

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 1 – Introduction

1. What leadership traits or characteristics do people expect of religious leaders today?
2. How do the traits you listed in question 1 compare or contrast with those of Isaiah?
3. What dangers was Judah (Isaiah's nation) facing?
4. As you look at the main divisions of Isaiah's book, which topics sound appealing to read about? Why those?
5. Why do you think Isaiah's audience might have been turned off by the first part of his message? How could it go against the grain of expectations?
6. What is the value of readiness prophecies of judgment? What is the value of reading prophecies of hope?

7. How can we effectively communicate to our culture about judgment (or is it impossible)? About hope?

8. What prophecies about the Messiah can you find in Isaiah?

9. Which of Isaiah's four words" – warning, promise, hope, salvation – might God most want you to hear? Why that one?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 2 – Prophet Wanted – Part 1

Wanted: A Prophet (Isaiah 1—6)

1. When hypocrisy or scandals in the church are well-known, how can the church regain credibility? What practical expression of repentance might the church demonstrate?
2. How does God describe His people in Isaiah 1? Talk about the meaning of the imagery He uses.
3. What were the four stages in Isaiah’s experience of God (6:1–13)? Which of these do you recognize as being neglected in your own life?
4. How does a call for repentance spell hope for those who’ve gone astray?
5. Isaiah’s message to his culture included the carrot (promises of hope) and stick (warnings of judgment). How effective do you think this approach would be in motivating those in our culture who have strayed from God’s standard? What makes you say that?
6. Why did Isaiah use music (5:1–30) as a creative medium to call people to repentance?

7. To whom was the song sung? About whom was it sung (see Isa. 5:1)?

8. Read the lyrics of Isaiah's song. What does he say about greed and materialism?

9. Why do you suppose Isaiah was so concerned about people's use of money and their treatment of the poor? What relevance does this emphasis have for us today?

10. How did Jesus refer to this song to address another generation (see Matt. 21:33–44)?

11. What title would you give Isaiah's song, and why?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 3 – Prophet Wanted – Part 2

God Is with Us! (Isaiah 7–12)

1. Even though there are positive aspects to independence, how can self-reliance become sin?
2. In what way was Ahaz tempted to play “power politics” rather than trust in God? How did God’s perspective differ from Ahaz’s?
3. What is the meaning of the name Emmanuel? What was its significance in Isaiah’s day? In our day?
4. How did trusting Assyria rather than trusting the Lord bring judgment? In what ways did their trust backfire? What lessons in this story are there for us today?
5. In Isaiah 10:12–19, what surprise is there for Assyria?
6. How does the doctrine of the remnant give hope (see Isa. 10:20–22)?

7. How does God give His people a future? What are the characteristics of that future (see Isa. 9:1–7; 11:1–10)?

8. What can we learn about Christ from these chapters? For example, what crucial truth do we learn about Him from the dual statement, “a child is born” and “a Son is given”?

9. Over and over, these prophecies speak of justice. Christ will ultimately rule with justice. How important is it for us now to be pursuers of justice? Why?

10. For what does Isaiah praise God in 12:1–6? Can you praise God for similar things? Explain.

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 4 – The Burdens – Part 1

The Burdened Prophet (Isaiah 13—23)

1. From what you know of Scripture, what evidence is there that history is going somewhere, and that there is someone in charge?
2. Isaiah refers to his prophetic declarations as “burdens.” Why do you think this particular word was used?
3. In what ways are the prophet’s words burdens?
4. How does the geographical location of Israel/Palestine reveal God’s sovereignty (see Ezek. 5:5)? Why do you think God placed Israel/Palestine in the center of the nations?
5. What advantages and disadvantages might there be for God’s people—economically, politically, spiritually—being at the crossroads of civilization?
6. What is the message Isaiah gives to Babylon?

7. "Babylon symbolizes the world system man has built in defiance of God." What are some aspects of that world system today? How does God describe Babylon in Isaiah 13:1—14:23?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 5 – The Burdens – Part 2

Scripture: Isaiah 13-23

1. What does Isaiah prophesy will happen on the day of the Lord (Isa. 13)?
2. Isaiah 14:12–17 seems to look beyond the king of Babylon to Lucifer, the ruler of the defiant world system. How does this passage portray Lucifer (Satan)? How do you see him at work in the events of this world?
3. If God used Assyria as “a tool to accomplish His purposes,” how could He then hold them accountable for that?
4. What gods do people worship in place of the one true God?
5. How can Psalm 2 and Acts 4:23–31 give you hope when the international news is not good?

