



Old Testament Overview 9

Isaiah – prophecies of judgement and exile – Leader’s version

For an hour study, just do the starred * questions

Check in – ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

Isaiah was a prophet who lived about 700 years before Jesus was born. As a nation, Israel had continued to reject God. God's message to them through Isaiah was that judgement was coming, but the people wouldn't listen. God also promised, through Isaiah, that He would save the people from destruction. Both these prophecies were fulfilled (came true).

This study uses several books of the Bible; this helps us to see that the Bible is a big book of joined-up thinking.

What does the passage say and mean?

60 minutes

*1. Read Isaiah 1 v 4. How are the people of Israel described?

Sinful, guilty, evil, corrupt, rejecting God.

Questions 2-4 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**.

We are going to look back at what God had said in the past, in order to understand Isaiah's message.

*2. **SDL** a. Read Leviticus 26 v 3-4, 9-12. What does God promise if the people follow His laws and obey His commands?

Good harvest, the nation will grow, God will live among them, He will be their God and they will be His people.

b. Read Leviticus 26 v 14-16, 27-33. What does God promise if the people reject him?

Why?

Terror, disease, poor harvest, punishment, death on a massive scale, famine so bad that the people would

resort to cannibalism (v29, fulfilled in 2 Kings 6 v 24-29), ruined cities, rejection of their sacrifices and offerings, their enemies will live in the land, the Israelites will be scattered among the nations. (The people of Israel living in foreign lands as prisoners is referred to as 'the exile').

Because of God's anger, v28.

*3. **SDL** Read Leviticus 26 v 44-45. What does God say will happen when the people have been scattered?

When the people are in exile in foreign lands, because of their sin, God will not forget or destroy them completely – God will not forget the covenant, even though the people will.

*4. **SDL** Read Isaiah 1 v 18. What does God promise, if the people are willing to live under His authority, and obey Him?

Forgiveness.

Read Isaiah 6 v 8-13.

*5. What does God say will happen when Isaiah takes God's message to them? (v8-10)

They will reject the message. NB 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding' etc is not a divine curse, but a statement of fact. God is telling Isaiah that his message will not be listened to. However, if they did hear / see / understand, they would be healed (forgiven).

*6. What will happen, when the people reject God's message? (v11-12)

The land will be laid waste and the people will be removed far away (warning of coming judgement and exile).

*7. What is the message of hope that God gives? (v13)

There will be a remnant – a few will survive, from whom the nation can be rebuilt. Specifically, there will be a holy seed – encourage the group to try to work out who this refers to (Jesus).

*8. Read Isaiah 10 v 22. What do we learn about God's judgement from this verse and from other verses we have studied so far?

God's judgement is 1. overwhelming – the people will not be able to avoid it, 2. righteous - it is not arbitrary, but appropriate.

9. What is the ultimate, and eternal, exile from God's presence to which we are all subject (on our own merit)?

Hell

10. Read Isaiah 42 v 1-3. What does this tell you about God's chosen one (the Messiah), who would rescue people from their sin (and thus from eternal exile from God)?

He is God's chosen one, v1. (He will be gentle? He will not be forceful? He will not have a high profile? v2). He will not crush the weak, He will bring justice, v3.

11. Read Isaiah 53 v 4-6. What does this tell you about the Messiah? What event in history do you think it refers to?

(Isaiah writes in the past tense to refer to an event in his own future!)

The Messiah will suffer on behalf of others, will be abandoned by God and bear our punishment, be pierced for our sins, v4-5. Because of this, we will be healed (saved), v5. This is because we have gone astray, v6.

This passage refers to Jesus' death on the cross.

12. Read Isaiah 61 v 1-3. What does this tell you about the Messiah?

The Holy Spirit is with Him. He is anointed (sent for a purpose) by God. He will release captives and give sight to the blind (primarily talking about spiritual imprisonment / blindness) etc.

13. Read Luke 4 v 16-21. What passage did Jesus read from the scroll at the beginning of His ministry? Why do you think He did this?

Isaiah 61 v 1-2! Jesus said these verses from the OT were a prophecy about Him (v21). He was making a statement that He is the Messiah, God's chosen servant, the anointed one.

*14. Read Isaiah 65 v 17-19. What does God say He will do? What does He tell us to do?

He will create a new heavens and new earth. He will rejoice over the new heavens and the new earth and there will be no weeping or crying (suffering) there. He tells us to be glad and rejoice for ever in His new creation. He calls this place 'Jerusalem' but this refers to the heavenly Jerusalem; eternity in God's presence.

15. Read Revelation 21 v 1-4. This is part of a vision God gave to John, one of Jesus' disciples. Why do you think the Bible ends with the promise of a new Jerusalem?

The Bible, from Genesis 3 to Revelation 22, is the account of God's rescue plan. Man sinned which separated humanity from God. As soon as that happened, God's rescue plan was put into operation. At the end of the Bible, we see again a picture of what is to come – the new Jerusalem; 'heaven'.

16. Read 1 Peter 1 v 3-5. What does this tell you about heaven?

Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the mercy of God, believers are promised a place in heaven. This promise cannot spoil or fade. Because of our faith, God's power shields us (from spiritual harm) until the last day, when Jesus comes back (as judge of all the world).

How can I live according to these truths in my life?

20 minutes

*1. It's often easy to see how someone else is rebelling against God, but not so easy to recognise it in our own lives. Be honest, are you living under God's authority in absolutely everything you do? Can you identify something that needs to change, and can you commit to working on that thing over the next week?

No-one is living under God's authority all the time – we are all sinners. Anyone who can't identify sin in their life is blinded to their own sin! Try to push everyone to think of something, but not things they don't want to share – try to keep the group discussion based around things like honesty, gossip, what they watch on TV etc. If there are bigger issues, either talk about them in another setting or suggest that the individual talk to God about the issue.

*2. How would you describe your response to the message of Jesus Christ? Are you listening, and acting on what you hear, or are you deaf to his good news?

3. In the highway code, we are told not to enter a yellow hashed box unless our exit is clear. In a similar way it has been said, regarding our own death, that we should not enter the box unless our exit is clear. Are you confident and secure in the knowledge of your eternal destiny?

TIME-LINE if you are making a time-line, do the next part of it now – ask the group to add what they have learnt today in the appropriate place.

Check out – ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



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2 a. Read Leviticus 26 v 3-4, 9-12. What does God promise if the people follow His laws and obey his commands?

b. Read Leviticus 26 v 14-16, 27-33. What does God promise if the people reject Him? Why?

3. Read Leviticus 26 v 44-45. What does God say will happen when the people have been scattered?

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