

HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

Isaiah 40 - 66
Work Book

Hearing the Word Isaiah 40-66 Work Book

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Nigel Barge, July 2017

Scripture Quotations taken from

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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 second booklet looks at seven representative passages in Isaiah 40-66, taken from the last three of Isaiah's sections. Another booklet covers Isaiah 1-39. 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 page 5.) But through him God promised some things in detail such as the birth and death of Jesus Christ; so the prophecy is also 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 happened 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!

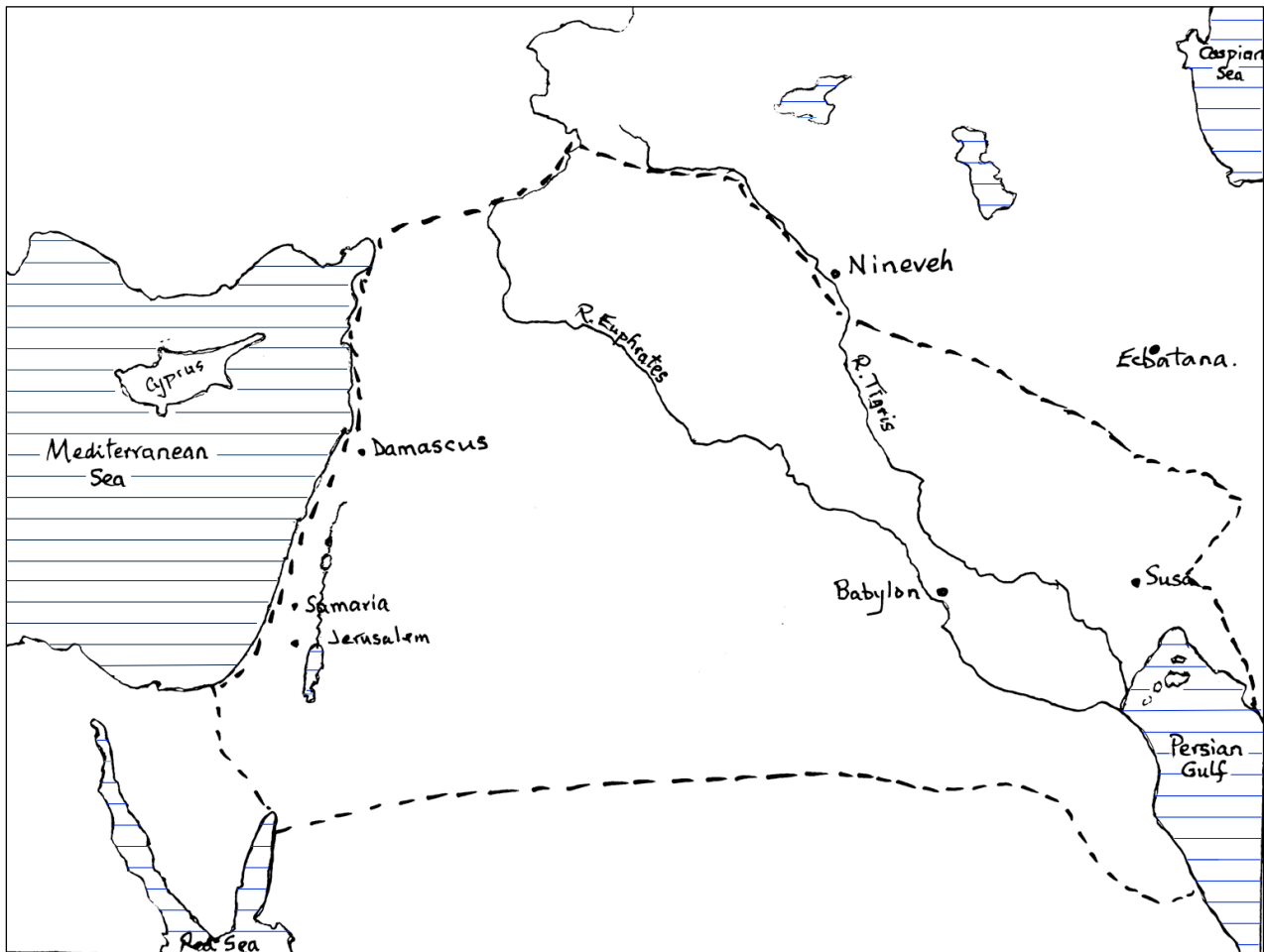
To prepare for the time of exile in Babylon, Isaiah wrote chapters 40-66 to comfort those future Israelites. Though he had died by the time it happened he wrote in advance: like writing a message for your great-grandchildren.

