

Isaiah 1 – Bible Study

For Starters

- Do you find the bible's frequent description of human nature offensive? What would you say to a friend who said, "I don't like that the bible says we are sinful"?

Read Isaiah 1:1-4, 21-23

1. What stands out about how God describes his people?
2. What best captures the heart of sin?
 - Failing God's standards
 - Disobeying and breaking rules
 - Doing immoral actions
 - Rejecting a person
3. Is Sin mainly moral failure or relational betrayal? What is the relationship between these?
4. (a) Why do you think people respond differently to sin?
 - Some feel constant guilt
 - Some only feel it with 'big' sins
 - Others rarely feel guilt, even when they know they've done wrong or are being slack

(b) What might shape those differences? What's your story in this area? (If you're comfortable sharing).

Read 1:11-14

5. Why does God react so strongly to their worship?
6. How can people be active in religion but distant from God? What needs to take place in our hearts/lives for this to occur?
7. What are some warning signs that you are 'going through the motions'?
8. How can we help each other to recognise and avoid this?

Read 1:7-9

9. Why should God judge sin? What other alternatives are there for him, and what would they say about his character?

Read 1:18, 25-26

10. What hope is there for God's wayward and unclean people?

11. Why is God's mercy shocking?

12. Many of us know the gospel so well that it no longer surprises or shocks us. Read the following scriptures and ask, 'What should shock or amaze us here?'

- Heb10:21-22 *Since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*
- 1Jn1:7 *The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*
- Eph1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace*
- Rev1:5 *To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood*

13. Do you think practices like confession (e.g. weekly in church) are important? Why or why not?

14. What helps keep grace from becoming 'normal' instead of astonishing? How does this help us to delight in the Lord so we don't just go through the motions?

Pray together

P.s.

Are you reading along with our daily Isaiah blog?

Go to the main page of our website, scroll down to the 'Isaiah Reading Plan' on the right and sign up www.standrews.net.au


Isaiah 6 – Bible Study

For Starters

- Have you ever had an overwhelming experience of something that left you feeling very small or unworthy?

Read Isaiah 6:1-5

1. How is this different to how people commonly think about God?
2. Why does seeing God clearly lead Isaiah to seeing himself clearly?

 **God is holy!** (Ex 15:11, Lev11:44, Ps 99:9, Rev 4:8). This means he is utterly unique in terms of his purity and power. He is set apart from all other things due to the totality of his perfections. He is holy because he is perfect in love, justice, wisdom, power etc. This should lead to a deep sense of reverent awe and profound inadequacy! Hab 1:12-13 *My God, my Holy One ... Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.*

3. How do we often minimise our sin before God? What might this say about how we view God?

Read Isaiah 6:6-8

4. What enables Isaiah to stand clean and ready for service? How do people often seek to atone for their sin/guilt?
5. In what way is Isaiah 6 hinting at the problem and solution for God's people?
 - Isaiah 53:5-6, 10, 12
 - John 1:29
 - 1 John 2:2

Read Luke 5:1-11

6. What did Peter encounter to react in such a way? What is Jesus' response?

7. Isaiah seems ready and glad to engage in service. What is the relationship between atonement and service?
- Hebrews 9:14
 - Romans 12:1-2
 - 2 Peter 1:5-9
8. “A small God produces a small Christian life”. Do you agree? How can we increase our vision of God?
9. The Christian life follows this pattern from Isaiah 6:
- We see Jesus the King.
 - We confess our sin.
 - He cleanses us by his atoning death.
 - And he sends us to serve him.

Which part of this pattern do you most need to grow in right now, and what would it look like this week to act on it?

- Seeing the King: (Making space to grasp God’s greatness. E.g. time in deep reflection of scripture & prayer)
 - Confessing sin: (Being honest with God, and maybe someone else you trust)
 - Receiving cleansing: (Trusting again in Jesus finished work)
 - Being sent: (Taking a concrete action step of obedience/courage at home, work, church, or with a friend).
10. After seeing God’s holiness and receiving his gracious atonement, Isaiah said, “Here am I, send me”. What might God be sending you into this week, and how will you respond in practice?

