

HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

Isaiah 1-39
Leader's guide

Hearing the Word Isaiah 1-39 Leader's Guide

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Nigel Barge, July 2017

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Resources

The *New Bible Dictionary* 3rd edition, published by Inter Varsity Press
The *New Bible Commentary* 21st century edition. A commentary on every Bible book, IVP

www.blueletterbible.org

Hearing the Word: A Tool for Bible reading



LOOK – What does it *say*?

- 1) The Text
 - a) What questions does it raise -
Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?
 - b) What surprises you?
- 2) The Context?
 - a) the surrounding text
 - b) the Book of the Bible
 - c) the whole Bible
 - d) the place in the Bible Story



LEARN – What does it *mean*?

- 1) What type of writing is it?
- 2) Answer the questions
- 3) Summarise the passage



LISTEN – What is the *message*?

- 1) Which is the main point?
- 2) Which is the key verse?



LIVE – How should we *respond*?

- 1) What does it show about God,
(Father, Son, Holy Spirit) :
 - a) His nature and character?
 - b) His grace*
 - c) Jesus / his salvation**
- 2) What should I do?

* God's undeserved generosity is evident throughout the Bible, and it is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

** The Bible, from 'the fall' onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through his Son. Thus, *all* the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27).

The seven studies in this booklet

This first booklet looks at seven representative passages in Isaiah 1-39, taken from the first four of Isaiah's seven sections. A second booklet covers the last three sections in chapters 40-66. Explore all 14 studies, and you will have a good grasp of Isaiah's contribution to our world.

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READING PROPHECY IN THE BIBLE

Whatever we read, we adjust to its style. We approach a newspaper, a cookery book, a poem and a scientific report in different ways. We take into account the purpose for which it was written and the way the writer uses words.

Since the Bible has many styles - law, poetry, history, prophecy, *etc.* - we need to allow for the style if we are to discern what God is saying. Isaiah is mainly **prophecy**, mostly expressed in *poetry*. To approach it properly, keep in mind the following principles:

1) In general - it is God's story

The Bible tells the story of God's dealings with humankind. After creation and 'the fall' in Genesis 1-3, the rest describes how he works out his unfolding plan to rescue humankind through Jesus. The Old Testament (OT)

prepares for the coming and the death of Jesus. The New Testament (NT) describes the event and looks forwards to his return at the end of time. It is *all* about God. It follows that:

a) Every part relates to Him (Luke 24:27; John 5:39). So as we read, we ask, 'what does this show about God? What is He doing?'

b) Everything is relevant. In a movie, every scene plays some part in the overall story. Often the early stages of a film show things that make no sense until later. The Bible is the same. So as we read prophecy, often knowing the outcome already, we ask, 'what relevance has *this* part to the *main* story?'

2) In particular - 'follow the camera angle'

A film director focuses our attention on particular shots to tell 'his story'. In the same way the prophet is selective about what he tells us. He omits much general detail, only giving us items relevant to what he is trying to convey.

As we read we should therefore be asking the question - why is he telling me this, and in this particular way?

3) The nature of prophecy

The Bible uses the word 'prophet' to mean a person authorised by God to speak for him, and inspired by the Holy Spirit so that what *he* says, *God* says (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). God had made a covenant, or special agreement, with his people; he had a special concern to hold his people to it.

4) The scope of prophecy

To read prophecy we need a tri-focal lens! A text may be referring to the immediate time-frame, the coming of Jesus made flesh among us, or His coming as Judge at the end of time. The difficulty in reading prophecy is that these may all be included, but mixed up, apparently at random!

READING ISAIAH

The Author

Isaiah lived in Jerusalem (7:3, 37:2), was married, with at least two sons (7:3; 8:3). His name means 'The LORD saves', which is the heart of his prophecy.

The Purpose

'Come now, let us reason together,' says the LORD. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ... If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land. But if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.' (Is 1:18-20)

Notice that Isaiah is not just predicting what will happen. He is appealing to people to turn to God. If they do turn, God will forgive and protect them. If they do not, God's judgement will fall on them. He hopes readers will:

- a. NOTE his vision – salvation or judgment.
- b. BELIEVE the truths displayed – our sinfulness and his saviour-hood.
- c. RECEIVE the Lord's provision– the rescue he offers in God's name.

Isaiah was mostly writing chapters 1-39 of his book to the people of Judah (the area around Jerusalem) about 730 years before Jesus Christ lived, to call them to repent; and chapters 40-66 to their descendants who would be living in exile 150 years later, to comfort and encourage them. See the table of dates on p 5. But through him God promised some things in detail such as the birth and death of Jesus Christ, and the prophecy is addressed to all people throughout history.

He *warns* of the judgement that is on its way as he writes (5:5-6) and of the greater final judgement of the impenitent (2:12-21; 66:24); but he also *promises* a coming Saviour (52:13–53:12) and *offers* all people a new start, and fullness of life, through belonging to him: free! (55:1-7)

What was happening then?

Isaiah prophesied through four reigns from 740 to about 700BC (1:1). The people we call the Jews, God's people Israel, had split into two kingdoms:

The *northern* kingdom, *Israel*, also known as Ephraim, had *Samaria* as capital; and *Judah*, the *southern* kingdom, with its capital, *Jerusalem*.

Sometimes Isaiah uses 'Israel' to mean *all* the people, of both kingdoms.

The joint enemy to their north and east was the empire **Assyria**. Isaiah warned that Assyria would invade their land and plunder Samaria (8:3-8); this *did* happen a few years later while Isaiah was still active as a prophet.

