

WEEK #1

Isaiah 1:1 - An Introduction

**So do not fear,
for I am with you;**
do not be dismayed,
for I am your God.
I will ***strengthen*** you
and ***help*** you;
I will ***uphold*** you with
my righteous right hand.

-Isaiah 41:10



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Isaiah by Mail

A Bible Study Born in the Midst of Covid

Monday, June 8, 2020

When we first heard that our once-a-week Bible Study at Village Bible Church had to be cancelled due to the Covid crisis, our group of 30 women was disappointed to say the least! We had been meeting together for almost 15 years!

We decided to continue our study by mail, since a few of us didn't have e-mails or computers. That might seem strange in this high-tech age, but many of us are in our 80's and 90's. No woman left behind!



It actually became great fun thinking through how to put together this Isaiah Bible Study by Mail. Isaiah is 66 chapters long, and has been called the 5th Gospel because it has so much prophecy about Jesus! It also has some of the most amazing verses in it, verses many of us will recognize because we've heard them over and over in church.

Here's a few facts about our upcoming study:

- The first 35 chapters of Isaiah are filled with prophecies of the 1st Coming of Jesus. We've seen those fulfilled.
- Chapters 36-39 are a pointed and powerful true story of God's rescue of Jerusalem in the middle of impossible circumstances. (Some commentators think this is a foreshadowing of how the Lord will rescue Israel in the End Times.)
- Then chapters 40-66 are overflowing with prophecies of the 2nd Coming of Jesus. There will be a generation someday who will see these all fulfilled...maybe soon?
- I've divided up the 66 chapters into 25 lessons – combining several chapters where it seemed to make sense.
- Each week in the mail you will receive 3 things:
 1. A short letter from me.
 2. Questions for you to answer about this coming week's passage.

3. My Answers and Comments on those questions.

My suggestion: Throughout the coming week, answer the questions yourself first, then compare to what I came up with –I hope it will feel sort of like a conversation. 😊

This week, with this first letter, you will receive Questions and My Comments just on the very first verse of Isaiah. *Isaiah 1:1*. We will use that as an Introduction to the whole book.

The thing that excites me the most about studying Isaiah right now is that it seems to be so relevant to our present world situation.

What do I mean by that? Read Isaiah chapter 1, and you will see that Isaiah is



describing the Jewish nation in 700 BC - but it sounds exactly like America today!

For instance: *“Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; strangers devour your land in your presence; and it is desolate, overthrown by strangers.”*
Isaiah 1:7

Isaiah tells Israel how they got that way, and what they can do about it. He gives hope for the future, and solutions! Hope and solutions is what all of us would like to hear in 2020, right?

In all 25 lessons these next few months we will be focusing on a different key verse each week, right out of our passage for that week; a verse which we can memorize, or just repeat to ourselves often during the week. These verses are powerful reminders of our Almighty God. They will be like a light which will keep us looking to Jesus and asking for *“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”*.

Have fun with Isaiah!!!

- Kathleen

Isaiah 1:1 – So Do Not Fear

Questions for the Introduction to Isaiah

As we study this book together, picture in your mind a lone man standing on a wall which surrounds a city full of sleeping people. That lone man has a job – he’s a Watchman. It’s his job to sound the alarm when the enemy approaches.

Here’s your key verse for this week. Memorize it, think about it often, ask Jesus to sink it deep into your heart, let the truth you learn change you.

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
Isaiah 41:10

So, let’s start. In order to begin our study of Isaiah, we’re going to answer some questions this week about just one verse...the first verse in the book of Isaiah. Isaiah 1:1. Some of these questions you can answer from verse one – and some you might have to just try to guess from what you already know, or what you can Google.

Next week I will send you my answers to these questions, and I’ll also send a whole new set of questions for the next lesson.

Isaiah 1:1

- What is Israel?
- Who was Isaiah?
- What does it mean: “the vision of Isaiah”?
- What is a prophet? What did a prophet do?

- When was Isaiah a prophet?
- Who are all those kings?
- Who did he prophesy to?

APPLICATION:

1. Do I think something written over 2,500 years ago can teach me anything?
2. Am I desperately thirsty for the Word of God in my life?
3. Do I find it easy to look like a Christian and talk about God, but almost impossible to mention the name of Jesus?
4. Do my friends and I talk about our walks with the Lord and pray or read the Bible together?

