

Study Guide





LifeLight Expands

LifeLight

Available NOW!

LifeLight Original Studies

(available until they are updated to new format; see schedule below)

Isaiah, Pt. 2
Ephesians/1 & 2
Thessalonians

1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Luke, Pt. 1

Luke, Pt. 2
Minor Prophets
Daniel

Life of David
Selected Psalms

LifeLight New Format

(* all-new LifeLight material)

1 John
* The Bible: An Overview
Matthew, Pt. 1
Matthew, Pt. 2
* Galatians/Phili/Col
Genesis, Pt. 1

Genesis, Pt. 2
Romans, Pt. 1
Romans, Pt. 2
John, Pt. 1
John, Pt. 2

* 1 & 2 Peter
Exodus, Pt. 1
Exodus, Pt. 2
* James/Jude
Acts, Pt. 1

Acts, Pt. 2
* Proverbs
Hebrews
* Revelation
Isaiah, Pt. 1

LifeLight Foundations

* Prophecy

* Bible Feasts

* Miracles

* Law & Gospel

LifeLight Release Schedule

(* all-new LifeLight material)

2006 RELEASES

LifeLight—Isaiah, Pt. 2 April
* LifeLight—Joshua July
* LifeLight Foundations—Baptism October

2007 RELEASES

LifeLight—1 Corinthians January
LifeLight—2 Corinthians April
* LifeLight—Judges July
* LifeLight Foundations—
Between the Testaments October

2008 RELEASES

LifeLight—Luke, Pt. 1 January
LifeLight—Luke, Pt. 2 April
* LifeLight—Ruth/Esther July
* LifeLight Foundations—Triune God October

2009 RELEASES

LifeLight—Minor Prophets January
LifeLight—Daniel April
* LifeLight—Mark July
* LifeLight Foundations—Ministry October

2010 RELEASES

LifeLight—Life of David January
LifeLight—Selected Psalms April
* LifeLight—Ecclesiastes/Song of Songs July
* LifeLight Foundations—Creation/
New Creation October

Other Future Studies:

1, 2 & 3 John
Job
Wilderness Wanderings (Lev., Num., & Deut.)
Ezra, Nehemiah

This helpful resource is also available:
Intro Kit

Isaiah, Mighty Seer

Distribute before session 1 for use in session 1.
 Use *Enrichment Magazine* pp. 8–10 with this session.

Isaiah 1, 6, and Related Historical Texts

Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study at home and at the week’s assembly.

Hymn

Hark, the voice of Jesus calling,
 “Who will go and work today?
 Fields are white and harvests waiting,
 Who will bear the sheaves away?”
 Loud and long the Master calls you;
 Rich reward He offers free.
 Who will answer, gladly saying,
 “Here am I. Send me, send me”?

If you cannot speak like angels,
 If you cannot preach like Paul,
 You can tell the love of Jesus;
 You can say He died for all.
 If you cannot rouse the wicked
 With the judgment’s dread alarms,
 You can lead the little children
 To the Savior’s waiting arms.

Let none hear you idly saying,
 “There is nothing I can do,”
 While the multitudes are dying
 And the Master calls for you.
 Take the task He gives you gladly;
 Let His work your pleasure be.
 Answer quickly when He calls you,
 “Here am I. Send me, send me!”

Daniel March, 1816–1909, alt.

Prayer

Merciful Lord, You opened the prophet Isaiah’s eyes so that he could see the wonders of heaven and learn his calling here on earth. Open now our eyes that we may read and understand Isaiah’s heavenly prophecies. Lead us to see Your calling for our lives here on earth. May the prophet’s words be upon our lips as a burning, purifying fire and the message of salvation for all nations; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Digging Deep My Personal Study for Week 1

Day 1 • Introduction

1. To better understand Isaiah’s message, we need to understand the time and place in which he wrote. Begin to set his book in context by reading 2 Chronicles 26:1–15.

a. Suppose you had taken a political poll in Judah during King Uzziah’s reign. Check the statements you think such a poll might have found to be true.

