

# WEEK 42.

## 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Psalms, Isaiah (Isaiah Prophecies Hope)

Sunday ([2 Kings 18.9–19](#), [2 Chronicles 32](#))

### 2 Kings

18:9 In the fourth year of King Hezekiah's reign (it was the seventh year of the reign of Israel's King Hoshea, son of Elah), King Shalmaneser of Assyria marched up against Samaria and besieged it. 18:10 After three years he captured it (in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign); in the ninth year of King Hoshea's reign over Israel Samaria was captured. 18:11 The king of Assyria deported the people of Israel to Assyria. He settled them in Halah, along the Habor (the river of Gozan), and in the cities of the Medes. 18:12 This happened because they did not obey the Lord their God and broke his agreement with them. They did not pay attention to and obey all that Moses, the Lord's servant, had commanded.

### Sennacherib Invades Judah

18:13 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, King Sennacherib of Assyria marched up against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. 18:14 King Hezekiah of Judah sent this message to the king of Assyria, who was at Lachish, "I have violated our treaty. If you leave, I will do whatever you demand." So the king of Assyria demanded that King Hezekiah of Judah pay three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 18:15 Hezekiah gave him all the silver in the Lord's temple and in the treasuries of the royal palace. 18:16 At that time King Hezekiah of Judah stripped the metal overlays from the doors of the Lord's temple and from the posts which he had plated and gave them to the king of Assyria.

18:17 The king of Assyria sent his commanding general, the chief eunuch, and the chief adviser from Lachish to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem, along with a large army. They went up and arrived at Jerusalem. They went and stood at the conduit of the upper pool which is located on the road to the field where they wash and dry cloth. 18:18 They summoned the king, so Eliakim son of Hilkiah, the palace supervisor, accompanied by Shebna the scribe and Joah son of Asaph, the secretary, went out to meet them.

18:19 The chief adviser said to them, "Tell Hezekiah: 'This is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: 'What is your source of confidence? 18:20 Your claim to have a strategy and military strength is just empty talk. In whom are you trusting that you would dare to rebel against me? 18:21 Now look, you must be trusting in Egypt, that splintered reed staff. If a man leans for support on it, it punctures his hand and wounds him. That is what Pharaoh king of Egypt does to all who trust in him. 18:22 Perhaps you will tell

me, 'We are trusting in the Lord our God.' But Hezekiah is the one who eliminated his high places and altars and then told the people of Judah and Jerusalem, 'You must worship at this altar in Jerusalem.' 18:23 Now make a deal with my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses, provided you can find enough riders for them. 18:24 Certainly you will not refuse one of my master's minor officials and trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen. 18:25 Furthermore it was by the command of the Lord that I marched up against this place to destroy it. The Lord told me, 'March up against this land and destroy it.'""

18:26 Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to the chief adviser, "Speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it. Don't speak with us in the Judahite dialect in the hearing of the people who are on the wall." 18:27 But the chief adviser said to them, "My master did not send me to speak these words only to your master and to you. His message is also for the men who sit on the wall, for they will eat their own excrement and drink their own urine along with you."

18:28 The chief adviser then stood there and called out loudly in the Judahite dialect, "Listen to the message of the great king, the king of Assyria. 18:29 This is what the king says: 'Don't let Hezekiah mislead you, for he is not able to rescue you from my hand! 18:30 Don't let Hezekiah talk you into trusting in the Lord when he says, "The Lord will certainly rescue us; this city will not be handed over to the king of Assyria." 18:31 Don't listen to Hezekiah!' For this is what the king of Assyria says, 'Send me a token of your submission and surrender to me. Then each of you may eat from his own vine and fig tree and drink water from his own cistern, 18:32 until I come and take you to a land just like your own – a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. Then you will live and not die. Don't listen to Hezekiah, for he is misleading you when he says, "The Lord will rescue us." 18:33 Have any of the gods of the nations actually rescued his land from the power of the king of Assyria? 18:34 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Indeed, did any gods rescue Samaria from my power? 18:35 Who among all the gods of the lands has rescued their lands from my power? So how can the Lord rescue Jerusalem from my power?'" 18:36 The people were silent and did not respond, for the king had ordered, "Don't respond to him."

18:37 Eliakim son of Hilkiah, the palace supervisor, accompanied by Shebna the scribe and Joah son of Asaph, the secretary, went to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and reported to him what the chief adviser had said.