Suggested prayer ...

Loving heavenly Father,
 You are holy, glorious, and far greater than we often realise.
 We confess that we are sinful and unclean in contrast to you
 And that we often minimise our sin
 Thank you that through Jesus, our sin is atoned for and our guilt is taken away
 Please help us to trust in Jesus finished work, not our own efforts.
 And we ask, that your Spirit would make us willing to say, “Here I am, Send me!”
 So that we’re ready to serve you in our homes, work environments, places of
 education, relationships and church.
 In Jesus name,
 Amen.

Isaiah 8-9 – Bible Study

For Starters

- “What you fear shapes what you trust” Can you give examples?

Read Isaiah 7:2-7, 9 and 8:11-13

1. What fears were pressing in on Judah, and what were they called to do?

Read Isaiah 8:16-22

2. What else did Judah’s fears lead them to trust in? What is the result?

Read Isaiah 9:1-7

3. What is the ‘light’ shining in the darkness?
4. How does each title describe an aspect of his character and rule?
 - Wonderful Counsellor
 - Might God
 - Everlasting Father
 - Prince of Peace
5. Does the promise of God’s Son reshape your perspective on current struggles or fears? In what way?
6. Fear shapes what we place our trust in ...
 - Isaiah fears God so he trusts God
 - Judah fears the nations and fatally trusts Assyria
 - Ahaz fears evil spirits and so consults mediums

Where is fear driving you at the moment?

- To control?
- To panic?
- To human approval?
- To spiritual shortcuts?
- To voices apart from God’s word?
- Other?

- Or to the Lord who has zealously given us his son?

Pray together

Loving Heavenly Father,
When fear presses in, keep us from trusting lesser things.
Turn our hearts back to you, our rock and refuge.
Thank you for your promised Son, Jesus the Prince of Peace.
Give us true peace and help us to trust and hold onto your promises to us in Christ
Amen.

Isaiah 11-12 – Bible Study

For starters

- What do we look to in ourselves and others to bring peace, security, and happiness? How effective is it?

Read 11:1-5

1. Have you ever delighted in the fear of the Lord? What might that look like?
2. Jesus is the spirit directed King (Luke 3:21-22, 4:1, 18), who rules righteously. Can you recall moments where he displays wisdom, power, and reverential fear of God?
3. While all the kings' qualities are excellent, which qualities resonate with you the most? Why?

Read 11:6-9

4. What does this tell us about the effects of sin on creation?
5. Read Romans 8:19-21. Where do you most feel the 'groaning' of creation's brokenness?
6. Read V9 – How does knowing God relate to peace and safety?
7. How does/should this future promise shape the way we endure present suffering?

Read 11:10-12

8. How does Jesus gather all sorts of people from all kinds of nations to himself and one another? (John 12:32, Ephesians 2:15-16).
9. How can you be an agent of peace and unity at Church?

Read 12:1-6

10. What causes you to sing and what sorts of things do you verbally share with excitement?
11. According to Isaiah 11-12, what should inspire us to sing and speak? What hinders us from this?

12. What can help us to develop our praise?

13. What can help us to develop our proclamation?

From a desolate stump God brings about a whole new world pulsating with joy.
Spend time praising him and praying together.

Suggested prayer

Dear heavenly Father,

Thank you for Jesus, the promised King who rules with wisdom, righteousness, and love. Thank you that through his death and resurrection your kingdom has come, is growing now, and will one day be complete.

Help us to trust you as we wait, to live as your people in this world, and to reflect your kingdom in what we say and do.

Fill us with your Spirit and make us people who praise you and point others to Jesus.

Amen.

Isaiah 24-25 Bible Study

For Starters

- What would you say to a friend who said, “*The Old Testament God is a God of judgment, but the New Testament God is a God of love*”.



