

Isaiah 1-39



A Mighty Prophet

with

A Mighty Message

from

A Mighty God

Ballina Presbyterian Church Membership Covenant

I. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By acting in love toward other members**
- ...By refusing to gossip**
- ...By following the leaders**

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom 15:5

"Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart" 1 Peter 1:22

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of our mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs..." Eph. 4:29

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you." Heb. 13:17

II. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By praying for its growth**
- ...By inviting the unchurched to attend**
- ...By warmly welcoming those who visit**

"To the church...we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly." 1 Thess. 1:2

"Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full." Luke 14:23

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." Rom. 15:7

III. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH

- ...By discovering my gifts and talents**
- ...By being equipped to serve by my pastors**
- ...By developing a servant's heart**

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others ..." 1 Peter 4:10

"God gave...some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up..." Eph. 4:11-12

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ...who took on the very nature of a servant..." Phil 2:3-4, 7

IV. I WILL SUPPORT THE WITNESS OF MY CHURCH

- ...By attending faithfully**
- ...By living a godly life**
- ...By giving regularly**

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together...but let us encourage one another." Heb. 10:25

"Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." Phil. 1:27

"Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering." 1 Cor. 16:2

Welcome to Isaiah and thank you so much for joining us. I pray that as we read through this book, spend time talking about it in our Growth Groups and sit under its teaching, our church corporately and you individually will be truly blessed with an increased understanding and appreciation of the awesomeness and majesty (*symbolized by the waterfall on the front cover*) of our loving heavenly Father.

Over time the book of Isaiah has often been referred to as the fifth gospel, due to its message of salvation and due to the majesty of his language and possible royal lineage Isaiah is often referred to as the prince of prophets. The book and its author really have made an impression. As we read through it today our impression may be more of confusion or even intimidation. Sixty six chapters of places, kings, and nations many of whom we have never heard of before. But scholars tell us that this is a majestic prophecy. It's delivered for the most part in the form of a poem by a prophet who was probably from royalty and whose message is widely regarded as the most theological of all prophecies. As we dig into this book we will see that through majestic (poetic) language Isaiah has delivered a message spanning far more than 40 plus years of his ministry, or even the few hundred years he specifically refers to. This message written 2700 years ago still speaks directly to us today with the same pronouncement – Our God Saves.

Over time the sixty six chapters of Isaiah have caused a great deal of speculation. The events referred to cover (approximately) the years of Isaiah's ministry – c740-701BC (chapters 1-39). But they also foretell, in detail the events surrounding the destruction and exile of Jerusalem 586BC and the return of the exiles 70 years later (chapters 40-66). This has led many scholars to question whether Isaiah is the sole author of this work or if he had 'help'!!! For what it's worth I see that one of the major themes of the book is that God is the God and redeemer of history. That is, he achieves his plans despite the sinfulness of men and nations. Furthermore, God does not need to change his plans to compensate for the rebellion of earthly kings (or their armies), he is not surprised, his plans still come to fruition. If this is the case then of course God can reveal to Isaiah, even in detail, things which will occur in the next few hundred years. When you think about it that's nothing compared to God's graciousness in revealing to us what will happen for all eternity. I, for one, am convinced that Isaiah is the human author of all sixty six chapters of his prophecy as directed by the very God he writes about.

It would be very helpful (both for you and your Growth Group) if you read the sections of each study and answered the questions BEFORE arriving at Growth Group. That way there will be more time for more fruitful and thoughtful discussion.

This is the **Preaching Profile** showing you how we will work through the first section of the book.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Passage</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Preacher</i>
<i>Feb 10</i>	Isaiah 1:1-31		Hamish
<i>Feb 17</i>	Isaiah 2:1-4:6		Hamish
<i>Feb 24</i>	Isaiah 5:1-30		Hamish
<i>Mar 2</i>	Isaiah 6:1-12:6		Hamish
<i>Mar 9</i>	Isaiah 13:1-23:18		
<i>Mar 16</i>	Isaiah 24:1- 33:24		
<i>Mar 23</i>	Isaiah 34:1-35:10	Easter Sunday	Hamish
<i>Mar 30</i>	Isaiah 36:1 – 37:7		Hamish
<i>Apr 6</i>	Isaiah 38:1 – 39:8		Hamish