## 2 Chronicles

### Sennacherib Invades Judah

32:1 After these faithful deeds were accomplished, King Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Judah. He besieged the fortified cities, intending to seize them. 32:2 When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had invaded and intended to attack Jerusalem, 32:3 he consulted with his advisers and military officers about stopping up the springs outside the city, and they supported him. 32:4 A large number of people gathered

together and stopped up all the springs and the stream that flowed through the district. They reasoned, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find plenty of water?" 32:5 Hezekiah energetically rebuilt every broken wall. He erected towers and an outer wall, and fortified the terrace of the City of David. He made many weapons and shields.

32:6 He appointed military officers over the army and assembled them in the square at the city gate. He encouraged them, saying, 32:7 "Be strong and brave! Don't be afraid and don't panic because of the king of Assyria and this huge army that is with him! We have with us one who is stronger than those who are with him. 32:8 He has with him mere human strength, but the Lord our God is with us to help us and fight our battles!" The army was encouraged by the words of King Hezekiah of Judah.

32:9 Afterward King Sennacherib of Assyria, while attacking Lachish with all his military might, sent his messengers to Jerusalem. The message was for King Hezekiah of Judah and all the people of Judah who were in Jerusalem. It read: 32:10 "This is what King Sennacherib of Assyria says: 'Why are you so confident that you remain in Jerusalem while it is under siege? 32:11 Hezekiah says, "The Lord our God will rescue us from the power of the king of Assyria." But he is misleading you and you will die of hunger and thirst! 32:12 Hezekiah is the one who eliminated the Lord's high places and altars and then told Judah and Jerusalem, "At one altar you must worship and offer sacrifices." 32:13 Are you not aware of what I and my predecessors have done to all the nations of the surrounding lands? Have the gods of the surrounding lands actually been able to rescue their lands from my power? 32:14 Who among all the gods of these nations whom my predecessors annihilated was able to rescue his people from my power? 32:15 Now don't let Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you like this. Don't believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to rescue his people from my power or the power of my predecessors. So how can your gods rescue you from my power?"

32:16 Sennacherib's servants further insulted the Lord God and his servant Hezekiah. 32:17 He wrote letters mocking the Lord God of Israel and insulting him with these words: "The gods of the surrounding nations could not rescue their people from my power. Neither can Hezekiah's god rescue his people from my power." 32:18 They called out loudly in the Judahite dialect to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, trying to scare and terrify them so they could seize the city. 32:19 They talked about the God of Jerusalem as if he were one of the man-made gods of the nations of the earth.

32:20 King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz prayed about this and cried out to heaven. 32:21 The Lord sent a messenger and he wiped out all the soldiers, princes, and officers in the army of the king of Assyria. So Sennacherib returned home humiliated. When he entered the temple of his god, some of his own sons struck him down with the sword. 32:22 The Lord delivered Hezekiah and the residents of Jerusalem from the power of King Sennacherib of Assyria and from all the other nations. He made them secure on every side. 32:23 Many were bringing presents to the Lord in Jerusalem and precious gifts to King Hezekiah of Judah. From that time on he was respected by all the nations.

## Hezekiah's Shortcomings and Accomplishments

32:24 In those days Hezekiah was stricken with a terminal illness. He prayed to the Lord, who answered him and gave him a sign confirming that he would be healed. 32:25 But Hezekiah was ungrateful; he had a proud attitude, provoking God to be angry at him, as well as Judah and Jerusalem. 32:26 But then Hezekiah and the residents of Jerusalem humbled themselves and abandoned their pride, and the Lord was not angry with them for the rest of Hezekiah's reign.

32:27 Hezekiah was very wealthy and greatly respected. He made storehouses for his silver, gold, precious stones, spices, and all his other valuable possessions. 32:28 He made storerooms for the harvest of grain, wine, and olive oil, and stalls for all his various kinds of livestock and his flocks. 32:29 He built royal cities and owned a large number of sheep and cattle, for God gave him a huge amount of possessions.

32:30 Hezekiah dammed up the source of the waters of the Upper Gihon and directed them down to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah succeeded in all that he did. 32:31 So when the envoys arrived from the Babylonian officials to visit him and inquire about the sign that occurred in the land, God left him alone to test him, in order to know his true motives.

32:32 The rest of the events of Hezekiah's reign, including his faithful deeds, are recorded in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz, included in the Scroll of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 32:33 Hezekiah passed away and was buried on the ascent of the tombs of the descendants of David. All the people of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem buried him with great honor. His son Manasseh replaced him as king.

19:1 When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and went to the Lord's temple. 19:2 He sent Eliakim the palace supervisor, Shebna the scribe, and the leading priests, clothed in sackcloth, with this message to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz: 19:3 "This is what Hezekiah says: 'This is a day of distress, insults, and humiliation, as when a baby is ready to leave the birth canal, but the mother lacks the strength to push it through. 19:4 Perhaps the Lord your God will hear all these things the chief adviser has spoken on behalf of his master, the king of Assyria, who sent him to taunt the living God. When the Lord your God hears, perhaps he will punish him for the things he has said. So pray for this remnant that remains.'"

