4. Read Isaiah 66:5 and 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10    What happens to the righteous once religion becomes completely formalized and corrupted?
5. Read Isaiah 66:6 and 1 Peter 4:17, James 3:1,2    Where did God's judgment start?
6. Read Isaiah 66:7,8; Jeremiah 51:8, Malachi 3:1    Does God sometimes do things with great suddenness? What is the fulfillment of this prophecy?
7. Read Isaiah 66:9, Philippians 1:6, Matthew 17:20, Luke 1:37    Does God leave things half done? How does this encourage you?
8. Read Isaiah 66:10,11 and Psalm 122:6    This is a rather strong image. What is the prophet trying to paint a picture of? What has happened to desolate Jerusalem?
9. Read Isaiah 66:12-14; 40:1,2 and 48:17,18    How does this start completing the circle of Isaiah's prophecy? What does peace like a river mean to you?

## Isaiah 66:15-24 - The Conclusion

1. Read Isaiah 66:15, Hebrews 12:26-29, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9, 2 Kings 2:11, 6:17; Psalm 11:6, Revelation 18:7,8 How does God punish the wicked?
2. Read Isaiah 66:16, Revelation 19:17-21 How is God's direct punishment from Heaven different from His punishment through earthly magistrates and rulers?
3. Read Isaiah 66:17 and Mark 7:17-23 What makes people unclean spiritually?
4. Read Isaiah 66:18, Ezekiel 38:17-23 and Revelation 20:7-10 What is the Great Battle of Gog and Magog and how is the Lord glorified through it?
5. Read Isaiah 66:19-20 What amazing spiritual event happens after God is glorified by the Great Battle?
6. Read Isaiah 66:21 and 1 Peter 2:5,9 How are even Gentile Christians "priests" of God and of Christ? And with which kind of priesthood? (Hebrews 7:15-17)
7. Read Isaiah 66:22 and Revelation 21:1-7 What is the new heavens and the new earth? How do "our offspring and our name endure" because of this?
8. Read Isaiah 66:23 and Zechariah 14:3-5,16-19 After the great revival, after the Great Battle, apparently "everyone" will worship God in Jerusalem. How is this the completion of the Great Commission? How does the Great Battle lead to the fulfillment of the Great Commission?
9. Read Isaiah 66:24, Mark 9:42-48, Revelation 14:9-12 Why does God tell us about Hell?

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