Enjoy,

Hamish

STUDY 1 Isaiah 1:1-31

1. What time frame does this vision/prophecy of Isaiah deal with (v1)? (*refer to the introduction to these studies*). Who is it initially directed to?
2. What is the charge(s) laid against these people (v2-4)?
3. What other 'messages' has God sent to this nation to get their attention and repentance (v5-8)?
4. How has God shown mercy to these people (v9ff)?
5. How has their religion blinded them to their true condition before God (v11-17)?
6. How can they recover from this situation (v18-20, 27)?
7. How does God plan to break and perish the rebels and sinners (v24-25; 28)?
8. List the ways in which we might fool ourselves about our true condition before God.

STUDY 2 Isaiah 2:1-4:6

1. What is Isaiah's vision for Judah and Jerusalem in the future (2:1-5)?
2. What have the people of Judah been up to (2:6-8)?
3. Having failed to see God's glory, how will it be revealed to them (2:9-22)?
4. What is God about to do (3:1-7)?
5. Even in the face of impending disaster what are Judea up to (3:8-16)?
6. How does Isaiah contrast the future of Jerusalem with the present (3:17-4:6)?
7. Does God still reveal his glory through trouble today? How might that occur in the believers life and what is an appropriate response?

STUDY 3 Isaiah 5:1-30

1. Who is singing the song about the vineyard (v1,7)? Who is the vineyard (v2,7)?
2. What was the problem God had with the vineyard (v3f)?
3. What is going to happen to the vineyard because of this (v5-6)?
4. In verses 8-25 there are six woes. Where are the people placing their security/hope/identity/joy? What is the future of these paths? What is the common sin of the people here?
5. What does Yahweh say he will do in response (v26-30)?
6. Where are you most tempted to place your security, sense of well being?
7. What New Testament verses/passages help you to remember how to keep things in perspective and your hope on Jesus?

STUDY 4 Isaiah 6:1- 12:6

Chapter 6

1. What does Isaiah see (v1) and when did he see it?
2. It seems that this chapter should appear at the beginning of the book and not six chapters in. What is the condition of Israel so far (ch 1-5) and how does Isaiah see his own condition (v5)?
3. How is Isaiah's situation rectified (v6-7)?
4. What is Isaiah's response to his new life (v8)?
5. What are the immediate prospects of his ministry (v9-13)?

Chapter 7

1. Why are the people of Judah nervous (v1-2)?
2. What is God's word to Ahaz, king of Judah (v3-9)?

Isaiah passes on God's invitation to ask God for a sign (note that this is not testing God but obeying a direct command!). Foolishly Ahaz declines and so God provides a promise with both positive and negative meaning (v10-25). See if you can identify the positive and negative meaning in this prophecy as you answer the next few questions.

3. The term virgin does not necessarily mean that Isaiah is referring to a virgin birth. He is giving Ahaz a time frame. If the virgin was to marry and conceive it would be about 12 years until the event took place. What event is Isaiah referring to here?
4. What event does Matthew tie this prophecy to in Matthew 1:23?
5. What aspect of the prophecy ties these two events together?
6. Although God will be with them what is the negative aspect of this prophecy? How will God continue to show mercy?

Chapter 8

1. Isaiah marries the prophetess in v3. But not before writing God's prophecy on a scroll with witnesses. What is the prophecy and how is it fulfilled (v1-4)?
2. What huge mistake do the people of Judah make (v5-8)?
3. What do v9-10 teach about "God with us" concept?
4. What is the way forward for the people of Judah (v11-22)?

Chapter 9

1. Read v1-7. What is the promise to the people 2700 years ago? How do we understand these verses today?
2. The prophecy of v8-21 is against the people of Israel as opposed to the people of Judah. What is the people's initial response to the disaster that they face? What does Isaiah say is the truth of the matter? How devastating is the wrath of God?