ISAIAH SO FAR ... By way of reminder, **Isaiah 1-12** focuses mainly on Judah and Jerusalem – God’s own people, their sin, and the judgment coming upon them. There are flashes of hope throughout this section (Is 1:18, 2:1-5, 4:1-6, 6:6-7, 7:7-9, 7:14, 9:1-17, 11:1-16, 12:1-6). Then **Isaiah 13-23** shifts its focus to the nations. One by one, the nations of the world are brought before God’s judgment seat (E.g. Babylon, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Cush, Egypt, Tyre). This section climaxes in **Isaiah 24** with an expanded vision of judgment now covering the whole earth. But then, surprisingly, **Isaiah 25** turns from devastation to celebration, portraying salvation and restored life through the image of a lavish feast prepared by God for all his people.

Read Isaiah 24:1-6 & 24:14-16

1. How can judgment be bad news and good news at the same time?
2. How is God’s anger different to our anger?
3. What kinds of sins are easiest for us to see in others, but harder to see in ourselves?
4. What are the alternatives to a God of just judgment? If he didn’t get righteously angry at real evil, what would we be left with?

Read Isaiah 25:6-9

5. What do you find appealing about this image? Which aspect speaks to you most powerfully?
6. Who is granted access to this bountiful feast?

Read Matthew 8:5-13

7. Why would Jesus’ audience have been shocked by the Centurion?
8. What made his faith remarkable?

9. Why does Jesus warn that some insiders will miss out while unexpected outsiders will enter the feast?

10. Why is it important for God to be both judge and saviour? How does the cross show both?

11. How are you going at inviting people to the great feast?

Pray together

A Suggested Prayer ...

Dear loving heavenly Father,
Thanks that you are both perfectly just and wonderfully merciful.
Thank you that through Jesus, death is defeated and sinners are invited to your feast by grace.
Help us to trust Christ alone, to keep turning from sin, to rejoice in your salvation, and to increase in our desire to let others know about it.

Amen.

Isaiah 36-39 Bible Study

There is NOOOOOOO WAY we could possibly do justice to all the rich detail of Isaiah 36-39. So, we will limit ourselves to a few key soundings. Remember, Ch36-39 functions as a bridge between the 2 halves of Isaiah (from Assyrian Threat to Babylonian Threat, and from the theme of judgment to salvation) and highlights the need to trust God's promise to rescue and renew despite circumstances.

Overview

- Ch36 Assyria threatens to destroy Jerusalem unless they surrender. Who will they trust?
- Ch37 God answers Hezekiah's prayer and removes the Assyrian threat
- Ch38 Illness threatens Hezekiah's life. He prays and God mercifully grants him more life.
- Ch39 Babylon are looking for an alliance against Assyria. Hezekiah foolishly directs his confidence towards them rather than God. Isaiah tells him that Babylon will one day conquer them. Hezekiah doesn't care, as long as he's safe!

Read Isaiah 36:4-5 & 36:13-20 & then 37:10-13

1. What are the basic reasons for Hezekiah to not trust God and to surrender to Assyria?
2. But why should he trust God and not surrender to Assyria? (Read 37:6-7, 33-35, 38:6)
3. God should save his people because he is faithful to his promise to save, but notice another reason in 37:20
4. "It's culturally insensitive and arrogant to want all nations to know that God is the only God over all." Discuss

Read Isaiah 38:1-8

5. What strikes you from this episode? What is similar/different to the last episode?
6. Should we pray for similar miracles?
7. How can we pray prayers that are more centred on God and more aligned with his will and desires?
8. How can comfort, success, or stability tempt us away from humility and prayer? What attitude and habits help us stay dependent upon God, even

as we enjoy many of these creational goods? (1Tim6:17-19, Mt6:19-21, 31-33)

Read Isaiah 39:1-8

9. What did Hezekiah get wrong? How can we make similar mistakes?

Turning from God to human resources is no way to find ultimate deliverance and security. Even the best of Israel's kings failed at this point. Thank God for Jesus, the spirit filled righteous King who perfectly mediated God's presence, power, and wisdom, and delivered us from our ultimate enemies of sin, Satan, death, and judgment.

