



*Hello! This guide is provided to help facilitate a clear understanding of the Bible passage with a focus on applying God's truths to our lives individually and corporately. As such we encourage you to spend at least half your time pondering and discussing questions that are application focused. While the guide has been bulked up, we still need to prepare by praying through the passage, reviewing the guide on our own, and thinking about how our group might answer questions.*

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## Overview of Isaiah

### Background and Context

Isaiah ministered for more than 40 years, through the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. His office of prophecy began in the final days of Uzziah's reign, through the war between Judah and the united kingdoms of Israel and Syria, Judah's defeat and exiled by Assyria, and the Babylonian captivity.

### Isaiah Chapters 1-35

The first part of Isaiah speaks about God's judgement on Israel and Judah by Assyria. Isaiah railed against the leaders for their hypocrisy (1:10-15), greed (5:8), self-indulgence (5:11), and cynicism (5:19). The rich prospered while the poor was oppressed. The people confessed the Lord as their king with their lips, their hearts was as far from Him and their temple sacrifices were a mere sham.

### Isaiah chapters 40-66

The second part focuses on the remnants' return from Babylon and their ultimate deliverance in the remote future and the fall of pagan Babylon (46:1-47:15). More than a century before Cyrus the Persian came to power, Isaiah named him as God's anointed agent to restore the remnant to the land (44:24-45:13).

He challenged the people to renew their loyalty to the Lord after they return to the land (56:1-8) and to avoid repeating idolatry and evil acts (57:3-13).

### Christ in Isaiah

Beyond this future act of salvation Isaiah predicted the coming of a Servant and Savior much greater than Cyrus. This Servant would fulfill Israel's original destiny by bringing justice to the nations (42:1-4) and becoming a light to the Gentiles (49:1-7). The Servant would suffer willingly to take away the sins of His people (52:13-53:12) and thus establish a new covenant between the Lord and the new Israel (42:5-7).

## Big Idea of the Text

God responds to Israel's prayer from 63:15-64:12. He says that he was ready to save his people but they did not seek him, rather Israel had sinned against him and followed cults. Even so, he promises to preserve a remnant who will be saved from judgement and will become his servants again. God then declares the coming of the new heavens and a new earth, in which creation order will be restored and there we no longer be enmity within creation.

## Goal of this Study

To understand God's willingness to save his people and his gladness to restore us to Christ. This should lead us to rejoicing in our God and gladly serving him as we wait for his kingdom to come.

## Recommended Resources

- 4-10 sheets of paper, A3 is best but A4 will also work
- Coloured pencils or other drawing materials

*Read Isaiah 65:1-25*

### Judgment and Salvation

<sup>1</sup> I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me;  
I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me.

I said, "Here I am, here I am,"  
to a nation that was not called by my name.

<sup>2</sup> I spread out my hands all the day  
to a rebellious people,  
who walk in a way that is not good,  
following their own devices;

<sup>3</sup> a people who provoke me  
to my face continually,  
sacrificing in gardens  
and making offerings on bricks;

<sup>4</sup> who sit in tombs,  
and spend the night in secret places;  
who eat pig's flesh,  
and broth of tainted meat is in their vessels;

<sup>5</sup> who say, "Keep to yourself,  
do not come near me, for I am too holy for you."

These are a smoke in my nostrils,  
a fire that burns all the day.  
6 Behold, it is written before me:  
"I will not keep silent, but I will repay;  
I will indeed repay into their lap  
7 both your iniquities and your fathers' iniquities together,  
says the Lord;  
because they made offerings on the mountains  
and insulted me on the hills,  
I will measure into their lap  
payment for their former deeds."  
8 Thus says the Lord:  
"As the new wine is found in the cluster,  
and they say, 'Do not destroy it,  
for there is a blessing in it,'  
so I will do for my servants' sake,  
and not destroy them all.  
9 I will bring forth offspring from Jacob,  
and from Judah possessors of my mountains;  
my chosen shall possess it,  
and my servants shall dwell there.  
10 Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks,  
and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down,  
for my people who have sought me.  
11 But you who forsake the Lord,  
who forget my holy mountain,  
who set a table for Fortune  
and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny,  
12 I will destine you to the sword,  
and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter,  
because, when I called, you did not answer;  
when I spoke, you did not listen,  
but you did what was evil in my eyes  
and chose what I did not delight in."  
13 Therefore thus says the Lord God:  
"Behold, my servants shall eat,  
but you shall be hungry;  
behold, my servants shall drink,