- _____ Most of Judah’s citizens give King Uzziah high marks for his job performance.
- _____ A majority of the people express confidence in the nation’s economy.
- _____ The king has won the approval of the nation’s farmers for his agricultural policies.
- _____ The nation is in terrible turmoil over the country’s military exploits.
- _____ Those in the construction industry express dismay over Uzziah’s long-term building plans.

b. Uzziah ruled in Judah for fifty-two years. This kind of stability in leadership usually inspires national confidence. Isaiah became a prophet in Judah in the year Uzziah died. What might a citizen in Judah at the time think about the nation’s future under a new, as yet untested, ruler? Explain.

2. Now read 2 Chronicles 26:16–23.

a. What clues does this passage give about the spiritual condition in Judah at this time?

b. What led Uzziah to try to usurp the authority that God had given only to the priesthood under the old covenant?

3. Read 2 Chronicles 27:1–9. These verses tell about the reign of Jotham, Uzziah’s son and successor to Judah’s throne.

a. Summarize Jotham’s reign in twenty-five words or less.

b. Reread verse 2. What hint of the spiritual dry rot in Judah’s soul do you see here?

4. Now read Isaiah 1:21–23. How would you list or summarize the Lord’s main complaints against His people?

5. *For personal reflection. Sharing optional.* Reread your answer to question 4 in view of matters facing you and your nation today.

a. Put a star beside those problems on your list to which you yourself have at times contributed, either by what you did or by what you failed to do.

b. Finally, read Isaiah 1:18. Why is this verse such Good News for you personally? (See also Romans 5:8 and 1 John 4:9–10.)

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Day 2 • Read Isaiah 6:1–7

Even though God’s people in Judah in the seventh century BC looked proper and prosperous to outside observers, the Lord knew their spiritual poverty. He saw their need even when most of them did not. So God sent prophets to confront them with their sin and to warn them to repent.

6. Isaiah 6:1 says, “I saw the Lord,” probably in a vision, a supernatural way in which God revealed Himself (as He did later to Peter in Acts 10:9–16, to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:1–6, and to John in Revelation 1:10). Isaiah tells how God called him to be His spokesman or prophet.

a. What three words might you choose if you were to describe that vision?

b. What exactly did Isaiah see that day?

c. What exactly did Isaiah hear?

7. Reread verse 5.

a. How did Isaiah respond to the vision? Why?

b. Why do you think he confessed the sins of his people? (See 1 Corinthians 12:12–26.)

8. With the words *unclean lips*, Isaiah summarizes the sinful condition in which both he and his people found themselves.

a. Why do you suppose Isaiah chose this particular phrase as he confessed his own and his people's sins? (Compare Isaiah 29:13.)

b. How does God (through the seraph) respond to Isaiah's confession?

c. Since Isaiah's ministry would involve speaking for God, why would this specific assurance of forgiveness (absolution) have been particularly meaningful for him?

9. *For personal reflection. Sharing optional.* Think about a time when God's absolution was especially meaningful to you. Also reflect upon any particular burden of guilt you might be carrying right now. What might

your Lord want to say to you about your sin and its guilt? (Read Isaiah 55:6–9.) Could you find it helpful to talk with another believer, perhaps even your pastor, about that burden? If so, what's keeping you from doing that?

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Day 3 • Read Isaiah 6:8–13

Isaiah heard God's Word of gracious and unconditional forgiveness. Then Isaiah heard God's voice once more. This time, God spoke a word of invitation and challenge.

10. Reread verse 8. The words translated "I am lost" (v. 5) likely mean "dumbstruck" or "silenced by the fear of destruction." What did Isaiah say when he first spoke again?

11. Study verses 9–13 carefully. Isaiah's ministry would not be an easy one. What specific phrases from the text reveal this?

12. *For personal reflection. Sharing optional.* Think about your own life. When are you personally most likely to "hear, but not hear" as God speaks to you through His Word?

13. The people would undergo some terrible consequences because of their hard-hearted rebellion (vv.

11–12), but still God gives reason for hope.

a. What words in verse 13 speak of the hope Judah could have?

b. To what words of hope do you turn in times when you recognize hardness or rebellion in your own heart?

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Day 4 • Read Isaiah 1:1–20

Isaiah was a mighty seer. Like all of God’s Old Testament prophets, Isaiah saw—really saw—the condition of God’s people. This chapter summarizes what the prophet saw, both present and future, as God revealed to him the condition of His people.