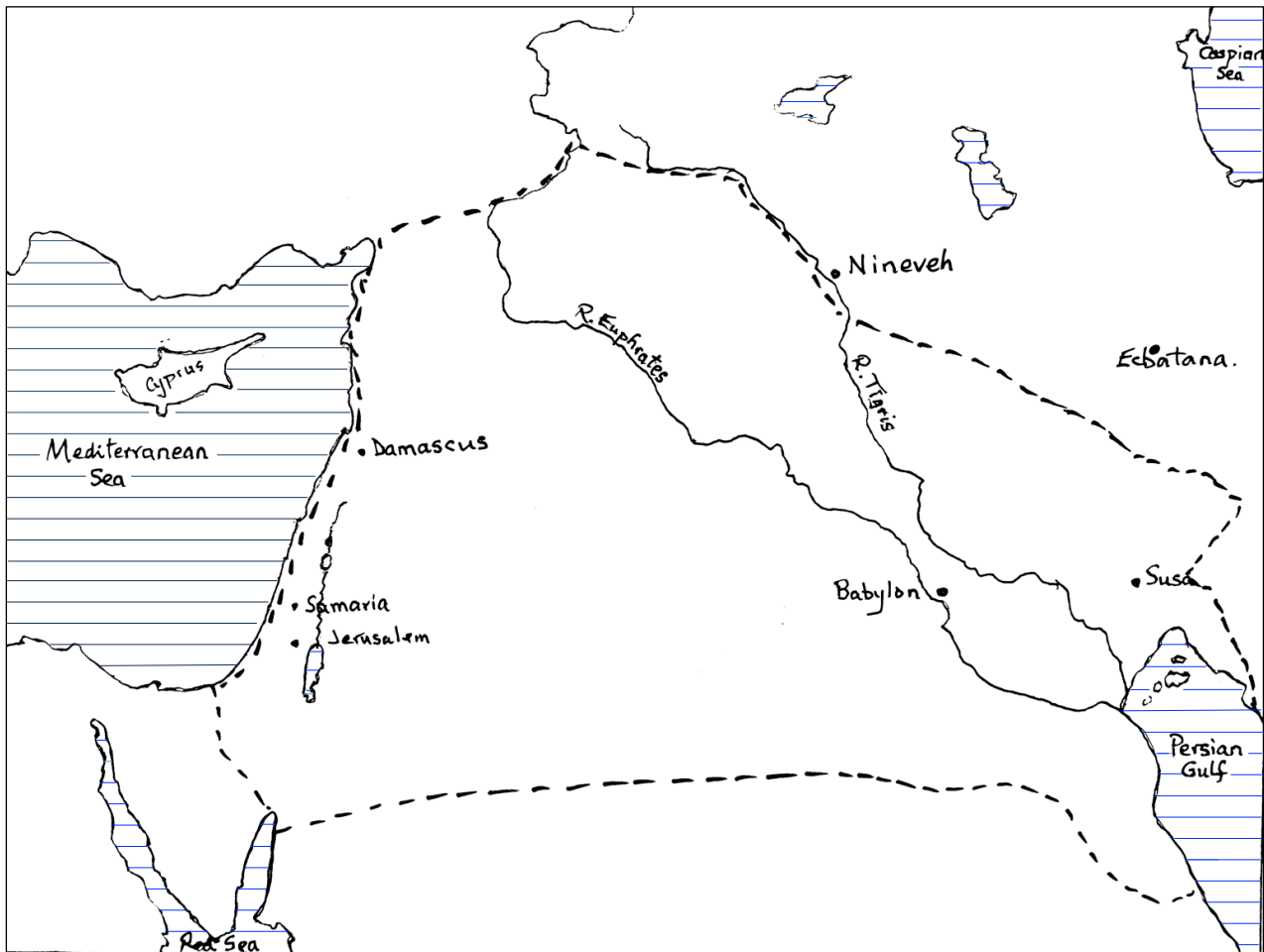
Many Israelites were deported to Assyria as prisoners of war. Israel became part of the Assyrian empire and ceased to exist as a separate kingdom.

So when you read warnings such as 8:3-8 (*'Because you have rejected God's reign, Assyria will invade'*), you can say to yourself, 'that was the news-flash of its day – and it came true: what does that say about God who inspired it?'

The next great empire was **Babylon**. Isaiah warned that they would conquer the remaining kingdom, Judah, and deport the people in turn as prisoners of war (39:5). This took place in a series of invasions about a century later, after Isaiah's death. Again, what God said came true.

To prepare for the time of exile in Babylon, Isaiah wrote chapters 40-66 to comfort those future Israelites. Though he had died by the time it happened he wrote in advance: like writing a message for your great-grandchildren.

Map for Isaiah



Key, taking the **cities** from west to east:

- Jerusalem: capital of southern kingdom, Judah
- Samaria: capital of northern kingdom, Israel
- Damascus: capital of Syria (Aram): see, eg, ch.7 v.1
- Nineveh: capital of Assyria
- Babylon: capital of Babylonia
- Ecbatana: capital of Medo-Persia for Cyrus' first two years
- Susa: capital of Medo-Persia after that (later Persepolis was: further south, to east of Persian Gulf)

Assyrian Empire: a little smaller than dotted line, with some land to north of it.

Babylonian Empire: area shown by dotted line.

Medo-Persian Empire: all that area, and Asia Minor all the way to the Mediterranean, and south west to northern Sudan, and territory to the east another 600 miles all the way to the Syr Darya river in what is now Eastern Uzbekistan. See also Esther 1.1. Cyrus' achievement (first emperor of the united Medo-Persian empire) is stunning.

Timescale Chart:

Timescale relating to Isaiah

Date	World Power	Kings of Israel	Kings of Judah	Isaiah
BC	800-625 Assyria		767-740 Uzziah	
		740-732 Pekah	740-732 Jotham	740 – c 695
		732-722 Hoshea 722 Samaria fell to Assyria	732-716 Ahaz (co-regent from 744)	Isaiah's ministry. Contemporaries: Micah, Hosea
- 700	Sennacherib and others	<i>People of Israel (the 10 northern tribes) exiled to Assyria</i>	716-687 Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29-32) then 7 more kings over next 100 years (2 Chron. 33-36)	
- 600	626-539 Babylonia			
			586 Jerusalem fell to Babylonia	
			586-538 <i>People of Judah exiled to Babylon</i>	Isaiah had written 40-66 in advance to these exiles
- 500	Belshazzar (Daniel 5)			
	538-331 Medo-Persia first ruler = Cyrus		538 Cyrus encouraged the exiles to return to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1)	Isaiah predicted this (44:28-45:6)

§1 Chapters 1-6 *Introducing Isaiah's prophecy*

Study 1 The state of the nation: Isaiah 1:1-31

Isaiah explains his task

Background

Chapters 1-6 set the scene for the rest of the book. It is thought that Isaiah wrote chapter 1 *after* the rest of his prophecy, to explain it.

God had brought up Israel as his children (v2) but they were behaving disgracefully (v4, 17, 23). Isaiah's life's work was to call them back to God (v4, 18), promising them God's blessing if they would do so (v19) but also warning them of the real dangers of ignoring him (v20).