Spend some time praying together

Isaiah 40:1-11 – Bible Study

For Starters

- When is it wrong to desire comfort?

NB:

- Isaiah 1-39 majors on the theme of God's judgment
- Isaiah 40-66 majors on the theme of salvation

Read Isaiah 39:5-7 and then read Psalm 137:1-6 (Feel free to sing it if you remember the Boney M version)

1. Imagine how they felt and what they longed for? What would comfort mean in this setting?

Read Isaiah 40:1-11.

2. How would this passage speak to someone in Babylon?
3. Comfort in what sense?
 - o Isaiah 12:1-3
4. What is the big picture of Isaiah 40:1-11 (I.e. What is basically depicted as occurring?)
5. Now let's look at the detail. List the things that make up this 'Comfort'
6. Why do all four gospels begin with Isaiah 40:3?
 - Mt 3:3
 - Mk 1:3
 - Lk 3:4-6
 - Jn 1:23

7. How else does the New Testament pick up these promises?

- Is 40:5 *The glory of the Lord will be revealed ...* (John 1:14)
- Is 40:6-8 *All people are like grass ...* (1 Peter 1:23-25)
- Is 40:11 *He tends his flock like a shepherd ...* (John 10:11)

- Which of these images speaks to you the most? Why?

8. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-5. The age of comfort has arrived in Jesus!

- Can you think of a time when you were comforted by God? What was it about him that comforted you?
- What stops us from being aware of and receiving God's comfort in difficult times?
- How does God's comfort of us translate into our comforting of others? How does it work? Can you think of any examples?

Pray together

Isaiah 42:1-9 – Bible Study

For Starters

- When you're struggling, what kind of person do you most want beside you: someone powerful, someone compassionate, or someone wise? Why?

➡ **The Servant Songs:** There are at least 4, and some think 5 'servant songs' in Isaiah 40-66 (Is 42:1-9, 49:1-7, 50:4-11, 52:13-53:12, 61:1-3). 'Songs' because they have a unique poetic song-like structure setting them apart from the surrounding material. Together they portray an enigmatic servant of the Lord who will not only comfort Israel, but bring justice to the nations and rescue for the world. Paradoxically, he is powerful and yet ministers through gentleness, self-sacrifice, and suffering. Surprisingly, he is the key to solving humanity's biggest problem. No one would make this up, surely! P.S. Matthew 12:17-21 explicitly identifies Jesus as the servant of Isaiah 42:1-9

Read Isaiah 42:1-9

1. What stands out to you about the servant? Describe the scope and manner of his reign
2. What aspect of the servant's ministry appeals to you most? Why?
3. Can you think of examples where Jesus was gentle in his authority?
4. Why is God as creator important to emphasise here? How does it contribute to the surrounding ideas (v5-8)?
5. How does idolatry cheapen God's name and glory?
6. When do you think someone moves from appreciating something to worshipping something? Are you in danger of crossing this line in some area? What can you do about it?

7. Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”* (John 8:12, Is 42:6). Jesus is now shining his light to the nations (Acts 13:46-48) and enlists us in his global cause (Mt 28:18-20).

- a. Do you view yourself as part of his light shining mission?
- b. What’s one thing we can do better to engage in evangelism as a church?
- c. What’s one thing you can do as an individual?

Pray together

- Praise God for Jesus, the Spirit-anointed Servant whose messianic mission advances through humble, compassionate service and ultimately brings justice and hope to the nations (Mt12:17-21).

Isaiah 53 – Bible Study

For Starters

- How much do cultural expectations shape how we think God should work?

