

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

LIFE GROUPS STUDY GUIDE



Overview:

The book of Isaiah is traditionally considered one of the most significant books of the Old Testament, due to its varied style in poetic language, Messianic themes and consistent message. Scholars are divided on whether Isaiah is the product of one author, or multiple authors. The latter view would mean that the prophet Isaiah composed the first thirty-nine chapters, while the last sections were composed by disciples of Isaiah, carrying on his message. Regardless of this question of authorship, the book is a vision of what life under God's universal reign should look like, and will look like when the Messiah comes, suffers, rises and ultimately brings about the arrival of the New Heavens and New Earth. The prophet Isaiah speaks as God's voice-box, reminding Judah to return to their calling: showing everyone, everywhere, what life under God's reign looks like.

This is significant for us in the 21st century, because we have an even greater vision into the unfolding of God's reign than Isaiah ever did. We have seen and believed Christ as the One through whom God's reign is most clearly realised in the world. Our calling is the same as Judah's and Isaiah's: to alert everyone, everywhere to the universal reign of God through Christ.

WEEK 2: A HIGHWAY FOR OUR GOD

WARMING UP...

1. Isaiah 40 is all about God arriving to save his people from Exile in Babylon. Can you think of an experience where God has shown up in a desperate situation in your life or in the lives of others?
2. Reflect on the time when the Lord called you to himself. Maybe when you first began to follow Jesus or maybe you received a call to serve God in a specific way. Take some time to encourage each other with stories of when God called.

GOING DEEPER...

READ ISAIAH 40:1-9

3. The prophet has been chosen by God to be the herald of good news (this is the first time the word for *gospel* is used in the bible – v9). He is to declare "Here is your God" to a people who have given up hope of being saved. How do we take up the mantle of Isaiah and be the heralds of this great gospel announcement in our world right now?
4. Isaiah seeks to "prepare the way for the Lord". What does this tell us about what our job should be as faithful gospel-proclaimers? (I.e. we should make a way for God and then *get out of the way for Him to do his saving work*).

READ ISAIAH 40:10-19

5. Isaiah's description of God is that of a Sovereign being with immeasurable power and majesty. How does this description of God make you feel about your life and the state of our world right now?

6. God's sovereignty is contrasted heavily with the futility of idol worship. How could such a BIG view of God help us to see our idols for what they really are?

READ ISAIAH 40:21-31

7. God's people felt rejected and disregarded by God (v27). Yet Isaiah also presents this God, who is coming to save his people, as a Shepherd. How do you feel about God being both SOVERIGN and SHEPHERD?

BRINGING IT HOME...

Verses 28-31 again.

8. Is there any doubt in these verses about God's care for you and the lives of his most desperate people?
9. How could taking up the challenge of memorising Isaiah 40 help you in your understanding of God and your practice of reliance on Him?