Chapter 40 sets the scene for the rest of the book. The 27 chapters are in three groups of nine, each with a special emphasis: See Table of Contents p1

Isaiah signals his divisions by ending each with the surprising, solemn statement 'There is no rest for the wicked:' 48:22, 57:21 and (even more strongly) 66:24, the words with which he ends his prophecy.

These prophetic chapters were primarily designed to comfort the exiled Jews. God had not forgotten them or cast them out. On the contrary, his purpose to bring the world his son as saviour still stood. These notes of comfort, and prediction of Jesus, dominate Isaiah 40 – 66.

MAP: Middle East affected by Isaiah's Prophecy



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.

CHART: Timescale relating to Isaiah

Timescale relating to Isaiah

Date	World Power	Kings of Israel	Kings of Judah	Isaiah
BC	800-625 Assyria			
- 750	<div>750 - 732 King Rezin of Damascus a minor power</div> Tiglath-Pileser III Shalmanezar V	740-732 Pekah 732-722 Hoshea 722 Samaria fell to Assyria	767-740 Uzziah 740-732 Jotham 732-716 Ahaz (co-regent from 744)	740 – c 695 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 Nebuchadnezzar and others		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)

HOW TO USE THIS LEADER'S GUIDE

The first page in each week's study explains matters that would have been known to the original hearers but not to readers today.

The 'Bible connections' show where the Bible refers to similar themes. Bibles that provide 'cross references' give the same kind of information.

In this Leader's Guide, the questions under 'LOOK' are those that others happen to have asked. The Leader should *not* read them out; unlike other types of study guides, they have not been carefully refined to elucidate the main points. Instead, enable your group to ask their own questions, and write them down. If there are too many for the time available, select the most pressing.

If any coincide with the questions shown in 'LOOK', the matching possible Answers offered in 'LEARN' may help the group if they get stuck. But wait till everyone has tried to work out their own answers first.

In all printed volumes in the series, instructions on using *Hearing the Word* are shown in brief on the inside *front* cover. Suggestions on how to use the process *with a group* appear on the inside *back* cover.

A 4-hour training course is available, 'Introduction to Hearing the Word' . Address on back cover.

§5 Chapters 40-48 The Return under Cyrus

Study 1

40:1-31

Comfort for the future Jews in exile

Background

After the message of disaster in 39:5-7 comes the message of comfort in chapter 40. God's promises may be forfeited but they cannot perish. He alone is the Creator and his people are his central concern. 41:1-7 tell us he is the ruler of history.

Word list

1	<i>says your God</i>	imperfect tense, so = 'keeps saying'
2	<i>Jerusalem</i>	capital city of Judah
5	<i>glory of the Lord</i>	= the Lord's presence <i>see</i> Exodus 16:10; 40:34f
10	<i>Zion</i>	name for Jerusalem, city on a hill
18	<i>God</i>	Hebrew <i>el</i> is the most transcendent of the OT's words for God.
26	<i>created</i>	the Hebrew verb here is reserved for divine action.
29	<i>weary</i>	= failure, or bowed down, under life's pressures
	<i>weak</i>	= lack of innate strength
	<i>power</i>	related to word for 'bone' <i>ie</i> durable and stable