Read the whole servant song (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)

1. What ideas or images stand out to you most? Why?

2. When you think of God acting with power, what do you expect it to look like? (with Isaiah 52:10 in mind)

3. How can the suffering servant be an expression of God's strong arm?

4. Why don't we notice God in the unimpressive?

Read Isaiah 53:4-6

5. This is the key stanza helping us to understand WHY this man is suffering. What is the answer?

6. What feelings does someone suffering in your place bring up for you?

7. How does it change your understanding of Jesus' death to see it as personal substitution rather than general inspiration?

8. How would you explain to a friend that Jesus' death is not weak and foolish but an expression of God's wisdom and love? (1 Cor 1:18, 22-24, Rom 5:8)

Read 53:10-12

9. List and describe all the outcomes for this servant and his people? Do any stand out for you?

10. How do we receive the benefits of the servant's ministry? See Romans 5:1-2 (Is53:5, 11)
11. Do you think you can have assurance that Jesus' death always keeps you close to God? What if you don't feel close? What if a sense of guilt or fear gets the better of you? (Rom 5:9-11)
12. What ongoing difference does it make to you knowing that Jesus actively and always represents you before God? (Is53:12 'intercession'. Heb 7:23-27)

Pray together

APPENDIX: Isaiah 53 in the New Testament

NT Quotes

- Romans 15:21 (Is52:15)
- John 12:38 (53:1)
- Romans 10:16 (53:1)
- Matthew 8:17 (53:4)
- Acts 8:32-33 (53:7-8)
- 1 Peter 2:22 (53:9)
- Luke 22:37 (53:12)

NT Allusions

- Phil2:9-11 Exalted (Is 52:13)
- Mt26:67 Beaten/disfigured (Is 52:14)
- 1Pt1:2 Sprinkled blood for forgiveness (Is 52:15)
- Jn11:47-50 Rejected (Is 53:3)
- 1Cor15:3 Died for sins (Is 53:4-6)
- Mk14:60-61 Silent before accusers (Is 53:7)
- 2Cor5:14-15 Died for peoples sin (Is 53:8)
- Mk15:27-28, 43-46 Assigned grave with wicked and rich but innocent (Is 53:9)
- Rom5:9, 2Cor5:21 God prepared him as sin offering (Is 53:10)
- Phil2:9-11, Heb1:3-4 Received great reward because poured out life (Is 53:12).

Isaiah 55 – Bible Study

For Starters

- When we are offered something valuable with no cost to ourselves ...
 - ... why do we react with suspicion?
 - ... And why do we feel uncomfortable receiving the gift?

Read Isaiah 55:1-3

1. Verse 2 says, “*Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy?*”

Give examples of things we spend time, money, and energy pursuing, yet that don't fill us up inside

2. Why can't we receive life without listening? (v2b-3)

Read Isaiah 55:6-7

3. What does God want?
4. Have we given him what he wants and received what he wants to give us? What difference has it made in your life?
5. Why would we hold back on turning to the Lord in this way? What do we think we'll lose? But what do we gain?
6. ‘*Seek the Lord while he may be found ...*’ (v6). With this idea in mind read 2 Peter 3:8-9 and discuss: Why has the Lord Jesus not yet returned? How should this affect our urgency to turn to God ourselves and encourage others to turn to him? What dulls our sense of urgency?

Read Isaiah 55:7-13

7. Using the verses suggested how would you answer the following three objections:
 - “His offer is too good to be true”
 - v7-9
 - “He's over promising and under-delivering” (v10-11)

- V10-11
- “If we come to him, he’ll ruin our life and deplete our joy”
 - v12-13

- 8.** How does this future hope (ie. V12-13) encourage Christians to keep trusting Christ when life is difficult and other things seem more attractive or immediately satisfying?

- 9.** In Luke 14:15–23, the invited guests all have reasonable-sounding excuses for missing the banquet.
 - What are some modern-day equivalents?
 - Are there any good things in your life that could become obstacles to responding fully to Jesus?
 - How would you try to persuade your unbelieving friend that Jesus is ultimately better than these things?

Pray about what you’ve learned, including one person you’d like an opportunity to ‘share the invitation to life’ with.