Word list

1	<i>Kings of Judah</i>	see table on page 5 for dates
4	<i>Holy One of Israel</i>	title for God, almost exclusive to Isaiah
8	<i>Daughter of Zion</i>	the people of Jerusalem (<i>Zion</i> was one of the hills on which it was built)
9	<i>Sodom, Gomorrah</i>	Two cities on Jordan river plain, completely destroyed by God for their wickedness <i>see</i> Genesis 18-19 (<i>cf</i> Pompeii)
10	<i>New Moons, Sabbaths, convocations</i>	appointed times to meet for feasts and/or sacrifices
11	<i>Mighty One of Israel</i>	title for God
29	<i>sacred oaks, gardens</i>	places for idol worship and sacrifice

Bible Connections

4, 16	<i>Jerusalem's sin</i>	<i>see</i> v23; 3:14,15; 5:8,11; 8:19; 10:1,2
11	<i>sacrifices</i>	Leviticus ch 1-7 gives details of the many sacrifices
18	<i>penitence, forgiveness</i>	<i>see</i> Psalm 51
	<i>merely external worship</i>	<i>cf</i> Jesus condemns Pharisees, Matthew 23:23

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 What about the other tribes of Israel?*
- 5 How were the people 'afflicted'?*
- 9 Why has the Lord left survivors'?*
- 10 Why does the Lord address the leaders of Sodom & Gomorrah?*
- 13 Why are these offerings meaningless?*
- 17 What will they stop doing / start doing if they hear the Lord?*
- 18 How will your sins be removed?*
- 23 What is so special about orphans and widows?*
- 26 How would a faithful / unfaithful city treat them?*
- 27 When will Zion be redeemed with justice?*
- 29 Who is the 'you' that he is speaking to?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 3 Why could they not see that their affliction was due to their sin?*

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible - surrounding passage, individual book, whole bible, or Bible story - might help you understand this passage?

a) individual book

- 6 sores - same word as 'stripes' (Isaiah 53:5)*
- 7 desolation - Sennacherib's invasion (Isaiah 37:30-32; 2 Kings 18:13)*
- 23 see how (Isaiah 14:12)*
- 30 an oak with fading leaves(c.f. Isaiah 58:11)*

b) whole Bible

- 2 hear O heavens, listen O earth (c.f. Deuteronomy 30:19)*
- 3 not understanding (c.f. 2 Corinthians 4:4)*
- 9 survivors (Genesis 6:13,18)*
- 18 Let us reason together. (c.f. Job 2 3:7)*
- 23 see how... (2 Samuel 1:25; Lamentations 1:1)*

c) Bible story

God create them but man's sin separated them.

God provide a way back to him through faith.
God gave mankind his perfect Law, which would if kept allow restoration.
Mankind did not obey Him despite the warnings of His prophets

LEARN

- 1) What type of literature is this? *Prophecy, written as poetry*
- 2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?
 - 1 *God spoke to them separately.*
 - 5 *They were afflicted by being exiled.*
 - 9 *The Lord left survivors because of his mercy.*
 - 10 *He addresses Judah's leaders as if they were as wicked as the leaders of legendary and infamous Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:16-19:29); like accusing someone today of being 'a bit of a Hitler'.*
 - 13 *The offerings and rituals were made meaningless by their evil deeds (v16,17) which spoke more loudly to God, contradicting their worship.*
 - 17 *They will stop mistreating the weak and start seeking justice.*
 - 18 *Sins can be removed by them being 'willing and obedient'.*
 - 23 *Orphans and widows are the weakest / most disadvantaged people.*
 - 26 *A faithful city should treat the weak 'righteously'.*
 - 27 *Zion will only be redeemed with justice finally when Jesus returns.*
 - 29 *'You' means the 'rebels and sinners' who 'forsake the Lord' (v28).*
- 3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
 They couldn't see because they were 'blinded'.
- 4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.
 To the people of Judah (1):
 sin weakens us (2-9),
 sin deafens God (10-17),
 sin is a choice (18-31),
 so choose God !

LISTEN

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?
 'The choice is yours – life or death. Choose life,' says the Lord.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 18 - 20**

'Come now, let us reason together,' says the Lord. 'If you are willing and obedient you will eat the best from the land, but if you resist and rebel you will be devoured by the sword'.

3) How do you think it does this?

In the passage Isaiah lays out how our sin affects our relationship with the Lord and invites us to reject sin and receive Him.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

1 God speaks to His people.

2 God wants His Word heard by all.

21 God judges the once faithful city – calling it a 'harlot' - that it may become again the city of righteousness (26).

28 Those who forsake the Lord will perish.

b) His grace?

18-20 God gives us the choice of life or death

19 God looks for devotion not gifts.

c) Jesus and His salvation?

27 He redeems her penitent ones with righteousness'.

Now underline the application of the Main Point

2) What should I do ?

2,10 Really listen to the Word of the Lord.

3b Recognise that people in the covenant may be ignorant of God.

5,6 Acknowledge that sin causes unrecognised malaises.

10- 16 Religious observance does NOT equal worship of God.

17 Note 'Seeking justice' involves doing what is right.

17,23 Defend the fatherless.

18-20 Be reasonable – choose the Lord and Life

27 Believe and trust in God for righteousness.

Now underline the application of the Main Point

Background

This paragraph is among the most important in all literature, for it tells us the direction in which God is taking human history. That involves a great future for the people of God.

Isaiah writes of 'the last days', 'the Lord has a day' and 'in that day' (2:2,10,12,17; 3:18; 4:1,2). 'Day' means a time of God's significant activity, from a great time when people will flock to choose God as their king (2:2-4), to the terrifying day when people will try to hide under rocks from his judgement (2:10-22), to the time when God will make everything perfect in new heavens and a new earth (4:2-6).

We are living in the 'afterwards days' of which he speaks (2), and these verses are coming true right now. People from all nations are streaming to God's house to learn his ways and to learn (if only we learnt more quickly!) how to build peace.

Word List

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| 2 | <i>day</i> | significant period <i>see above</i> |
| | <i>mountain</i> | the exalted place where God is worshipped: the Jerusalem Temple |
| 3 | <i>many people</i> | all nations <i>cf</i> Isaiah 60:3 |
| | <i>God of Jacob</i> | a title for God. God had given Jacob (meaning <i>twister</i>) a new name: 'Israel' Genesis 32:28 |
| 5 | <i>house of Jacob</i> | including both Judah and Israel |

Bible Connections

2-5 *repeated almost word for word in Micah 4:1-3*. Micah and Isaiah lived at the same time so the vision must have been laid on the hearts of the prophets of that period.

2 *in the last days* *see* Acts 2:17 (quoting Joel 2:28-32); Hebrews 1:1-2

2-3 *huge increase in the number of God's people, including Gentiles ('all nations')* - also predicted in 11:10; Ps 22:27 & 72:8-11, Daniel 2:44, Romans 11:25-36 and Revelation 11:15.

hence the great commission see Matthew 28:18-20.

4 *Nations will be at peace.* *see* Psalm 46:9; Micah 4:3; Zechariah 9:9,10.