6. Isaiah invited Edom to “inquire, return, come.” What did this mean?

7. What was that nation’s response? In what area of your life might God be inviting you to do this?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 6 – The Coming Storm – Part 1

A Refuge from the Storm (Isaiah 24—27)

1. What contemporary people can you think of who are models of repentance?
2. What condition will the earth be in at and after the day of the Lord? How will Satan, as well as the earth's inhabitants, be affected?
3. What environmental concerns of our day are the result of man's failure to be good stewards of the Lord's earth? How does Isaiah 24 speak to this situation?
4. Where can God's people go as they encounter life's storms? Describe a time when you experienced God as your refuge.
5. How did God care for His people during other times of trial and judgment (see Gen. 6—8; Ex. 8:22–23; Josh. 6:25; Ezra 9:8–9; Matt. 16:18)?

6. When you read about God's wrath and judgment, how do you respond? Why? What perspective does 1 Thessalonians 1:10 and 5:9 offer?

7. What significance is there in the feast (Isa. 25:6–9) that would give Christians hope?

8. What can we learn from Isaiah 26 about dealing with life's storms?

9. According to Hebrews 12:1–11, how does God use suffering as a discipline to purify us? How, if ever, have you experienced that?

10. Which of the kingdom blessings in Isaiah 26–27 seems especially important to you, and why?

11. How does this section of Isaiah flesh out what it means to pray, "thy kingdom come"?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 7 – The Coming Storm – Part 2

Storm Clouds Over Jerusalem (Isaiah 28—31)

1. What evidence can be found in Isaiah 28—31 of God's burdens or concerns for His people?
2. What examples or analogies does God use to get His people's attention and motivate them to change?
3. What are the consequences of failure to heed God's warnings?
4. What basis do God's people have for any future hope in their relationship with Him?
5. As for Jerusalem, what was her bottom-line problem (see Isa. 30:8–11; 1:31)?
6. What names and incidents in Scripture do you recall of God's people using illegitimate ways to accomplish His will?

7. Had Jerusalem obeyed God's will, what stresses might she have avoided?

8. When in your journey of faith have you been tempted to walk by sight and not by faith?

9. How does your nation, your church, or your family face temptations to trust in other things than God or compromise His will?

10. What are some principles to apply when faced with the temptation to compromise God's will and God's ways (see Prov. 3:5–6; Ps. 27:13–14; Ps. 139:23–24; Isa. 40:27–31; Phil. 4:6–7)?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 8 – The Future – Part 1

Future Shock and Future Glory (Isaiah 32—35)

1. As you read or watch the news, which trends and predictions cause you concern and anxiety?

2. What is the significance of Isaiah's shift from "a king" to "the king", and finally to "our king"?

3. What does this tell us about God's people in Isaiah's time?

4. What does it tell us about their culture? Their hope?

5. Describe the future for God's people as depicted in Isaiah 32—35.

6. Why do you think Isaiah singles out the women of Jerusalem in 32:9-20?

7. What does this say about their influence in the culture?

8. How does this compare with your understanding of women's role in early Bible history?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 9 – The Future – Part 2

Scripture: Isaiah 32-35

1. What new crises might God's planned future for His people produce?
2. What new activities occur in the messianic kingdom, according to Isaiah?
3. Read Luke 4:16–21. How does Jesus' announcement (from Isaiah 61) summarize the new kingdom's activities?
4. What do you think is the significance of Jesus' statement, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing"?
5. In what ways is the kingdom of God both "here" and "yet to come"?
6. In light of the new kingdom activities, what should our priorities be as kingdom people?

7. How can we as Christians begin to anticipate and prepare for the future rather than simply reacting to it when it comes?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 10 – The King – Part 1

God Save the King! (Isaiah 36—39)

1. What difference do you notice when you face crises in the Spirit's power versus in your own strength?

2. What are the crises Hezekiah's has to deal with?

3. How typical do you think Hezekiah's responses were to the crises he faced?

4. How does pride often affect our response to crises and conflicts?

5. What alternative solutions could Hezekiah have chosen to deal with the crisis?

6. What do you think led the field commander to report as he did to Hezekiah?

7. What fears might have prompted his report?

8. What solutions would you recommend to the king, and why?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 11 – The King – Part 2

God Save the King! (Isaiah 36—39)

1. What principles can you glean from Hezekiah's experiences that would motivate you to become a person of prayer and one who trusts God?

2. What do you think about Hezekiah's prayer for healing (see Isa. 38:1–5)?

3. If God's answer to Hezekiah's plea for healing had been "no" rather than "yes," how might God's purposes still have been accomplished in that crisis?