Bible Connections

2	<i>sin has been paid for</i>	OT uses <i>passive tense only</i> of God's acceptance of the Levitical offerings <i>see</i> Leviticus 1:4; 7:18; 19:7
3	<i>prepare the way</i>	Predicts John Baptist <i>see</i> Mark 1:3-8; Luke 3:2-17
5	<i>Glory of Lord seen</i>	<i>see</i> John 1.14
8	<i>The Word of our God stands for ever. cf</i>	Psalm 33:6,9; 148:5
10	<i>the Lord's arm</i>	<i>see</i> 48:14; 51:5,9; 52:10; 53:1; 59:16; 62:8; 63:5,12
11	<i>shepherd</i>	<i>see</i> Psalm 23; Micah 5:4; Ezekiel 34:2ff, 23f; John 10:11-30
13	<i>understood mind of Lord</i>	<i>see</i> Job ch. 38,39
18	<i>folly of idolatry</i>	<i>see</i> 41:5-7,21-24,29; 42:8,17; 44:6-20; 46:1-7
22	<i>He sits enthroned.</i>	<i>see</i> Daniel 7:9-14; Revelation 4:1-6
23	<i>He brings princes to naught.</i>	<i>see</i> Jeremiah 27:5; Daniel 4:17,34f.
29	<i>He gives strength to the weak:</i>	<i>see</i> Matthew 11:28-30

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

2) The Context

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

LEARN

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

- 2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
- 3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

LISTEN

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?
- 2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v.

LIVE

- 1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
 - a) His nature and character?
 - b) His grace?
 - c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

A song about God's coming servant

Background

Chapter 41 'See, they are all false' (v29) points to the emptiness that marks the Gentile world. Chapter 42 introduces God's remedy, 'Here is my servant.'

Vs 1-4 the Lord speaks *of* his servant, describing his task;

Vs 5-9 the Lord speaks *to* his servant, confirming his task.

Justice is the leading idea of this first Servant Song.

Word List

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|
| 1 | <i>Here</i> | the Hebrew word <i>ben</i> is better translated, 'See' |
| | <i>My Spirit</i> | mode of the Lord's personal presence and action and the special endowment of leaders |
| 4 | <i>establishes</i> | Hebrew for 'to set or place', as in Deuteronomy 4:44 |
| 4 | <i>law</i> | teaching, revelation of God's will <i>see</i> 1:10 |
| | <i>islands</i> | landmasses, countries in general as in 40:15 |
| 6 | <i>Gentiles</i> | non-Jews |
| | <i>Covenant</i> | a unilateral declaration, sealed with a sacrifice, of a commitment by a 'superior', and entered into with agreement by an 'inferior'. |

Bible connections

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------|--|
| 1-4 | <i>Jesus quotes</i> | Matthew 12:18-21 |
| 1 | <i>My Spirit</i> | <i>see</i> Psalm 139:7; Numbers 11:16ff;
1 Samuel 16:13; Luke 4:1,14; Hebrews 9:14
(Spirit = Breath <i>see</i> Psalm 33:6 Isaiah 40:7) |
| 6 | <i>Covenant</i> | <i>see</i> Genesis 6:17-18; 15:17;
Exodus 2:24; 24:7-8; 6:2-7; 20:1-2; 20:3ff,
Hebrews 8:7-12 |

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How great is our God!

Background

We are still in the first section of 40-66, the promise of a return to the holy land by permission of the future Medo-Persian emperor Cyrus. What a God, to have even the rulers of the world at his disposal! A major theme in 40-48 is God's incomparable greatness, for instance, this chapter, 44.

Word List

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|--|
| 2 | <i>Jeshurun</i> | poetic variant of Israel. Hebrew means 'the upright one' |
| 4 | <i>Spirit</i> | the Spirit of the Lord <i>see</i> Isaiah 11:2; Mark 1:8-11 |
| 6 | <i>Redeemer</i> | the one who pays the ransom/price <i>see</i> v22 |
| 8 | <i>Rock</i> | title for the Lord |
| 28 | <i>Cyrus</i> | Persian king who conquered Babylon 539BC |

Bible connections

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| 6 | <i>first and last</i> | <i>see</i> Isaiah 41:4; Revelation 1:8,17. <i>Alpha</i> and <i>omega</i> (α, ω) are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet |
| 28 | <i>Cyrus</i> | This came true in detail about 170 years after Isaiah predicted it: <i>see</i> Ezra 1:1-4 |

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§6 Chapters 49-57 The Rescue by God's Servant

Study 4

52:13–53

Our Saviour, and how He saves us

Background

The heart of chapters 49-57 is the rescue that the coming Servant of God, (who is, as we now know, Jesus Christ) will achieve for us by his life, death and resurrection. The central chapter, in every sense, is Isaiah 53. The New Testament often refers to it, sometimes word for word (*eg* Matthew 8:17; Acts 8:32f, 1 Peter 2:24f). Note the repeated, emphatic 'he'.