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Why do you need to say it again (1:1)?*
- 2 *When are 'the last days'?*
Why is the mountain important?
Who will establish it?
- 3 *Who are 'the peoples'?*
How will the Word go from Jerusalem?
- 4 *Who will judge?*
How else could they resolve their disputes?
Why will they do away with their swords?
- 5 *Who is speaking?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 5 *What is the light we are meant to live by?*

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage

- 1 *Isaiah is also called 'Son of Amoz' in (1:1)*

b) individual book

- 2 *The Mountain of the Lord (30:29)*
All nations - see my Glory (66:11)

c) whole bible

- 3 *many peoples – drawn to the Lord (John 12:32)*
come to Jerusalem (Zechariah 8:20)
the nations (Deuteronomy 4:27; Psalm 67:4)
Teach, so we walk in his paths – we will be like Him. (1 John 3:2)
the word from Jerusalem (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8; 8:1,4)
- 4 *The judge – Jesus (Acts 17:31)*
- 5 *Live by the light. (Matthew 5:38-48; John 1:9)*
Walk in the light (John 3:19-21; 8:12)
(No more night) (Revelation 22:5)

d) Bible story

See study 1

LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 Repetition makes sense, as chapter 1 was written as a summary of the prophecy.

2 The 'last days' are the days in which we live.

The mountain symbolises exaltation or high distinction.

God will establish it.

3 'The peoples' are the earth's inhabitants.

The Word goes out after the coming of the Holy Spirit.

4 Jesus will judge.

Having God as the Lord would make their disputes irrelevant.

Swords, being weapons of human aggression, will no longer be needed.

5 The Prophet Isaiah is speaking.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

The light is the revelation of God to all mankind that he will complete at the end of time.

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Isaiah anticipates that in the final days the Lord will reign supreme, with his people living in peace. He invites us to embrace this.

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

The people of God are invited to live anticipating the peace that he will command at the end of time.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

v 5

'Come, O house of Jacob, let us live in the light of the Lord.'

3) How do you think it does this?

It is an invitation to join Isaiah living in the light of the Lord's teaching, anticipating the peace that he will bring.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

2 *The Lord reigns supreme.*

3 *His intention is that we are like him.*

4 *He (alone) is the judge.*

At the end he will rule in peace.

b) His grace?

3 *His grace extends to peoples of every nation.*

Lord gives mercy to those who turn to Him, then He teaches us his ways.

5 *God invites to 'walk,(i.e. conduct ourselves) in accordance with the light He has given us.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

4 *Jesus is the Judge.*

5 *Jesus is the light of God.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point

2) What should I do? ?

3 *Acknowledge that the Word is to be shared with the World.*

5 *'Walk in the light of the Lord'.*

Accept the invitation to participate in God's rule.

Now underline the application of the Main Point

Study 3 God's call to Isaiah

Isaiah 6:1-13

Background

Uzziah, also known as Azariah, who died c740BC, had a long and prosperous reign as king of Judah for 52 years. He extended its borders and successfully campaigned against the Philistines, Arabs and Ammonites. He strengthened the fortifications of Jerusalem. However when he usurped the function of the priests the Lord afflicted him with leprosy/skin disease for the rest of his life.

Isaiah is the only prophet who dates an event by a death (cf 14:28), each time with significance.

Word List

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | <i>Uzziah</i> | King of Judah 791 - 740BC. |
| 2 | <i>seraphs</i> | Hebrew = 'burning ones', i.e. angels; the only use of this word in Bible (in verses 2 and 6) |
| | <i>covered...covered...flying</i> | All three verbs are continuous action. |
| 3 | <i>holy, holy, holy</i> | Hebrew uses repetition to express superlatives / totality. This phrase is the only triple repetition in the Bible, until Revelation 4:8. |
| 5 | <i>ruined</i> | Hebrew root means 'to be silent', as in silence following disaster or death. |
| 6 | <i>live coal</i> | perpetual fire was kept at the altar. |
| 7 | <i>touched...taken away</i> | tense shows, the effect is instantaneous. |
| | <i>atoned for</i> | fire is part of sacrifices. The angel assures Isaiah that he is 'at one' (atoned) with God again. |
| 13 | <i>terebinth, oak</i> | Meaning uncertain; may be two species of oak. |

Bible connections

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | <i>reign of King Uzziah</i> | see 2 Kings 14:21;15:1-7; 2 Chronicles 26 |
| 2 | <i>seeing the Lord</i> | see John 1:18; 12:41; 14:9; 1 Corinthians 13:12 |
| 3 | <i>the holiness of God</i> | see Exodus 15:11; 1 Samuel 2:2; Habakkuk 1:13; John 17:11; Revelation 15:4 |
| 6 | <i>live coal</i> | ie fire from the altar, see Leviticus 6:12-13 |
| 8 | <i>'us' i.e. the Trinity</i> | see Matthew 28:19; John 14:21; |
| 9 | <i>hearing/ not understanding, seeing/ not perceiving.</i> | The New Testament quotes Isaiah 6:9 <i>six times!</i> Matthew 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:39-40; Acts 28:26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16. |

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *What is the significance of the death with the vision?*
Why does the train of his robe fill the Temple?
- 2 *Why the six wings?*
- 3 *Why were they calling to one another?*
- 4 *What did their effect on the Temple mean?*
- 5 *Why did they have such an effect on Isaiah?*
- 7 *How had his sin been atoned for by the coal?*
- 8 *Why did he volunteer?*
- 9 *Why bother to tell them?*
Why is there no possibility of repentance?
- 11 *When will these things take place?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 9 ff *There is no chance of repentance given or desired.*

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage

- 8 *Here I am. (contrast v 5!!)*

b) individual book

- 7 *guilt and uncleanness (1:25)*
14 *hoy seed c.f. seed of evil doers (1:4 AV)*

c) whole Bible

- 1 *Uzziah, a leper, ignores God's holiness (2 Chron 26:16ff; cf Isaiah 2:17)*
the Lord sitting on a throne (Revelation 7:10; 19:4)
Glory filled the Temple. (Ezekiel 43:5)
- 3 *Holy, Holy, Holy (Revelation 4:8)*
- 4,5 *smoke etc c.f. Sinai (Exodus 19:16-19)*
No one shall see God and live. (Exodus 33:20)
- 5 *Conviction of sin before God (John 16:8)*
Only the pure in heart see God (Matthew 5:8)
- 8 *Who shall be sent (Romans 10:14ff)*

11 cf conviction of Holy Spirit (John 16:8ff)

14 Holy seed c.f. (Genesis 3:15; 22:18; Galatians 3:16)

d) the Bible story

See study 1

LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 Uzziah, leper, who is unclean, contrasts with Isaiah, feels unclean (5)

The 'train of his robe' represents the Glory of God

2 Two wings to fly in God's service, two for bodily modesty before God's splendour and two to hide their eyes from God's unendurable glory.