4. Read Galatians 5:22–23. Which of the fruits of the Spirit seem to come easier for you? For which of these do you have to trust the Lord on a regular basis? Which one of these fruits of the Spirit are you asking God to increase in your life?

5. Why does Isaiah tell Hezekiah that he's going to die?

6. How does God's decision to give Hezekiah more years to speak to the message God wanted to give His people during this time?

7. What does this story teach about God's character?

8. As you think back on Hezekiah's experiences, what lessons on prayer, faith, and pride do you want to remember?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 12 – How Great Thou Art – Part 1

How Great Thou Art! (Isaiah 40—48)

1. In what specific way does Isaiah 40-48 remind you of the message in the New Testament?
2. Ignore chapter numbers, do you think the parallels between Isaiah and the entire Bible are significant? God inspired? Why or why not?
3. What verses or passages from Isaiah 40 could be given to someone in a crisis?
4. Isaiah 40:1–11 is often read in the season leading up to Christmas, and Matthew 3:1–5 quotes this passage in describing the ministry of John the Baptist. Why is 40:1–11 a suitable passage to describe the coming of Christ? How does it fit John the Baptist?
5. In Isaiah 40—48, what areas of life does Isaiah say God is greater than?

6. God told His people several times in Isaiah 41—44 to “fear not.” Why shouldn’t they be afraid?

7. How does God’s sovereignty over the unconverted give hope to believers?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 13 – How Great Thou Art – Part 2

How Great Thou Art! (Isaiah 40—48)

8. What hope can a believer have about his or her past (Isa. 43:25)?

9. In what ways can the Messiah give someone a future hope (see Isa. 42:1–7)?

10. For today, what hope can we find in Isaiah 43:1–7?

11. In what ways did the remnant in Babylon look to God??

12. What are some appropriate ways to respond to the greatness of God?

13. In what ways can believers bring encouragement to each other in times of struggle?

7. What do you think caused “the wall” between the Jews and Gentiles (see Eph. 2:14)?

8. As a Gentile hearing this news from Paul, how do you think you would have responded?

9. How does the Messiah’s relationship to the Father demonstrate a servant’s attitude of mind (Isa. 50:4), of will (Isa. 50:5), and of body (Isa. 50:6)?

10. In order to become a model disciple in mind, will, and body, what goals reflecting servant attitude and activities would you set for yourself?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 15 – God’s Servant – Part 2

Climbing Mount Everest (Isaiah 52:13—53:12)

1. What important truths do each of the five stanzas of Isaiah 52:13—53:12 reveal?
2. How do the sufferings and death of Jesus differ from that of other people?
3. Why was Jesus rejected and shamed by the Jews?
4. Should we blame modern Jews for this? Please explain.
5. How does Isaiah 53:4–6 explain the heart of the gospel message?
6. Why is Jesus often referred to as a lamb? Where else in the Bible do you find this lamb imagery?

7. In what way did Christ's death on the cross bring satisfaction?

8. Contrast justice with grace.

9. What is justification? Who is justified before God?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 16 – Promises – Part 1

Promises and Punishments (Isaiah 54—59)

1. What does Christ's suffering and sacrifice mean to Israel, to the Gentiles, and to rebellious sinners?

2. In Isaiah 54:1–17, what does God promise to restore to His unfaithful wife?

3. What reasons did Israel have to have confidence in God and not be afraid?

4. When believers rebel against God, what is God's response? What is God's motive?

5. What threefold invitation did God give to the Gentiles?

6. What obstacles prevent a person from responding to God's invitation?

7. What is involved in “seeking the Lord”?

8. What was the significance of God’s house being called “a house of prayer for all the peoples”?

9. What, in God’s view, is true fasting? How can you put this into practice?

Isaiah: Feeling Secure in the Arms of God

Week 17 – Promises – Part 2

The Kingdom and the Glory (Isaiah 60—66)

1. What evidence have you seen that God finishes what He begins? What unfinished areas do you look forward to Him completing?

2. What process often lies between grace and glory according to 1 Peter 5:10?

3. What becomes “new” when a person trusts Christ as Savior and Lord (see 2 Cor. 5:17)?

4. What victory does Isaiah look ahead to in 63:1–6? What great blessing on Israel did the prophet look back on in Isaiah 63:7–14?

5. How does God describe His attitude toward His people and their response to Him (see Isa. 65:1–7)?

6. Who was, and will be, saved in the remnant?

7. What do you look forward to in the new heaven and new earth?

8. What are the qualities of a person about whom God says, "But to this one I look" (Isa. 66:2)?

9. What does Isaiah call people to do? Warn them against? Plead for?

10. Who will be comforted? How? Why them?

