

Holy Trinity Bible Study - Isaiah – Course Introduction

Course Format

There will be a study guide given out for each lesson with suggested Bible readings and readings from Barry F. Webb's book, The Message of Isaiah. Doing the readings is NOT a requirement for the class, just a suggestion.

The lessons will follow the organization of Webb's book so there will be a total of 65 lessons. This does not mean that there will be a total of 65 classes. We will spend as much time as needed on each lesson, so a lesson may well take more than one class to complete.

The lesson study guides will be posted on the Holy Trinity website at http://www.htaj.org/Bible_Studies/Isaiah. When a lesson is completed the class leader's lesson notes will be posted on the website as soon as possible.

The Socratic method will be used in teaching the class with the class leader or members presenting questions for discussion. Class members are encouraged to speak up and to ask any questions. It is the responsibility of the class leader to rein in the discussion if it veers too far off topic.

The Primary Sources

ESV Bible

Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Barry G. Webb (to be distributed to the class)

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer

Introduction to Isaiah (ESV)

Timeline



Author and Date

Isaiah was called to his prophetic ministry “in the year that King Uzziah died” ([6:1](#)), around 740 B.C. He lived long enough to record the death of Sennacherib ([37:38](#)), in 681. However, most of the book can be dated only in very general terms because few specific dates are given.

Theme

The central theme of the book is God himself, who does all things for his own glory ([48:11](#)). Isaiah defines everything else by how it relates to God: is it rightly related to him as the center of all reality ([45:22–25](#))? God’s people find strength only as they rest in the promises of their God ([30:15](#)). They find refreshment only as they delight themselves in his word ([55:1–2](#)). To serve his cause is their worthy devotion (ch. [62](#)), but to rebel against him is endless death ([66:24](#)).

Simplified Overview of Isaiah

	Isaiah 1–39	Isaiah 40–55	Isaiah 56–66
Date and Setting	The eighth century B.C.(700s); the Assyrian threat	Prophecies for the sixth century B.C.(500s); the Babylonian exile	Prophecies about all times and occasions until the end
Audience	God’s rebellious people craving worldly security	God’s defeated people under worldly domination	All who hold fast to God’s covenant
Actions	God purifies a remnant of his apostate people through judgment	God encourages his discouraged people in exile	God prepares all of his true people for his promised salvation
Message	“In returning and rest you shall be saved; . . . But you were unwilling” (30:15)	“the glory of the LORD shall be revealed” (40:5)	“Keep justice, and do righteousness” (56:1)

Key Themes

1. God is offended by religious practices that come from an empty heart or a careless life ([1:10–17](#); [58:1–12](#); [66:1–4](#)).
2. God’s true people will someday become a multinational community of worship and peace that will last forever ([2:2–4](#); [56:3–8](#); [66:18–23](#)). They will be the predominant culture of a new world ([14:1–2](#); [41:8–16](#); [43:3–7](#); [60:1–22](#)).
3. God opposes human pride ([2:10–17](#); [13:11](#); [23:9](#)).

4. The foolish idols that man creates are destined for destruction ([2:20–21](#); [44:9–20](#); [46:1–7](#)).
5. God’s judgment will reduce Israel to a remnant. From this remnant he will raise up a holy people ([1:9](#); [6:1–12:6](#); [40:1–2](#)).
6. God sometimes judges people by making them deaf and blind to his saving word ([29:9–14](#)).
7. The only hope of the world is in one man. He is the promised Davidic king ([7:14](#); [9:2–7](#); [11:1–10](#)), the servant of the Lord ([42:1–9](#); [52:13–53:12](#)), the anointed preacher of the gospel ([61:1–3](#)), and the victor over all evil ([63:1–6](#)).
8. God uses everything, even human sin, for his own glory ([44:24–45:13](#)).
9. All people are called to repent of sin and trust in God alone ([12:2](#); [26:3–4](#); [32:17–18](#); [50:10](#); [66:2](#)).
10. Often, when God’s people feel abandoned by him ([40:27](#)), they foolishly trust in worldly powers ([31:1–3](#); [39:1–8](#)).
11. God will vindicate his cause with a world-transforming display of his glory ([11:10](#); [40:3–5](#); [52:10](#); [59:19](#)).
12. God is guiding all of human history ([41:1–4](#); [44:6–8](#); [46:8–11](#)).
13. God’s faithfulness and the certainty of his final victory should motivate his people to pray and to be obedient ([56:1–2](#); [62:1–64:12](#)).
14. The wrath of God is to be feared above all else ([9:19](#); [13:9, 13](#); [30:27](#); [34:2](#); [66:15–16](#)).

Outline

- I. Introduction: “Ah, Sinful Nation!” ([1:1–5:30](#))
- II. God Redefines the Future of His People: “Your Guilt Is Taken Away” ([6:1–12:6](#))
- III. God’s Judgment and Grace for the World: “We Have a Strong City” ([13:1–27:13](#))
- IV. God’s Sovereign Word Spoken into the World: “Ah!” ([28:1–35:10](#))
- V. Historical Transition: “In Whom Do You Now Trust?” ([36:1–39:8](#))
- VI. Encouragement for God’s Exiles: “The Glory of the Lord Shall Be Revealed” ([40:1–55:13](#))
- VII. How to Prepare for the Coming Glory: “Hold Fast My Covenant” ([56:1–66:24](#))

The Near East at the Time of Isaiah

c. 740 B.C.

The prophecies of Isaiah took place during the rise of the Assyrian Empire. Assyria posed a great threat to Israel and Judah as well as the entire Near East.



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