3 Praise is a personal appreciation shared with others

4 This meant the Lord Himself inhabited their praises

5 The effect was to realise his own unholiness

7 Coal came from the place of sacrifice

8 He volunteered because he was forgiven / righteous.

9 Unrepentant attitude was ingrained? (2 Chronicles 36:16)

11 They will keep happening until man admits his complete powerlessness

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

As Romans 1:28ff explains, when we insist on continually refusing God, we become, by his discipline, unable to have a change of heart.

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Isaiah, on seeing God, becomes acutely aware of his sin, and the holiness of God. Following his forgiveness, he accepts the commission to take the message to the world. This will only be accepted when humanity knows it is utterly ruined and is willing to accept God's solution, 'the Holy Seed'.

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

By God's gracious forgiveness, He enables servants to speak His Word.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

8c

'Here. I am send me!'

3) How do you think it does this?

Isaiah has experienced the conviction of sin and forgiveness of God before presenting himself as a willing prophet of His Word.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

1 The Lord is glorious in heaven (1) and on earth (3).

8 The revelation of God revelation induces willing service.

b) His grace?

7 Atonement for sin is a gift.

c) Jesus and His salvation?

13 The promised 'holy seed' is Jesus.

Now underline the application of the Main Point

2) What should I do?

2 In appreciating God's glory, be aware of my own short-comings.

3 Be aware of the Holiness of God.

5 Look to God for an awareness of my sin.

8 Be willing to accept the God call to His service.

As a forgiven person volunteer for the Lord's work.

10 Don't allow deliberate unbelief to make us deaf to God's entreaties.

13 Be willing to wait on the hope of God in Jesus.

Now underline the application of the Main Point

§2 Ch 7-12 *Present dilemma, Promised Saviour*

Study 4 The Sign of the pregnant virgin 7:1-25

Background

Chapters 7-12 form the second section of Isaiah. The date is about 735BC. It predicts the Assyrians will invade the land north of Jerusalem and gives the first promises of a future rescuer (7:14; 9:1-7; 11:1-9).

Word List

1,5,6	<i>Kings</i>	<i>see</i> dates, page 5. Kings Rezin of Aram (= Syria, capital Damascus) and Pekah of Israel (capital Samaria) are allied against Ahaz of Judah (capital Jerusalem).
2,13	<i>house of David</i>	kingdom of Judah.
	<i>Ephraim</i>	another name for the northern kingdom, i.e. Israel .
3	<i>Shear-Jashub</i>	the name means ‘a remnant will return’.
	<i>Upper Pool</i>	outside Jerusalem’s gates at head of Valley of Hinnom
	<i>Washerman’s Field</i>	(Fuller’s Field in AV) on highway west of Jerusalem.
6	<i>Son of Tabeel</i>	the enemy wanted to depose Ahaz and put a puppet king on the throne in Judah.
14	<i>virgin</i>	The word means ‘maiden.’ It is never used of a married woman, has the idea of virtue and so assumes virginity. Matthew 1:23 tells us that ‘virgin’ is the correct understanding. (Another word Isaiah could have used normally means virgin but is used in Joel 8 of a married woman, so would have been less clear.)
	<i>Immanuel</i>	means ‘God is with us’.
17	<i>King of Assyria</i>	Tiglath-Pileser <i>see</i> 2 Chronicles 28:20.
20	<i>River</i>	<i>ie</i> the river Euphrates.
22	<i>Curds and honey</i>	a symbol of natural plenty. (Exodus 3:8).
23	<i>silver shekel</i>	about 25lbs (11.5kg) of silver.

Bible Connections

1	<i>the fight for Jerusalem</i>	<i>see</i> 2 Kings 16:5
14	<i>Immanuel</i>	<i>see</i> Matthew 1:18-25
18-25	<i>Assyrian invasion</i>	<i>see</i> 2 Chronicles 28:16-21

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Why does Isaiah mention son of Jotham son of Uzziah?*
Why couldn't they overpower Jerusalem?
- 2 *Why were they so 'shaken'?*
- 3 *Is the place of meeting significant?*
- 4 *What does he mean about his opponents?*
- 7 *Why does he call Him 'sovereign Lord'?*
- 9 *What does his warning mean?*
- 10 *Why does the Lord speak 'again'?*
- 12 *Why will Ahaz not ask for a sign?*
- 14 *'Therefore' - Why is the Lord giving a sign?*
What does the sign mean?
Who is called 'Immanuel'?
- 17 *When will the Lord bring this time?*
- 18 *'In that day. . .' – When?*
What will happen? (see also 20,23)

What surprises or confuses you?

Who, of Isaiah's contemporaries could give the significance of 'Immanuel'?

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible - surrounding passage, individual book, whole bible, or Bible story - might help you understand this passage?

a) surrounding passages

- 3 *Jerusalem will be redeemed 1:27.*

b) individual Book

- 3 *meeting place cf the place of confrontation 36:2.*
- 4 *Don't be afraid (trust God) 8:12,13; 28:16; 30:15.*

c) whole Bible

- 1 *Choosing to obey is faith! John 7:17.*
Signs of faith 37:20, Exodus 3:12; 4:11.
- 12 *Testing forbidden unless the Lord invites Deut 6:16; Malachi 3:10.*
- 14 *Immanuel is the promised seed Genesis 3:15.*

18 Surrounded like bees; blazed like firethorns Deuteronomy 1:44; Psalm 118:12.

d) the Bible story

See study 1

LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 Isaiah wants to remind of how far Judah has fallen in one generation.

The reason is simply the Lord was against them.

2 They were shaken because they didn't trust God.

3 Ahaz was probably inspecting his water supply, anxiously.

4 It means their opponents are impotent.

9 If you trust me you will stand, if not you will fall.

10 The Lord speaks again because he has not received a response.

12 He won't ask for a sign because he does not, and will not, believe.

14 God is giving this sign because he has not been listened to.

In immediate terms, the sign refers to

a) time – short, before the child grows u.p

b) assurance - God is with us (opposite: Ichabod, 1 Samuel 4:21)

c) the rank— royal birth gives hope

In ultimate terms, the Lord Himself is called 'Immanuel'.

17 In 733 BC, Syria and Israel, having conspired against Assyria, were overrun.

18 'that day' = when the Lord brought Assyria.

Prosperity will be destroyed.

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

No one could have understood that the prophet has 'raised his eyes' to see some 700 years ahead.

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Don't listen to your fears. Ask God for help. In time, God, Himself, will come.

Meantime judgement be upon you.