19:5 When King Hezekiah's servants came to Isaiah, 19:6 Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master this: 'This is what the Lord says: 'Don't be afraid because of the things you have heard – these insults the king of Assyria's servants have hurled against me. 19:7 Look, I will take control of his mind; he will receive a report and return to his own land. I will cut him down with a sword in his own land.'"

19:8 When the chief adviser heard the king of Assyria had departed from Lachish, he left and went to Libnah, where the king was campaigning. 19:9 The king heard that King Tirhakah of Ethiopia was

marching out to fight him. He again sent messengers to Hezekiah, ordering them: 19:10 “Tell King Hezekiah of Judah this: ‘Don’t let your God in whom you trust mislead you when he says, “Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.” 19:11 Certainly you have heard how the kings of Assyria have annihilated all lands. Do you really think you will be rescued? 19:12 Were the nations whom my ancestors destroyed – the nations of Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden in Telassar – rescued by their gods? 19:13 Where are the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of Lair, Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah?”

19:14 Hezekiah took the letter from the messengers and read it. Then Hezekiah went up to the Lord’s temple and spread it out before the Lord. 19:15 Hezekiah prayed before the Lord: “Lord God of Israel, who is enthroned on the cherubs! You alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You made the sky and the earth. 19:16 Pay attention, Lord, and hear! Open your eyes, Lord, and observe! Listen to the message Sennacherib sent and how he taunts the living God! 19:17 It is true, Lord, that the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands. 19:18 They have burned the gods of the nations, for they are not really gods, but only the product of human hands manufactured from wood and stone. That is why the Assyrians could destroy them. 19:19 Now, O Lord our God, rescue us from his power, so that all the kingdoms of the earth will know that you, Lord, are the only God.”

19:20 Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah: “This is what the Lord God of Israel says: ‘I have heard your prayer concerning King Sennacherib of Assyria. 19:21 This is what the Lord says about him:

“The virgin daughter Zion

despises you, she makes fun of you;

Daughter Jerusalem

shakes her head after you.

19:22 Whom have you taunted and hurled insults at?

At whom have you shouted,

and looked so arrogantly?

At the Holy One of Israel!

19:23 Through your messengers you taunted the sovereign master,

‘With my many chariots

I climbed up the high mountains,

the slopes of Lebanon.

I cut down its tall cedars,

and its best evergreens.

I invaded its most remote regions,

its thickest woods.

19:24 I dug wells and drank

water in foreign lands.

With the soles of my feet I dried up

all the rivers of Egypt.'

19:25 Certainly you must have heard!

Long ago I worked it out,

In ancient times I planned it;

and now I am bringing it to pass.

The plan is this:

Fortified cities will crash

into heaps of ruins.

19:26 Their residents are powerless,

they are terrified and ashamed.

They are as short-lived as plants in the field,

or green vegetation.

They are as short-lived as grass on the rooftops

when it is scorched by the east wind.

19:27 I know where you live,

and everything you do.

19:28 Because you rage against me,

and the uproar you create has reached my ears;

I will put my hook in your nose,

and my bridle between your lips,

and I will lead you back the way

you came.”

19:29 This will be your confirmation that I have spoken the truth: This year you will eat what grows wild, and next year what grows on its own from that. But in the third year you will plant seed and harvest crops; you will plant vines and consume their produce. 19:30 Those who remain in Judah will take root in the ground and bear fruit.

19:31 For a remnant will leave Jerusalem;

survivors will come out of Mount Zion.

The intense devotion of the sovereign Lord to his people will accomplish this.

19:32 So this is what the Lord says about the king of Assyria:

“He will not enter this city,

nor will he shoot an arrow here.

He will not attack it with his shield-carrying warriors,

nor will he build siege works against it.

19:33 He will go back the way he came.

He will not enter this city,” says the Lord.

19:34 I will shield this city and rescue it for the sake of my reputation and because of my promise to David my servant.”

19:35 That very night the Lord's messenger went out and killed 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp. When they got up early the next morning, there were all the corpses. 19:36 So King Sennacherib of Assyria broke camp and went on his way. He went home and stayed in Nineveh. 19:37 One day, as he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword. They escaped to the land of Ararat; his son Esarhaddon replaced him as king.

## PRAYER

Lord, it was always obvious what every king before him should have done, but only Hezekiah was obedient and teachable enough to do the right thing before You. May I look to Hezekiah as my role model – to do the right thing rather than the convenient or the ordinary. It is a dangerous thing indeed for a mere human king or his associates to mock the living an all-powerful God, Your patience with man is not without boundaries. May I be careful with my own words, and advise others to do so as well, because You deserve our respect.

## SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Hezekiah was king of Judah for twenty-nine years. He was the only king, before or after, who fully-obeyed the Lord God. He not only led the people to obey by doing so himself, he removed the high places, he removed the Asherah pole, and he removed the bronze serpent which Moses had made and they had been misusing as a tool of false worship.

Israel had been decimated by the king of Assyria because they had refused to be faithful to the Lord God. The king of Assyria then threatened Jerusalem and the rest of what was left of Judah and Hezekiah attempted to placate him with silver and gold.

The Assyrians arrived with a huge army and challenged the people to rebel against Hezekiah, to recognize that they were helpless before them, and to surrender rather than resist and die. The priests and leaders whom Hezekiah had sent out to meet the Chief Advisor to the king of the Assyrians heard him insult the Lord God and they tore their clothes and reported back to Hezekiah. The people heard what he said but did not respond as Hezekiah has instructed them not to respond.

Hezekiah asked the prophet Isaiah to appeal to the Lord God for help and he replied that the Lord God intended to deal with the king of Assyria.

News came to the chief adviser to the king of Assyria that they were under attack from the king of Ethiopia and as he departed to support the king's forces he sent additional insults and threats and ultimatums to Hezekiah.

Hezekiah brought his messages to the altar and asked the Lord God to defend them. Isaiah replied with a detailed message from the Lord which reminded Hezekiah of what He had done before and that He would now deal harshly with the Assyrians.



The angel of the Lord struck down 185,000 of King Sennacherib of Assyria's troops as they slept and shortly after he returned home two of his sons murdered him as he offered sacrifices to a false god, then fled, and a third son took his place as king.

Hezekiah cleansed the temple and offered great national worship. He removed many of the altars to false gods and celebrated Passover – but later than scheduled as not enough Levites were ceremonially clean to lead. He also asked, and received the Lord God's forgiveness for many who chose to celebrate, even though they were ceremonially unclean – God mercifully allow it as their hearts were inclined toward Him.

## **INTERACT WITH THE TEXT**

### **CONSIDER**

Hezekiah was the greatest and most-true king of God's children because he fully obeyed. Hezekiah was wise, he not only did not respond to the insults he instructed the people to not do so either.

### **DISCUSS**

Hezekiah had offered tribute in order to keep the Assyrians from invading and trying to destroy Judah, deporting and enslaving the people, as they had Israel. Why would the Assyrians challenge the God of Hezekiah and demand their complete surrender when they could have received service and tribute from Judah as a subject-state?

### **REFLECT**

Not only had the people engaged in the idolatry of false gods, they had turned symbols of the One True God from Moses (the bronze serpent, originally a tool of healing) into a tool of their false worship. Hezekiah recognized the threat but seemed equally upset about the insult to the Lord God as he was about the impending battle.

### **SHARE**

When have you experienced or observed things that were originally of God misused in empty ritual and/or superstitious ways? When have you felt threatened and appealed to the Lord God for protection?

## **FAITH IN ACTION**

### **PRAY**

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you something in your faith tradition that has become more of an empty ritual and/or a superstitious ritual rather than a genuine expression of worship and to reveal to you a time in your life where you responded to a fearful situation by trusting Him and He responded to your faith with an effective intervention.

## ACT

Today I will prayerfully examine my exercise of faith in praise and worship for things that have become less-genuine. It may be a prayer that has become more of a thoughtless chant than a genuine communication with the Lord God, it may be a worship style that appeals to my flesh more than lifting my spirit (extremes of the cultural comfort of ancient hymns, the exuberance of gospel songs, or the emotional energy of modern praise), it may be works that get in the way of worship, it may be an idolatry of religious celebrity or of a man-made denomination, it may be a cycle of confess – sin – confess - sin where repentance (turning away) never occurs, or some other place there the enemy has tricked me into an empty and false and powerless “religion”. I will share with a fellow believer, asking them for prayers in-agreement, and I will partner with the Holy Spirit to get right before the Lord God. I will share the story of God's mercy and protection with a fellow believer as an encouragement to them. We will share praise and worship together.

Be Specific \_\_\_\_\_

**Monday ([Psalms 135](#), [46](#), [2 Kings 20](#), [2 Kings 21](#), [2 Chronicles 33](#), [Psalms 80](#))**  
[Psalm 135](#)

135:1 Praise the Lord!

Praise the name of the Lord!

Offer praise, you servants of the Lord,

135:2 who serve in the Lord's temple, in the courts of the temple of our God.

135:3 Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good!

Sing praises to his name, for it is pleasant!