Chapter 10

1. God's hand is still upraised despite the devastation wreaked upon the land and among the people. What does it seem they have failed to learn (v1-4)?
2. Although God will use the king of Assyria for his purposes the king and his nation will experience God's wrath as well(v5-19). Why?
3. What does this teach us about the majesty of God?
4. In all this talk of destruction and devastation what is the note of grace (v20-34)?

Chapter 11

1. Chapter 11 points to a rescuer, a champion of Israel – the Messiah. From what family will this Messiah come from (v1)? . What is significant about this family?
2. By what power will he rule and to what ends will he reign (v2-5)?
3. What will be the result of his rule (v6-16)? Who stands to benefit?

Chapter 12

1. What does the song of praise (v1-6) rejoice in ...
 - a. v1?
 - b. v2-3?
2. What response does this song call for (v4-6)?
3. What application do these verses have for us ...
 - a. as we meet together for church ?
 - b. as we live lives as followers of Jesus?

STUDY 5 Isaiah 13:1 – 23:18

Chapter 13

1. Who is this oracle against (v1)?
2. God calls Israel his people. What does God's judgment of Babylon teach us of God's godness?
3. What does the future hold for Babylon (v2-10)? Why (v11)? How far reaching is the wrath of God (v12-22)?
4. Who will God use as his instrument of judgment (v17)?

Chapter 14

1. Amidst the destruction and annihilation what good news emerges for Israel (v1-2)?
2. How is the plight of Babylon a warning to all those who fail to glorify God (v3-23)?
3. What is the promise to God's people in v24-27? What assurance do the people have of this?
4. God will strike down the enemies of his people. Philistia were long time oppressors of Israel. What is their future (v28-32)?

Chapter 15

1. What is the future of Moab (v1-9)?

Chapter 16

1. Where is the hope of Moab to be found (v1-14)?
2. Why would we expect this to be the case?

Chapter 17

1. What will happen to the stronghold of Damascus (v1-3)?
2. Is there a hint of grace (v4-6)?
3. How will God reveal himself in these times (v9-11)?
4. What is the message for Israel (v12-14)?

Chapter 18

1. Rather than messengers (envoys) coming to Israel calling on them to make treaties God says you are not in a position of power. What should happen instead (v2a)? Messengers from Israel should go. What is their message (v3-7)?

Chapter 19

1. What means will the Egyptians have to combat God at his coming (v1-4)?
2. What is their coming plight (v5-10)?
3. Where has the wisdom of Egypt landed her (v11-15)?
4. What are verses 16-25 saying?

Chapter 20

1. Israel made a pact with Egypt. They paid money for Egypt to protect them from Assyria (v6). What is the message to Israel that naked Isaiah is delivering – for three years (v1-6)?
2. Where are you most tempted to place your trust apart from God?

Chapter 21

1. What does this passage tell us about the relationship between deceit and devastation?

Chapter 22

1. How can a valley provide a place for vision – don't you climb a hill to see what lies ahead!
2. How does Isaiah respond to this vision (v4)?
3. Israel make many (useless) preparations for the ordeal ahead (v5-11) but they overlooked the most important one of all. What did they over look?
4. What was the Lord looking for (v12)? What did he find (v13)?
5. What does the Lord have to say about Israel's attitude and preparations (v14-25)?

Chapter 23

1. Tyre is on the coast (hence the reference to ships, v1). God has spoken against nations of the land and now nations of the sea. What does this tell you about the far reaching nature of God's power?
2. What use will their riches and institutions be when Yahweh comes to visit (v2-18)?
3. Where is true confidence found?
4. When are you tempted to make allegiances with the world? How can you guard yourself against this?

STUDY 6 Isaiah 24:1 – 33:24

Chapter 24

Read v1-13.

1. What is the plight of the earth and from whom?
2. Why is God going to do this (v5)? How comprehensive will the punishment be (v2)?

Read v14-18a

3. Who are those praising God in response to this promise?
4. What is the response of Isaiah (assuming that the 'I' of v16b is the prophet)?
5. Why does he respond this way and not with joy at God's righteous judgment?

Read v18b-23

6. The imagery of the opening verses of this section hark back to the flood narrative. In these verses what really causes the need for the earth to be renewed?
7. Whose power will reign supreme?