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Because we are failures, trust in God's sign, the virgin's Son.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 14**

'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and you will call him Immanuel.'

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

7 God is in control.

17 The Lord brings adversity – The King of Assyria.

18 The Lord brings judgment.

b) His grace?

11 All the King has to do is to ask.

c) Jesus and His salvation?

14 The sign of Jesus is to be believed and received.

Now underline the application of the Main Point

2) What should I do?

4 Trust God - Be careful, keep calm, don't be afraid.

9 Have faith in what God requires and you will stand.

11 Ask the Lord to fulfil His promises.

12 There is no excuse for disobeying God.

14 Believe in the virgin's child.

Now underline the application of the Main Point

Study 5 The coming Prince of Peace

9:1-7

Background

In chapter 8 Isaiah writes of a time after the devastation of the northern lands, using a theme of *darkness* (gloom). However the believing remnant are the people of hope and this hope is sure. 9:1-7 is written in past tenses ie the future is written as something that has already happened. Here he uses the theme of *light*. It is a poem in two sections:

v1-3 the hope described / v4-7 the hope explained.

Word List

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| 1 | <i>land of Naphtali</i> | area along western shore of Sea of Galilee and northwards. |
| | <i>land of Zebulun</i> | area W & SW of Naphtali. The first two areas to fall to Assyria. Same areas are covered by |
| | <i>Galilee of the Gentiles</i> | the northward extension of Naphtali |
| | <i>By the way of the sea</i> | trade route between Egypt and Syria |
| | <i>along the Jordan</i> | river which flowed into north end of Sea of Galilee and out at south end to the Dead Sea |
| 2 | <i>walking</i> | living out their lives |
| 4 | <i>Midian</i> | nation living east of R Jordan, defeated by Gideon |
| | <i>bar</i> | A by-word for overwhelming odds (Judges 6:5) |
| | | another term for yoke: the section across the shoulders |
| 6 | <i>on his shoulders</i> | symbol of 'bearing rule' |

Bible Connections

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | <i>Zebulun, Naphtali:</i> | Captured by Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria about 733BC. see 2 Kings 15:29 |
| | <i>Galilee of the Gentiles honoured</i> | see Matthew 4:12-17 |
| 2 | <i>Darkness/ light motif pointing to creative work of God</i> | see Isaiah 4:5; Genesis 1:2-3; 2 Corinthians 4:6 |
| 3 | <i>rejoicing before God</i> | see Exodus 23:15-17; Deuteronomy 12:7; 14:26 |
| 4 | <i>Midian's defeat</i> | see Judges 6 – 8 |
| | <i>'yoke...burdens...shoulders...oppressor'</i> | recall Egypt and the exodus see Leviticus 26:13; Ex 1:11; 2:11; 5:4-5; 6:6-7. |
| | <i>Exodus as background to coming child</i> | Exodus 3:7-8 |

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *'Nevertheless' – what is he referring to?*
When – 'In the past'?
Who is 'he'?
How will he honour Galilee?
- 2 *Who has seen the great light?*
Where is it seen?
- 3 *Why the joy?*
- 4 *What is the enemy that has been defeated?*
- 6 *How does the birth of a son amount to a defeat for the enemy?*
Who will call him 'wonderful counsellor etc'?
- 7 *How will He reign on David's throne?*
Why will it never end?

What surprises or confuses you?

There is no indication of when it is going to happen.

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage

- 1 *the king of Assyria will conquer the land (8:4ff)*

b) individual book

- 2 *a great light (42:6; 60:3)*
- 6 *a son (7:14)*
Government upon his shoulders (22:22)
- 7 *Zeal (37:22)*

c) whole Bible

- 1 *no more tears (Revelation 21:4)*
- 2 *a great light (Zechariah 14:7,16; John 8:12)*
- 3 *Rejoice always (Philippians 4:4)*
- 4 *Midian routed (Judges 7:22-25)*
- 6b *he will be called (Philippians 2:10)*
- 7 *Zeal (lit glowing fire) (cf 'deep red' Deuteronomy 4:24.*

d) the Bible story
See study 1

LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 *'Nevertheless' – means despite the desolation coming to both houses of Israel (8:14), there is still hope (9:1c-9).*

'In the past' – Probably refers to Assyria recently humbling that area by invasion. See 2 Kings 15:29.

'He' is the Lord

He will honour Galilee since The Son (6), Jesus, will grow up there.

2 *Those who have been in darkness, ie both halves of the Jewish nation (8.14), will 'see the great light'*

The light is seen when the Son is born.

3 *Joy because the birth of this boy brings the wonder of salvation plus relief from oppression.*

4 *The enemy defeated, in the first instance, is the Assyrian oppressor. (The second enemy is 'death' (2), defeated by Jesus the Son of God, on David's throne.)*

6 *The birth of a son is a defeat for the enemy, for He will grow up to conquer them.*

Everyone, ultimately, will acknowledge Him.

7 *He will reign on David's throne by right.*

It will never end as he is immortal – 'the mighty God' (6)

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

Since there is no information about when it is going to happen, they will have to live by faith

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

The weakest, most downtrodden of Israel will rejoice, as death, their worst enemy, is defeated. For a child born amongst us will be God Himself and he will reign over his kingdom (us) as a just king forever. This will be the work of God himself.

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

God brings light and life to us by sending his son to be our king.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 6**

'For to us a child is born, a Son is given.'

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

I God is in charge – He humblesHe honours.

God's rule and reign are eternal.

God is just and righteous.

When He 'wills' something to happen, it does!

b) His grace?

6 God's answer for mankind is in the weakness of man

c) Jesus and His salvation?

6 The Son is the Everlasting Father?!!

7 He has chosen to reign over man as a human being (David's throne)

Now underline the application of the Main Point

2) What should I do?

2 *Seek the Light – It is the cure for the darkness of death.*

3 *Place your joy in Who God Is, and in What He Has Done.*

4 *Believe that our God has given us victory over our worst enemy.*

5 *Trust that the victory is complete – total.*

6 *Believe that through His son, God will triumph finally, be acknowledged by all.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point

§3 Chapters 13-35 God rules the nations

Study 6 The safety of God's people... 14:1-23

. . . and the insecurity of his enemies

Background

The third great section of Isaiah, chapters 13-35, tells how God deals with the nations. He might seem to act slowly but in due time he does punish proud cruelty (especially chapters 13-23); yet ever offers mercy (especially ch 24-35).