14. Seer that he is, Isaiah paints several word pictures in today’s reading. These pictures portray the dire straits in which God’s people find themselves, even though the people themselves don’t yet see things this way.

a. List the pictures of sin and rebellion painted by the prophet and the verses in which those portraits appear. (e.g., v. 2—rebellious children; v. 4—people loaded down with guilt)

b. Isaiah also sees a beautiful picture of God’s love (v. 18). If you were to commission an artist to paint that picture, what details would you want included? Explain.

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Day 5 • Read Isaiah 1:21–31

As you began your study of Isaiah this week, you read the first three verses of today’s assignment (vv. 21–23) and summarized God’s main complaints against His people. These included Judah’s outward sins of lovelessness toward one another—sins against what you may have learned to know as the second table of the Law, the last seven commandments.

God’s people also had transgressed the first table of the Law, the first three commandments. They had not loved the Lord “with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.” They had not listened to God’s Word or to His representatives who spoke that Word.

15. Verses 29–31 refer to the idolatry into which God’s people had fallen. The sacred oaks (or terebinth trees) and gardens were sites reserved for idol worship. Isaiah says the people will someday be ashamed and disgraced (or embarrassed) as they remember what they did there.

a. What idols in the lives of God’s people today are shameful and an embarrassment?

b. How could God’s promise to cleanse and restore His Old Testament people (vv. 24–28) also comfort you today as you think about the false gods on which you sometimes rely? (See Acts 2:32–36, 41.)

The Day of the LORD

Distribute before session 2 for use in session 2.

Use Enrichment Magazine pp. 4–7 with this session.

Isaiah 2–5

Resources for Worship

Use these resources for your daily study at home and at the week's assembly.

Hymn

The world is very evil,
The times are waxing late;
Be sober and keep vigil,
The Judge is at the gate;
The Judge that comes in mercy,
The Judge that comes with might,
To terminate the evil, To diadem the right.

Arise, arise, good Christian,
Let right to wrong succeed;
Let penitential sorrow
To heav'nly gladness lead,
To light that hath no evening,
That knows no moon nor sun,
The light so new and golden,
The light that is but one.

O sweet and blessed country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country
That eager hearts expect!
Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest,
Who art, with God the Father
And Spirit, ever blest.

Bernard of Morlas, c. 1140, cento;
tr. John M. Neale, 1818–66

Prayer

Beloved Lord, prune my wild and unfruitful ways. Root my thoughts, words, and deeds this day in Your holy and life-giving Word. Nurture me—stem, vine, tendril, and leaf—with Your rich goodness. May these prayers and meditations stand as a watchtower over all I do and say that I may flourish as a choice vine and bear the fruit of righteousness; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Digging Deep

My Personal Study for Week 2

Day 1 • Read Isaiah 2:1–4

1. Note: "In the latter days" (v. 2) here and elsewhere in Scripture refers to the first coming of Christ, the Messiah, and usually includes the entire New Testament era that will conclude with Christ's second coming. Today's reading is a poem built around one central thought. That thought is expressed in two phrases found at the very center of the poem. Reread these words (the middle two phrases of verse 3): "He may teach us . . . in His paths."

a. What does it mean to learn the Lord's ways and to walk in the Lord's paths? (See also Genesis 17:1; Psalm 86:11; and Psalm 143:8–10.)

b. We do not learn the Lord's ways or walk in the Lord's paths by drumming up the desire or the ability to do so inside our own hearts. It does not happen because we try hard. How do the verses from Isaiah and those from Genesis 17:1; Psalm 86; and Psalm 143 describe God's role in this process?

In Old Testament times and in many ways today, mountains were regarded as especially spiritual places. Sacrifices were usually offered on high places by both pagans and devout servants of the Lord. Ascending a mountain was thought of as approaching heaven (e.g., the ancient Greeks held that the gods lived atop Mt. Olympus).

2. The phrases "the mountain of the house of the LORD," "the mountain of the LORD," "the house of the God of Jacob," "Zion," and "Jerusalem" all refer to the same thing or nearly the same thing—the place

where God meets His people.

a. Where did God meet His Old Testament people (Exodus 40:34–35; 1 Kings 8:10–13)?

b. Where does God meet us today (Matthew 18:20; Acts 2:38–39; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25)?

c. **Challenge question.** What insight does John 12:32–33 give as you think about God drawing people to meet with Him and to learn from Him? (See also Hebrews 12:22 and Matthew 11:28–30.)