Chapter 25

1. Why does Isaiah praise God for his destruction (v1-5)?
2. What is the hope of the godly Israelite (as seen in Isaiah's praise)?
3. Where is Isaiah's hope found (v6-8)? What does this teach us about an Old Testament view of salvation?
4. Who will enjoy this salvation (v9)? What is the plight of the nations (Moab) (v10-12)?

Chapter 26

1. What is the appropriate response to God's salvation (v1a)? How does this help you understand the importance of singing as God's people?
2. What are the various aspects of God's actions listed in this song and how are they used as praise points?
3. If you were to write a song of praise what would you include?

Chapter 27

v1 seems to be a conclusion to chapter 26 rather than an introduction to the thought of chapter 27. Remember that the chapter numbers are a 'new' way of presenting the text of the Bible. In this verse it seems that Isaiah is referring to a well known myth of the day regarding the slaying of a sea monster, Leviathan in order to establish peace and tranquility. It is akin to me referring to someone being as strong as Hercules. I don't believe Greek mythology but he is a well known figure – so it was with the Leviathan myth.

1. What is the promise to God's people in this short chapter?

Chapters 28 & 29

1. What is the problem presented in these two chapters and what is making this problem worst?

2. What is the solution to the problem?

Chapters 30 & 31

The mighty Assyrian army has been devastating every nation in its path as it heads toward its goal of conquering Egypt. The region of Judea and the city of Jerusalem in particular are in line of fire sitting between Assyria and Egypt. The Israelites are very nervous and looking for help.

1. Who have the people turned to in order to gain salvation/rescue?

2. Why is this a problem?

3. How have they responded to God's word and warning? What is his promise?

Chapters 32 & 33

1. Read these chapters (at home). What is God's solution, as opposed to the other solutions tried by Israel?

2. How are we like Isaiah as we face our world?

STUDY 7 Isaiah 34:1 – 35:10

1. Who is God angry with (34:1-2a)?
2. What is their fate (v2b-7)?
3. Why (v8)?
4. If God has used them to bring destruction on Israel how can God be angry at them for doing it?
5. What is the time frame and nature of God's judgment against the nations (v9ff)? How does this correspond with the New Testament teaching on the fate of those who reject King Jesus?
6. How does this highlight the urgency of introducing people to Jesus?
7. What is the message of ch 35?
8. How would this be a message of hope for the people facing a time of terror and destruction?
9. Does the New Testament teach of such things? What similarities are there?

STUDY 8 Isaiah 36:1 – 37:38

1. What is going on here (36:1-3)?
2. Taking into account all that God has said leading up to this point how would you assess the message of the envoy (v4-10)? Note particularly the claim that God is on their side, is this the case here? What has God promised previously (cf 31:5)?
3. Note the promises of the spokesman for the Assyrian king. Notice how his curses and blessings sound like those God has spoken (v13ff). What is the difference?
4. How does 37:1-9 show that God is truly in control?
5. The Assyrian king leaves with a big threat to Hezekiah. How does Hezekiah show wisdom (v14-20)?
6. Outline Yahweh's response to the king of Assyria via Hezekiah (v21-29).
7. Outline Yahweh's promise to king Hezekiah (v30-35).
8. Why will Yahweh save Jerusalem (v35)?
9. How does the Lord bring this about (v36-38)? What does this teach us about trusting God, even when the solution is not obvious to us?

STUDY 9 Isaiah 38:1 – 39:8

1. What bad news is Hezekiah faced with (v1)?
2. How does his response show wisdom (v2-3)?
3. What is God's response and how does he reassure Hezekiah (v4-8)?
4. What is Hezekiah's take on this brush with death (v9-20)?
5. What does ch 39 show us about Hezekiah?
6. What prophecy does the Lord give Isaiah about the future plight of Israel (v5-7)?
7. Notice Hezekiah's response in v8. He takes God at his word even though his self centredness is a little repulsive. However, what kingdom is reigning over all the earth at that time in history?
8. Babylon won't actually fulfill the prophecy until 586BC. What does this tell us about God's reign over that of human kings or nations?
9. How might this truth give God's people hope?