Word list

1	<i>The Lord will Jacob, Israel</i>	Original text begins, ' For the Lord will...' Here the two names are synonymous and refer, not to the individual, but to all twelve tribes of Israel.
	<i>aliens</i>	political or other refugees
	<i>settle them</i>	traditional expression for home and security (Deuteronomy 12:10; 2 Samuel 7:1)
3	<i>relief</i>	from same verb as <i>settle</i> in verse 1
4	<i>Babylon</i>	Babylon conquered the southern kingdom, Judah, more than 100 years <i>after</i> Isaiah wrote this!
9,11,15	<i>grave</i>	Hebrew word is <i>Sheol</i> . To the OT believer, it can mean simply the grave or, as in this poem, the place where the spirits of the departed continue and can meet (<i>see</i> 2 Samuel 12:23). It nearly always has the feeling, as here, of unhappiness and weakness.
13	<i>sacred mountain</i>	Mount Zaphon in north. In Canaanite mythology this was the seat of the gods.
18	<i>tomb</i>	here means mausoleum, ie grandiose tomb
19	<i>tomb</i>	the usual word for grave
21	<i>cities</i>	ie power bases

Bible Connections

1	<i>aliens</i>	a specially protected status in Israel <i>see</i> Deuteronomy 10:18-19
1-3	<i>Restoration</i>	<i>see also</i> 49:8-26; Jeremiah 33:1-9
14	<i>the Most High</i>	<i>see</i> Genesis 14:18-19,22 <i>cf</i> Daniel 4:17,34-35

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 When will the Lord have compassion on Israel / the house of Jacob?*
- 4 Why mention the King of Babylon when Assyria is ruling?*
- 5 How has 'the Lord broken the rod of the wicked?'*
- 7 When will 'all the land be at rest?'*
- 9 Who is 'you' (9-11)?*
- 12 Who is 'the morning star'?*
- 15 How has he been brought down?*
- 16 Who 'ponders his fate'?*
- 20 Why is there no place for burial?*
- 22 Why does the Lord have it in for Babylon?*

What surprises or confuses you?

Why has the Lord personalised it against the King? (4,12)

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage

- 3 'The day of the Lord' is coming (Isaiah 13:6,8..)*

b) individual book

- 1 Compassion (Isaiah 49:15)*

c) whole Bible

- 1 choosing' to bear fruit (John 15:16)*
compassion (Psalm 145:8)
- 4 Babylon (Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2,10,21)*
- 4b 'how...' (2 Samuel 1:25; Lamentations 1:1 etc.)*
- 5 Jesus breaks the power of the evil one (Colossians 2:15)*
- 12 court room in Heaven (Job 1:6)*
fallen from heaven (Luke 10:18; 1 Timothy 3:6)
- 15 the pit (Luke 16:26)*

d) the Bible story

See study 1

LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

- 1 The Lord will have compassion on 'the day', i.e. at the end of time*
- 4 It is foretelling a time when Babylon will be in the ascendancy*
- 5 It refers to when The Lord will 'rise up against them'*
- 7 'All the land will be at rest' at the end of time*
- 9 'You' is the 'morning star'*
- 12 The 'morning star' is a fallen heavenly being who desires to be 'like the most high,*
- 15 He has been brought down by death*
- 16 Humans / the human race 'ponder his fate'?*
- 20 There is no place for burial, as none will mourn or miss him*
- 22 The Lord has it in for Babylon because of the 'suffering, turmoil and cruel bondage' she has caused (3).*

2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

This is no mere earthly king but one with spiritual ambitions too (14) i.e the Devil himself.

3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

The writer looks to the day when the roles will be reversed – suffering ends (3) and Israel will rule. The king of Babylon (the devil) will be / has been brought down. He and his offspring are in everlasting disgrace.

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

At the end of time, the Lord will have mercy on His people but 'the king of Babylon' (the Devil and his minions) will be exposed, and rendered powerless for ever.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 3,4**

'On the day the Lord gives you relief from the suffering, turmoil and cruel bondage, you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon.'

3) How do you think it does this?

The day is spoken of when the Lord will prevail and all His enemies will be vanquished.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

1 The Lord has compassion on / chooses whom He wills.

5 God has broken / will break the rod of the oppressor.

22 God determines things by His Word.

b) His grace?

1 The Lord has compassion on Jacob.

Aliens are welcome with the chosen people.

3 The Lord gives relief.

c) Jesus and His salvation?

5 In Jesus, God breaks the power of the evil one

Now underline the application of the Main Point

2) What should I do?

3 Look to the Lord for relief.

4 Israel is pre-eminent.

11 Be humble - the grave is the great leveller.

15 Beware - pride comes before a fall.

21 Believe the righteous (not wicked) will rise to inherit the land.

22 Believe all the wicked and their offspring will be destroyed.

Now underline the application of the Main Point

§4 Chapters 36-39 Three remarkable events

Study 7 A thrilling rescue – 36:1 – 37:38 God can be trusted

Background

Unlike the rest of Isaiah, chapters 36-39 are mostly history written in prose. They recount events that brought home the great lesson of the previous section: don't go elsewhere to find security, for God can be trusted. *See also 2 Kings 18:13 to 19:37*

Word List

Chapter 36

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | <i>Sennacherib</i> | became king of Assyria in 705BC and died in 681BC
<i>see 37:38; 2 Kings 19:37</i> |
| 2 | <i>field commander</i> | the Rabshakeh in other translations: high official in royal service |
| | <i>Lachish</i> | 30 miles SW of Jerusalem |
| | <i>Upper Pool</i> | outside city gates at head of Valley of Hinnom |
| | <i>Washerman's Field</i> | or Fuller's Field, on highway west of Jerusalem |
| 6 | <i>Egypt</i> | Assyria indeed defeated them in battle |
| 8 | <i>horses</i> | in short supply in Israel <i>see eg 1 Kings 10:28</i> |
| 11 | <i>Aramaic</i> | was the diplomatic language of the day |
| 19 | <i>Hamath and Arpad</i> | rebelled with Samaria in 720 BC |
| | <i>Sepharvaim</i> | location uncertain, possibly Syria |

Chapter 37

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--|
| 1 | <i>torn clothes, sackcloth</i> | signs of distress and penitence |
| 7 | <i>spirit</i> | a delusion, <i>see eg 2 Thessalonians 2:11</i> |
| 8 | <i>Libnah</i> | 10 miles N of Lachish |
| 16 | <i>cherubim</i> | figures at each end of the mercy seat, Isaiah 37:6-9 |
| 22 | <i>Virgin Daughter of Zion</i> | <i>ie</i> untouched by the marauders |

Bible Connections

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|---|
| 16 | <i>cherubim</i> | <i>see</i> Exodus 25:17-22. True prayer is pre-occupied with God v16 - 20; Daniel 9:17-19 |
| | <i>nature of prayer</i> | <i>see</i> Luke 11:1-13 |

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

Ch 36 v 2 Why did he stop at the aqueduct?