Isaiah 1:1 – So Do Not Fear

Kathleen's Answers and Comments for the Introduction to Isaiah

What is Israel?

Today Israel is a nation. But over 4,000 years ago Israel started with a man who obeyed God (Abraham), who became a family, which grew into a people group, which became a nation, and then almost disappeared as a nation, and then became a nation again...And through all of that, Israel was chosen by God for a very special purpose...to tell the world about the One, True, God...and to give birth to the Savior of the World.

Who was Isaiah?

Isaiah was a prophet of God who lived and ministered after the time of King David, but before the exile to Babylon – about 700 BC.

Isaiah served the Lord God during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. He prophesied about events current to his day, but He also told the world amazing things about the Jewish Messiah who was coming to save the whole world – about His first coming, and also about His second coming!

So, who was Isaiah? He was a prophet of the One, True God, who, for the space of his adult lifetime, obeyed the LORD and spoke forth His truths as He commanded.

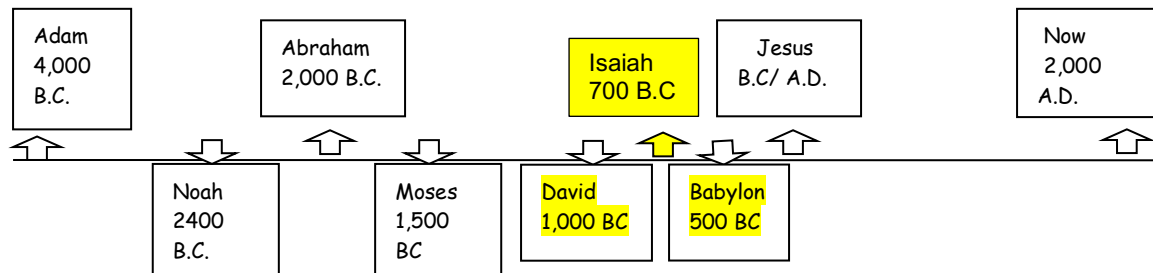
What does it mean: “the vision of Isaiah”?

Quite often the prophets described their own prophecies as “visions”, or “burdens”. Sometimes that meant they actually did see something in a vision from God. Sometimes it meant they simply heard from God just within themselves, and knew that it was something they were “seeing” or understanding which they had to share. But the vision of a prophet was never something he gave to himself. It was always directly from God and always true. *Numbers 12:6, 2nd Peter 1:20&21*

What is a prophet? What does a prophet do?

This isn't complicated. A prophet is simply a man or woman who is chosen by God to take His Word to people. Most of the prophets suffered greatly as they did their job for God – because most of the people they were speaking to did not want to hear what God had to say.

When was Isaiah a prophet?



From about 750bc to 700bc. For about 50 years

Who are all those kings?

There were many kings of Israel, starting with King Saul, who was not a good king. After King Saul was King David, who was a great and wonderful king. After that, there were kings after kings after kings. Some of them loved the Lord and wanted to follow His ways, but many of them were evil kings who led the Jewish people into idol worship and worse.

Who did he prophesy to?

His ministry was to all of Israel, both the Northern and Southern kingdoms, but most of the time he was preaching in Judah – the Southern kingdom.

Isaiah was a Watchman on the Wall.

Isaiah was a prophet who was comfortable in the tents of shepherds, and also able to walk into the halls of the glorious temple of Israel, speaking the language of the politicians and priests and governors of Israel.

It is possible that Isaiah lived the last years of his life in relative peace, but tradition tells us that his death was violent – probably during the reign of King Manasseh (a really bad king – son of Hezekiah). Although the Bible itself does not record Isaiah's death, Jewish tradition holds that he was sawn in two. (see **Hebrews 11:37**, this may be referring to Isaiah.)

We are not going to get through this Bible study without realizing that there is a price to pay for telling the truth. When you see an enemy approaching, you want comfort and peace from God, but it also takes courage to sound the alarm. We're going to see that Jesus can give us comfort and peace, and amazing courage if we ask Him for it.

*Did you memorize this verse this week? Isaiah 41:10
It will give you courage!*