3. In Isaiah's word picture, people from all nations come together to learn the ways of the Lord and, learning of Him, to walk in His paths.

a. Read Acts 2:1–11. How did Pentecost begin to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy?

b. How could it be said that the fulfillment of Isaiah 2:2–3 is still ongoing? (See 2 Peter 3:9).

4. a. The words of Isaiah 2:4 are engraved on a wall near the entrance of the United Nations building. Will this part of Isaiah's prophecy be fulfilled here on earth? Explain. (See also Matthew 24:6–14.)

b. What peace is available now? (See John 14:27 and Romans 5:1–2.)

5. *For personal reflection. Sharing optional.* If the Holy Spirit were to put His finger on a place in your heart that has not yet received His peace, what circumstance or worry would He touch? How does God's message of forgiveness calm our worries and fears? What would you like to say to Him about that right now?

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Day 2 • Read Isaiah 2:5–22

6. Reread verse 5. It's an invitation that echoes the thought of walking in the Lord's paths (v. 3). What additional dimension does this verse add? (Compare Psalm 119:105.)

7. The rest of this passage is God's Word of judgment to His disobedient people. Summarize the words of Isaiah in verses 6–11.

8. Wealth is not inherently evil (Ecclesiastes 5:19). However, riches and personal security often lead people away from God's light and into the darkness of idolatry.

a. Why do you think this happens? (See Isaiah 31:1.)

b. *For personal reflection. Sharing optional.* When have “idols of silver” and “idols of gold” or the things you have made to worship (Isaiah 2:20) become idols in your own life?

c. *For personal reflection. Sharing optional.* What response does Isaiah’s warning in verses 12–22 evoke in you as you think about your answer to (b)?

d. How could a trip up to the “mountain of the LORD” help you in the battle with materialism or idolatry?

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Day 3 • Read Isaiah 3–4

9. Today’s reading, though lengthy, makes one unified point. God’s wrath will fall on His rebellious people of that day and also, in the final judgment, on all who have stubbornly stood in opposition to His justice and love. Indeed, God’s judgment will show itself in the breakdown of social order in Judah. Chaos will result.

a. What are some things God threatened to do to wake the people up to the dangers of their sin and arrogance?

b. Which phrases describe the anger of God at Judah’s sinful leaders most powerfully for you?

c. What does all this say about the importance and the responsibility of those in spiritual leadership?

d. What is our responsibility toward our spiritual leaders?

10. In what ways does your congregation prepare or train spiritual leaders for service?

11. In Isaiah 3:18–23, the Lord threatens to strip from the proud and impenitent all they cherish. Count the items listed.

a. How many are there?

b. **Challenge question.** The Hebrews used numbers symbolically. For example, seven represented completeness. That being true, do you see any significance to your answer in (a) above? Explain.

12. Reread Isaiah 4:2–6. Note that this picture of God’s grace and the picture of that same grace in 2:1–4 form a frame, as it were, around the picture of judgment in 2:5–4:1.

a. What specifically does God promise His people in 4:2–6?

b. How are these verses fulfilled for you?

(Reread vv. 12, 20.)

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Day 4 • Read Isaiah 5:1–7

13. In the Scriptures, vineyards often symbolize God’s people.

a. What did the Lord do to cultivate His vineyard (vv. 1–2)?

b. What good reason can be given for its unfruitfulness (5:7)?

14. How do our lives become lives of fruitfulness rather than barrenness? (See John 15:4–8.)

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Day 5 • Read Isaiah 5:8–30

15. After the Song of the Vineyard, Isaiah gives many specific examples of fruitlessness. It starts out sounding like a tirade against spring break or Mardi Gras. He prefaces several of these examples with the word *woe*.

a. Jot a few of Isaiah’s examples here.

b. What portions of these woes reveal that Isaiah speaks against something more than errant revelry?

16. Think about the seriousness of the sins mentioned in the foregoing questions.

a. Which of them would fall into a category our culture might label as heinous crimes?

b. Which of them would those in our culture label as petty or inoffensive?

c. What insights and feelings does this text evoke in your heart?

17. Reread the last two phrases of verse 25 (“For all this . . . stretched out still”). This refrain will ring repeatedly throughout chapters 9 and 10.

a. Where in these words do you hear God’s Law for your heart and life?

b. Where in the words do you hear God’s gracious invitation to repentance and faith? (See also Exodus 34:6–7.)