135:4 Indeed, the Lord has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel to be his special possession.

135:5 Yes, I know the Lord is great, and our Lord is superior to all gods.

135:6 He does whatever he pleases in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all the ocean depths.

135:7 He causes the clouds to arise from the end of the earth, makes lightning bolts accompany the rain, and brings the wind out of his storehouses.

135:8 He struck down the firstborn of Egypt, including both men and animals.

135:9 He performed awesome deeds and acts of judgment in your midst, O Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants.

135:10 He defeated many nations, and killed mighty kings –

135:11 Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan.

135:12 He gave their land as an inheritance, as an inheritance to Israel his people.

135:13 O Lord, your name endures, your reputation, O Lord, lasts.

135:14 For the Lord vindicates his people, and has compassion on his servants.

135:15 The nations' idols are made of silver and gold, they are man-made.

135:16 They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see,

135:17 and ears, but cannot hear. Indeed, they cannot breathe.

135:18 Those who make them will end up like them, as will everyone who trusts in them.

135:19 O family of Israel, praise the Lord!

O family of Aaron, praise the Lord!

135:20 O family of Levi, praise the Lord!

You loyal followers of the Lord, praise the Lord!

135:21 The Lord deserves praise in Zion – he who dwells in Jerusalem.

Praise the Lord!

### [Psalm 46](#)

46:1 For the music director; by the Korahites; according to the *alamoth* style; a song.  
God is our strong refuge; he is truly our helper in times of trouble.

46:2 For this reason we do not fear when the earth shakes, and the mountains tumble into the depths of the sea,

46:3 when its waves crash and foam, and the mountains shake before the surging sea. (Selah)

46:4 The river's channels bring joy to the city of God, the special, holy dwelling place of the sovereign One.

46:5 God lives within it, it cannot be moved. God rescues it at the break of dawn.

46:6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms are overthrown. God gives a shout, the earth dissolves.

46:7 The Lord who commands armies is on our side!

The God of Jacob is our protector! (Selah)

46:8 Come! Witness the exploits of the Lord, who brings devastation to the earth!

46:9 He brings an end to wars throughout the earth; he shatters the bow and breaks the spear; he burns the shields with fire.

46:10 He says, "Stop your striving and recognize that I am God!

I will be exalted over the nations! I will be exalted over the earth!"

46:11 The Lord who commands armies is on our side!

The God of Jacob is our protector! (Selah)

## 2 Kings

### Hezekiah is Healed

20:1 In those days Hezekiah was stricken with a terminal illness. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz visited him and told him, "This is what the Lord says, 'Give your household instructions, for you are about to die; you will not get well.'" 20:2 He turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, 20:3 "Please, Lord. Remember how I have served you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion, and how I have carried out your will." Then Hezekiah wept bitterly.

20:4 Isaiah was still in the middle courtyard when the Lord told him, 20:5 "Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people: 'This is what the Lord God of your ancestor David says: "I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Look, I will heal you. The day after tomorrow you will go up to the Lord's temple.

20:6 I will add fifteen years to your life and rescue you and this city from the king of Assyria. I will shield this city for the sake of my reputation and because of my promise to David my servant.'" 20:7 Isaiah ordered, "Get a fig cake." So they did as he ordered and placed it on the ulcerated sore, and he recovered.

20:8 Hezekiah had said to Isaiah, "What is the confirming sign that the Lord will heal me and that I will go up to the Lord's temple the day after tomorrow?" 20:9 Isaiah replied, "This is your sign from the Lord confirming that the Lord will do what he has said. Do you want the shadow to move ahead ten steps or to go back ten steps?" 20:10 Hezekiah answered, "It is easy for the shadow to lengthen ten steps, but not for it to go back ten steps." 20:11 Isaiah the prophet called out to the Lord, and the Lord made the shadow go back ten steps on the stairs of Ahaz.

### Messengers from Babylon Visit Hezekiah

20:12 At that time Merodach-Baladan son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah, for he had heard that Hezekiah was ill. 20:13 Hezekiah welcomed them and showed them his whole storehouse, with its silver, gold, spices, and high quality olive oil, as well as his armory and everything in his treasuries. Hezekiah showed them everything in his palace and in his whole kingdom. 20:14 Isaiah the prophet visited King Hezekiah and asked him, "What did these men say? Where do they come from?" Hezekiah replied, "They come from the distant land of Babylon." 20:15 Isaiah asked, "What have they seen in your palace?" Hezekiah replied, "They have seen everything in my palace. I showed them everything in my treasuries." 20:16 Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Listen to the word of the Lord, 20:17 'Look, a time is coming when everything in your palace and the things your ancestors have accumulated to this day will be carried away to Babylon; nothing will be left,' says the Lord. 20:18 'Some of your very own descendants whom you father will be taken away and will be made eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'" 20:19 Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The Lord's word which you have announced is appropriate." Then he added, "At least there will be peace and stability during my lifetime."