but you shall be thirsty;  
behold, my servants shall rejoice,  
but you shall be put to shame;  
14 behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart,  
but you shall cry out for pain of heart  
and shall wail for breaking of spirit.  
15 You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse,  
and the Lord God will put you to death,  
but his servants he will call by another name,  
16 so that he who blesses himself in the land  
shall bless himself by the God of truth,  
and he who takes an oath in the land  
shall swear by the God of truth;  
because the former troubles are forgotten  
and are hidden from my eyes.

*New Heavens and a New Earth*

17 "For behold, I create new heavens  
and a new earth,  
and the former things shall not be remembered  
or come into mind.  
18 But be glad and rejoice forever  
in that which I create;  
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,  
and her people to be a gladness.  
19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem  
and be glad in my people;  
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping  
and the cry of distress.  
20 No more shall there be in it  
an infant who lives but a few days,  
or an old man who does not fill out his days,  
for the young man shall die a hundred years old,  
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.  
21 They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
22 They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat;

for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

<sup>23</sup> They shall not labor in vain  
or bear children for calamity,  
for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord,  
and their descendants with them.

<sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer;  
while they are yet speaking I will hear.

<sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;  
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,  
and dust shall be the serpent's food.  
They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain,"  
says the Lord.

Q1. In Isaiah 63:15-64:12, Israel prayed to God to have mercy on them in their sins. How does God answer that prayer?

Q1a. What are God's charges against Israel in v1-7? (1-7,v11-12)

Q1b. What does verse 8 teach you about God's willingness to save? (v8)

Q2a. There are two different responses to God in Isaiah 65:8-16. In small groups, draw pictures that illustrate the two different groups and the consequences of the decisions they make about God.<sup>1</sup>

Alternative Q2a: What are the the two different responses to God? What are the consequences of the decisions they make about God?<sup>2</sup>

Q2b. How are the servants of God contrasted to those who reject God? (v8-16)

Q3a. What characterises the new heavens and new earth?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Question taken and adapted from Andrew Reid and Karen Morris, *Isaiah: Two Cities*, Second ed, Interactive Bible Studies, (Australia: Matthias Media, 2009), 61.

<sup>2</sup> Question taken and adapted from Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Question taken and adapted from Howard, Peskett. *Isaiah: Trusting God in Troubled Times*, LifeGuide Bible Studies, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 77.

Q3b. Why do you think the hopes of v17-25 are expressed in such a down-to-earth fashion?<sup>4</sup>

Q3c. How is this description of the new creation different from our current reality?

Q4. This passage was written to Israel who were once God's people by ethnicity, but it says there will be both judgement and blessing for the Israelites. A remnant who are his servants who will rejoice and be glad (v13), while those who continue to reject God will be accursed (v20).

What is the basis by which people can be part of this restored future world?<sup>5</sup>

Q5. How should knowing the promises of the new heavens and new earth affect our lives today?

Q6. What is God's attitude to you as a member of his restored world?<sup>6</sup>

Q7. What is the basis for our joy as Christians? (v13-14, 18-19) What does a lack of joy suggest?<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Question taken from Ibid., 78.

<sup>5</sup> Question taken and adapted from Andrew Reid and Karen Morris, *Isaiah: Two Cities*, 63.

<sup>6</sup> Question taken and adapted from Reid and Morris, *Isaiah: Two Cities*, 62.

<sup>7</sup> Question taken and adapted from Reid and Morris, *Isaiah: Two Cities*, 64.