3 Why did the palace administrator, the secretary and the recorder go out to meet Sennacherib's field commander?

6 Why does he call Egypt a 'splintering reed'?

7 When did Hezekiah remove the high places?

10 How did he know about 'the Lord'?

11 What did wanting the commander to speak in Aramaic show?

16 What land is he speaking of?

20c What did his question about the Lord show?

22 Why did they tear their clothes?

Ch 37 v4 Why does he say, 'the Lord your God'?

14 Why did he 'spread it out before the Lord'?

17 Why say 'insult to living God'?

22 Why 'virgin'?

25 What does he mean 'with the soles of his feet'?

26 What is the Lord saying to Sennacherib?

32 What is the 'zeal of the Lord'?

35 Why did He save it 'for David's sake'?

36 Why so abrupt an end to the narrative?

What surprises or confuses you?

37: 32 Why did the Lord intervene here but not later when Judah was carried into exile?

2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible - surrounding passage, individual book, whole bible, or Bible story - might help you understand this passage?

a) surrounding passage

36:5 On whom do you rely? – And whom have you mocked? (37:23)

37:7 Cut down with the sword (37:38)

26 Have you not heard (40:21,28)

b) individual book

36:3 *Eliakim, Son of Hilkiah (22:10)*

8 *cf come now let us reason together 1:18.*

37:4 *remnant 10:20ff.*

23 *'the Holy one of Israel' almost only in Isaiah – over 20 times.*

32 *the Zeal of the Lord (9:7)*

37:26 *ordained long ago (22:11)*

c) whole Bible

36: 7 *The enemy confuses the facts. (Genesis 3:1)*

13 *"Hear O Israel"... (Deuteronomy 6:4)*

14f *Did God really say...? (Genesis 3:1)*

15 *Trust the Lord ... not one's own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5,6)*

16 *own vine and fig tree (1 Kings 4:25)*

17 *land with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8)*

37: 2 *sackcloth (2 Samuel 12:16; Luke 10:13)*

20 *'... may know that you have eternal life' (1 John 5:13)*

34 *'for sake of David' (1 Kings 11:12,13,34)*

d) the Bible story

See study 1

LEARN

1) What type of literature is this?

This part of Isaiah is Narrative

2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

36:2 *Perhaps he stopped there, in command of the city's weakest point - the water supply - to show his intention to besiege it?*

3 *They were non-military personnel – non aggressive.*

6 *'Splintering reed' recognises that Egypt's power was diminishing.*

7 *Hezekiah removed the high places during his reforms.*

10 *He knew about 'the Lord' by repute?*

11 *It showed weakness and uncertainty.*

16 *The land he is speaking of is foreign: exile is intended.*

- 20c Sennacherib believed he was more powerful than the Lord.
 22 They tore their clothes as a sign of repentance /despair?
37:4 He says, 'the Lord your God' because it is God's honour that has been impugned.
 14 He 'spread it out before the Lord' to convey he was laying the whole situation before Him.
 17 He says 'insult to living God' because Sennacherib claimed to have greater power than God.
 22 'Virgin' is a sign of weakness / Jerusalem has not fallen before?
 25 'With the soles of his feet' means that he has complete power.
 26 The Lord is telling him He, God, ordained his victories
 32 The 'zeal of the Lord' means His integrity / power
 35 He saved it 'for David's sake', as He had made promises to him.
 36 An abrupt end showed that God was totally in control.

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

- 32 The Lord intervened here for David's sake, but not later when Judah was carried into exile.

4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

- Ch 36 Having captured all the fortified cities of Judah, Sennacherib arrogantly challenges Jerusalem/the Lord.
 Ch 37 Hezekiah appeals to the Lord, and to Isaiah. The latter assures him that Sennacherib will be judged and killed. (1-7)
 Sennacherib threatens, but is distracted by other conflicts. (9-13)
 Hezekiah entrusts the threatening letter to the Lord. (14-20)
 Isaiah prophesies the downfall of Sennacherib. (21-35)
 The Assyrian army is destroyed by sickness and Sennacherib is killed by his sons. (36-38)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

God judges the enemies of his people in response to their prayers

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

v21,22

'Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib, king of Assyria, this is the word the Lord has spoken against him.'

3) How do you think it does this?

It links Sennacherib's threat with the judgment of God through the prayer of Hezekiah.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

36: 2 *(The Lord still reigns) at the point of apparent greatest weakness.*

37:21 *God rules and answers prayer.*

28 *God knows and sees all.*

32 *God accomplishes his purpose 'by his zeal'.*

b) His grace?

37:20 *God answers our prayers for his name's sake*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

37:35 *For the sake of David / son of David (Matthew 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30; 21:9,15)*

Now underline the application of the Main Point

2) What should I do?

36:7 *Note - The enemy confuses the facts.*

10 *Beware someone who claims to speak for God.*

37:1 *When threatened, seek the Lord first.*

4 *When praying, seek for God's honour to be upheld.*

6 *Do not fear the enemy.*

7 *Listen to the Word of God.*

10-13 *Do not be afraid of the enemy's words.*

14 *'Take it to the Lord in prayer'.*

20 *Pray on the basis of God's honour being upheld/exemplified.*

21 *Pray to the Lord expectantly concerning opposition of His Work.*

23 *Note - To insult God's people amounts to insulting God.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point

Sharing the Word

Use

'Hearing the Word' can be used alone, with one other person, or in a group

Preparing for a group

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.

Write down your own questions and answers. *

Format

- a. LOOK - Any questions? (If answer is known or not!)
Relevant cross references in rest of the Bible?
- b. LEARN - Answers to questions?
- c. LISTEN - Key verse and Main Point?
- d. LIVE - What does it show about God /His grace/ Jesus?
What should I do

n.b. Leave plenty of time for the LIVE section!

By also eating together and a time of prayer, you will have shared something of the life of the early church! (Acts 2:42-47)

Remember!

As we gather round God's Word -

- a) Listen to the views of others.
- b) Make room for the novice. (They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'.)
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others, especially 'seekers', in your time together.

* The **process** is explained and practiced in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called '**An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**

<https://hearingtheword.org.uk>

“I can read the Bible for myself!”

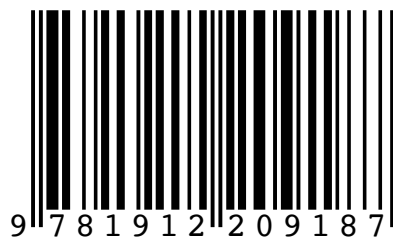
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Isaiah 1-39 LG