20:20 The rest of the events of Hezekiah's reign and all his accomplishments, including how he built a pool and conduit to bring water into the city, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Judah. 20:21 Hezekiah passed away and his son Manasseh replaced him as king.

## 2 Kings

### Manasseh's Reign over Judah

21:1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned for fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother was Hephzibah. 21:2 He did evil in the sight of the Lord and committed the same horrible sins practiced by the nations whom the Lord drove out from before the Israelites. 21:3 He rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he set up altars for Baal and made an Asherah pole just like King Ahab of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the stars in the sky and worshiped them. 21:4 He built altars in the Lord's temple, about which the Lord had said, "Jerusalem will be my home." 21:5 In the two courtyards of the Lord's temple he built altars for all the stars in the sky. 21:6 He passed his son through the fire and practiced divination and omen reading. He set up a ritual pit to conjure up underworld spirits, and appointed magicians to supervise it. He did a great amount of evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger. 21:7 He put an idol of Asherah he had made in the temple,

about which the Lord had said to David and to his son Solomon, “This temple in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will be my permanent home. 21:8 I will not make Israel again leave the land I gave to their ancestors, provided that they carefully obey all I commanded them, the whole law my servant Moses ordered them to obey.” 21:9 But they did not obey, and Manasseh misled them so that they sinned more than the nations whom the Lord had destroyed from before the Israelites.

21:10 So the Lord announced through his servants the prophets: 21:11 “King Manasseh of Judah has committed horrible sins. He has sinned more than the Amorites before him and has encouraged Judah to sin by worshiping his disgusting idols. 21:12 So this is what the Lord God of Israel says, ‘I am about to bring disaster on Jerusalem and Judah. The news will reverberate in the ears of those who hear about it. 21:13 I will destroy Jerusalem the same way I did Samaria and the dynasty of Ahab. I will wipe Jerusalem clean, just as one wipes a plate on both sides. 21:14 I will abandon this last remaining tribe among my people and hand them over to their enemies; they will be plundered and robbed by all their enemies, 21:15 because they have done evil in my sight and have angered me from the time their ancestors left Egypt right up to this very day!’”

21:16 Furthermore Manasseh killed so many innocent people, he stained Jerusalem with their blood from end to end, in addition to encouraging Judah to sin by doing evil in the sight of the Lord.

21:17 The rest of the events of Manasseh’s reign and all his accomplishments, as well as the sinful acts he committed, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Judah. 21:18 Manasseh passed away and was buried in his palace garden, the garden of Uzzah, and his son Amon replaced him as king.

### **Amon’s Reign over Judah**

21:19 Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned for two years in Jerusalem. His mother was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz, from Jotbah. 21:20 He did evil in the sight of the Lord, just like his father Manasseh had done. 21:21 He followed in the footsteps of his father and worshiped and bowed down to the disgusting idols which his father had worshiped. 21:22 He abandoned the Lord God of his ancestors and did not follow the Lord’s instructions. 21:23 Amon’s servants conspired against him and killed the king in his palace. 21:24 The people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon, and they made his son Josiah king in his place.

21:25 The rest of Amon’s accomplishments are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Judah. 21:26 He was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzzah, and his son Josiah replaced him as king.

## **2 Chronicles**

### **Manasseh’s Reign**

33:1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned for fifty-five years in Jerusalem. 33:2 He did evil in the sight of the Lord and committed the same horrible sins practiced by the nations whom the Lord drove out ahead of the Israelites. 33:3 He rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he set up altars for the Baals and made Asherah poles. He bowed down to all the stars in the sky and worshiped them. 33:4 He built altars in the Lord's temple, about which the Lord had said, "Jerusalem will be my permanent home." 33:5 In the two courtyards of the Lord's temple he built altars for all the stars in the sky. 33:6 He passed his sons through the fire in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom and practiced divination, omen reading, and sorcery. He set up a ritual pit to conjure up underworld spirits and appointed magicians to supervise it. He did a great amount of evil in the sight of the Lord and angered him. 33:7 He put an idolatrous image he had made in God's temple, about which God had said to David and to his son Solomon, "This temple in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will be my permanent home. 33:8 I will not make Israel again leave the land I gave to their ancestors, provided that they carefully obey all I commanded them, the whole law, the rules and regulations given to Moses." 33:9 But Manasseh misled the people of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem so that they sinned more than the nations whom the Lord had destroyed ahead of the Israelites.