The poem is symmetrical – 5 sections of 3 verses. It begins and ends with the exaltation of the Servant. Section 2 and 4 speak of his rejection. The centre-piece is 53:4-6, which describes the atoning significance of his suffering.

Word list

Ch 52 13 *act wisely* the wisdom of true prudence

14 *human likeness* 'sons of man' ie common humanity

15 *sprinkle* the work of a priest, removing the defilement that separates sinners from God (*eg* Ex 24:6-8; 1 Peter 1:2)

shut their mouths ie overwhelmed, silent from shock, and respect

Ch 53 1 *arm of the Lord* powerful act of God

3 *esteemed* an accountancy word ie a reckoning up of value

considered same Hebrew word as *esteemed* in v3b

pierced usually means *pierced fatally*

crushed used of people being crushed to death (Lament'ns 3:34)

5 *transgressions* deliberate flouting of the Lord and his law

iniquities Hebrew *to bend double* ie the bent-ness of human nature

peace Hebrew *shalom*, to be whole or complete

8 *descendants* but see v. 10!

Bible Connections

52:13 *see, my servant* *see* Isaiah 42:1

highly exalted *see* Isaiah 6:1; Ephesians 1:19-23

53:3 *familiar with suffering* *see* Matthew 16:21

4-6 *the Servant as the Substitute* *see* Leviticus 16; Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 10:1-12; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:1-2

making our burdens his *see* Matthew 8:17; Revelation 21:4

7-9 *the Servant's firm and deliberate self-submission to death.*
see John 10:18; Philippians 2:6-8

9 *with the rich in his death* *cf* Jesus' burial Matthew 27:57-60

10 *the Lord's will* *see* Isaiah 46:10; 55:11; Acts 2:23

guilt offering *see* Leviticus 5:15

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- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

God's free offer of salvation

Background and Word List

In his saving work, the Servant has done everything; the way is now open for response, pure and simple, to enjoy a feast for which someone else has paid. There is free entrance into life (1-5) through the moral and spiritual response of returning to God (6-11)

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|---|
| 1a | <i>come</i> | the first one is better translated 'Hey!' ie a summons; the remaining three are plural, imperative words. |
| | <i>all you who are thirsty</i> | is singular: every single person who thirsts |
| 3 | <i>soul</i> | the whole essential person |
| | <i>faithful love</i> | translates a plural Hebrew word 'the dependable acts of steadfast or covenant loves' |
| | <i>David</i> | This is his only mention in chs 40-66, but it links 'servant' with Kingly Messiah prophesied in 7:13ff |
| 5 | <i>nations</i> | Heb <i>goy</i> = the world outside the pale of Israel ie the whole Gentile world |
| 6 | <i>near</i> | Heb <i>qarab</i> is part of vocabulary of next-of-kinship see Ruth 2:20; 3:12; 4:4 |
| 7 | <i>turn</i> | = turn back, return |
| 13 | <i>pine, myrtle</i> | translations of type of tree vary but all are evergreen. |

Bible connections

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | <i>thirsty</i> | Psalm 63.1; 84:2; John 7.37-39; Revelation 22.17 |
| | <i>without money</i> | 1 Peter 1:18-21 |
| 2 | <i>what is not bread</i> | John 6:25-35 |
| 3 | <i>God's faithful love and Covenant</i> | see Psalm 89; Luke 1:67-79; Hebrews 8:7f |
| 5 | <i>nations coming to the Lord</i> | Zechariah 8:20-23; 9:9,10 |

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New heavens and a new earth

Background information

The special emphasis of §7, ch 58-66, is that God will wind up history and, in some cataclysmic way, create new heavens and earth from our universe. The section has warnings for the impenitent but this passage enlarges our hearts in telling us what God has prepared for those who love him.