33:10 The Lord confronted Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. 33:11 So the Lord brought against them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria. They seized Manasseh, put hooks in his nose, bound him with bronze chains, and carried him away to Babylon. 33:12 In his pain Manasseh asked the Lord his God for mercy and truly humbled himself before the God of his ancestors. 33:13 When he prayed to the Lord, the Lord responded to him and answered favorably his cry for mercy. The Lord brought him back to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh realized that the Lord is the true God.

33:14 After this Manasseh built up the outer wall of the City of David on the west side of the Gihon in the valley to the entrance of the Fish Gate and all around the terrace; he made it much higher. He placed army officers in all the fortified cities in Judah.

33:15 He removed the foreign gods and images from the Lord's temple and all the altars he had built on the hill of the Lord's temple and in Jerusalem; he threw them outside the city. 33:16 He erected the altar of the Lord and offered on it peace offerings and thank offerings. He told the people of Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel. 33:17 The people continued to offer sacrifices at the high places, but only to the Lord their God.

33:18 The rest of the events of Manasseh's reign, including his prayer to his God and the words the prophets spoke to him in the name of the Lord God of Israel, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel. 33:19 The Annals of the Prophets include his prayer, give an account of how the Lord responded to it, record all his sins and unfaithful acts, and identify the sites where he built high places and erected Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself. 33:20 Manasseh passed away and was buried in his palace. His son Amon replaced him as king.

## Amon's Reign

33:21 Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned for two years in Jerusalem.  
33:22 He did evil in the sight of the Lord, just like his father Manasseh had done. He offered sacrifices to all the idols his father Manasseh had made, and worshiped them. 33:23 He did not humble himself before the Lord as his father Manasseh had done. Amon was guilty of great sin. 33:24 His servants conspired against him and killed him in his palace. 33:25 The people of the land executed all who had conspired against King Amon, and they made his son Josiah king in his place.

## [Psalms 80](#)

80:1 For the music director; according to the *shushan-eduth* style; a psalm of Asaph.  
O shepherd of Israel, pay attention, you who lead Joseph like a flock of sheep!

You who sit enthroned above the winged angels, reveal your splendor!

80:2 In the sight of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh reveal your power!

Come and deliver us!

80:3 O God, restore us!

Smile on us! Then we will be delivered!

80:4 O Lord God, invincible warrior!

How long will you remain angry at your people while they pray to you?

80:5 You have given them tears as food; you have made them drink tears by the measure.

80:6 You have made our neighbors dislike us, and our enemies insult us.

80:7 O God, invincible warrior, restore us!

Smile on us! Then we will be delivered!

80:8 You uprooted a vine from Egypt; you drove out nations and transplanted it.

80:9 You cleared the ground for it; it took root, and filled the land.

80:10 The mountains were covered by its shadow, the highest cedars by its branches.

80:11 Its branches reached the Mediterranean Sea, and its shoots the Euphrates River.



80:12 Why did you break down its walls, so that all who pass by pluck its fruit?

80:13 The wild boars of the forest ruin it; the insects of the field feed on it.

80:14 O God, invincible warrior, come back!

Look down from heaven and take notice!

Take care of this vine,

80:15 the root your right hand planted, the shoot you made to grow!

80:16 It is burned and cut down. They die because you are displeased with them.

80:17 May you give support to the one you have chosen, to the one whom you raised up for yourself!

80:18 Then we will not turn away from you.

Revive us and we will pray to you!

80:19 O Lord God, invincible warrior, restore us!

Smile on us! Then we will be delivered!

## PRAYER

Lord, sometimes when we cling to the things of this world You allow us to have them, but the consequences are often bad. May I cling only to the things which You give, and invest every day I have in this world to serve You.

## SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

[Psalm 135](#) was praise with wisdom “The nations’ idols are made of silver and gold, they are man-made. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see, and ears, but cannot hear. Indeed, they cannot breathe. Those who make them will end up like them, as will everyone who trusts in them.” The author was not identified in the text.

The forty-sixth Psalm is a wisdom-song which reviewed the protection and provision of the Lord God.

Hezekiah was dying from a disease and cried out to the Lord for healing because he had been a very faithful king.

Isaiah informed him that the Lord would give him fifteen more years and had him apply a fig cake to his ulcerated sore as the means of healing.

Visitors came from Babylon with gifts as they had heard he was ill. He showed them all of the riches of his kingdom.

Isaiah confronted him, asking who visited and what he showed them, when informed what the king had arrogantly and foolishly done, he prophesied that all he had shown the foreigners would be taken away by them along with his descendants.

Hezekiah agreed that the prophesy was a righteous consequence of his actions but expressed thanks that the Lord would not cause him to live to see it implemented.