It seems we cannot in this life understand what the next will be like. The author C.S.Lewis likens it to a small child trying to understand why his parents enjoy going to bed together – ‘I know! You have chocolate hidden under the pillow.’ He lacks the capacity to make sense of the adult experience; and we lack the capacity to make sense of the new heavens and earth.

So the Bible either uses *negatives* (there will be *no more* death or pain, (Revelation 20:4) or, as here, uses ‘*more than*’ picture language taken from what we know now: ‘Jerusalem will be a delight’ (18,19), ‘we’ll live as long as trees’ (22). In fact this world’s Jerusalem will no longer exist, and we will live not just *longer* but *for ever* (25:6-9, 26:19). Our passage describes the next life in metaphor: in pictures with a message, but taken from this life’s experience.

Word List

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|---|
| 17 | <i>Behold, I will...</i> | should read <i>For behold, I will...</i> |
| | <i>create</i> | OT uses this word in this form only of actions of God |
| 18 | <i>But</i> | emphatic – ‘but on the contrary’ |
| 19 | <i>weeping/crying</i> | weeping refers to <i>felt</i> pain, crying to <i>inflicted</i> pain |
| 20 | <i>he who fails...accursed</i> | it will be as though anyone who lived to less than 100 would have died ‘young’ as a punishment from God |
| 23 | <i>people</i> | Hebrew is ‘seed’ |

Bible connections

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 17 | <i>new heavens and new earth</i> | - the totality of things see Genesis 1:1 |
| 18 | <i>new Jerusalem</i> | see Revelation 21:1-5 |
| | <i>no more tears</i> | see Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 7:17, 21:4 |
| 23 | <i>seed</i> | of the promise in Genesis 17:7
of the Servant as promised in Isaiah 53:10 |
| 24-25 | <i>Eden restored</i> | see Isaiah 11:6-9 |
| 25 | <i>serpent, the curse remains</i> | see Genesis 3:14 |

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

2) The Context

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

LEARN

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

- 2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
- 3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

LISTEN

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?
- 2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v.

LIVE

- 1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
 - a) His nature and character?
 - b) His grace?
 - c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Study 7

Isaiah 66

Humankind's two destinies

Background and Word List

Isaiah is so full of good news, it is shocking to notice that he identifies each section of chapters 40-66 by ending 'but there is no peace for the wicked.' (48:22, 57:21 and the startling 66:24). Jesus and his apostles confirmed this difference between the destinies of the repentant who ask God for mercy and the impenitent wicked. *see* Bible connections below.

2,5	<i>trembles</i>	sensitive longing to obey <i>see also</i> Ezra 9:4; 10:3
17	<i>gardens</i>	loci of fertility cults <i>cf</i> 1:29; 65:3
19	<i>Tarshish</i>	possibly Tartessos in Spain
	lit. <i>Pul</i> and <i>Lud</i>	<i>see</i> Jeremiah 46:9; Ezekiel 30:5
	<i>Tubal</i>	in the far north (ie 'to the ends of the earth')
20	<i>vessels</i>	the only offering brought in a container was 'the first-fruits' <i>see</i> Deuteronomy 26:2

Bible connections

<i>Difference in destinies</i>	<i>see</i> Matthew 22-25; John 5:28f; Romans 6:23; Galatians 6:7-8; James 1:15; Ephesians 2:1-5
1 <i>God's house</i>	<i>see</i> 2 Samuel 7:7; 1 Kings 8:12-29
7 <i>painless birth</i>	<i>c.f.</i> Genesis 3:16
16 <i>fire and sword</i>	<i>c.f.</i> Genesis 3:24
19 <i>I will send some.</i>	<i>c.f.</i> Matthew 28:19-20
20 <i>brothers from all nations</i>	<i>see also</i> John 11:52
<i>Jerusalem</i>	<i>see also</i> Galatians 4:25-26; Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 21

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

2) The Context

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

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 - a) His nature and character?
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 - c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

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>

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Isaiah 40-66