Manasseh ruled Judah for fifty-five years and reversed all of the good that his father Hezekiah had done. He restored all of the prior places and rituals and symbols of the false gods and added more.

The Lord God declared “I will wipe Jerusalem clean ... I will abandon this last remaining tribe among my people ... they ... have angered me from the time their ancestors left Egypt right up to this very day!”

Manasseh died and his son Amnon followed in his evil ways for two years until he was murdered. His killers were executed and his son Josiah became king.

Asaph’s Psalm, numbered eighty, petitioned the Lord God as the “invincible warrior”.

## INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

### CONSIDER

While Hezekiah had been the most faithful king in the history of the Israelites, unlike the prophets, he valued his earthly existence too greatly. There is an implicit principle, beyond the power of the king's bad choices to bring harm upon the nation, that the people are culpable for that (because they demanded a human king “like the nations around them”), and because they did not refuse to participate in his urging of them to do evil before the Lord God.

### DISCUSS

Why would Hezekiah have been so foolish as to show all of the riches of the kingdom to strangers from another nation? Why would Manasseh behave so irrationally and venally given the blessings of God for his father's early faithfulness?

### REFLECT

The foolishness of Hezekiah, flowing from his obsession with the false value of worldly things, resulted in tragedy for his people. Had Hezekiah set his son and grandson up to fail because of his foolishness? They were, of course, responsible for their own choices – the Lord God had shown a willingness to withdraw plans to punish when presented with a faithful and repentant person.

## SHARE

When have you observed a Christian clinging to life as if they didn't really trust the Lord God for their eternity?

## FAITH IN ACTION

### PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a place where you may be boasting about, or otherwise sharing, information about yourself or others, or that which involves others, which you should no and/or a place where choices you are making may be creating problems for others.

### ACT

Today I will humbly accept the chastising of the Holy Spirit and intentionally refrain from boasting or inappropriately disclosing personal and/or private information to those who have no legitimate need to know. If I have a need to share I will do so with those whom the Lord God has brought into my intimate circle of Christian friends. If I lack such friends I will pray and seek to develop them – because a Christian is not expected to walk through this world alone. I will prayerfully listen closely for the prompting of the Holy Spirit. When I discover how I may be a poor witness and/or somehow creating an environment of compromise I will confess, accept forgiveness, repent, and be restored by the Lord God. It may be a poor role model to a child, friend, or other associate, or it may be choices I am making to tolerate something I should not which allows evil to enter or flourish when it need not have been – but whatever it is I will purge it – both for the sake of my right-standing before the Lord and for the sake of others.

Be Specific \_\_\_\_\_

## Tuesday ([Isaiah 40–41](#))

### The Lord Returns to Jerusalem

40:1 “Comfort, comfort my people,” says your God.

40:2 “Speak kindly to Jerusalem, and tell her that her time of warfare is over, that her punishment is completed. For the Lord has made her pay double for all her sins.”

40:3 A voice cries out, “In the wilderness clear a way for the Lord; construct in the desert a road for our God.

40:4 Every valley must be elevated, and every mountain and hill leveled. The rough terrain will become a level plain, the rugged landscape a wide valley.

40:5 The splendor of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it at the same time. For the Lord has decreed it.”

40:6 A voice says, “Cry out!” Another asks, “What should I cry out?” The first voice responds: “All people are like grass, and all their promises are like the flowers in the field.

40:7 The grass dries up, the flowers wither, when the wind sent by the Lord blows on them. Surely humanity is like grass.

40:8 The grass dries up, the flowers wither, but the decree of our God is forever reliable.”

40:9 Go up on a high mountain, O herald Zion! Shout out loudly, O herald Jerusalem! Shout, don’t be afraid! Say to the towns of Judah, “Here is your God!”

40:10 Look, the sovereign Lord comes as a victorious warrior; his military power establishes his rule. Look, his reward is with him; his prize goes before him.

40:11 Like a shepherd he tends his flock; he gathers up the lambs with his arm; he carries them close to his heart; he leads the ewes along.

### **The Lord is Incomparable**

40:12 Who has measured out the waters in the hollow of his hand, or carefully measured the sky, or carefully weighed the soil of the earth, or weighed the mountains in a balance, or the hills on scales?

40:13 Who comprehends the mind of the Lord, or gives him instruction as his counselor?

40:14 From whom does he receive directions? Who teaches him the correct way to do things, or imparts knowledge to him, or instructs him in skillful design?

40:15 Look, the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales. He lifts the coastlands as if they were dust.

40:16 Not even Lebanon could supply enough firewood for a sacrifice; its wild animals would not provide enough burnt offerings.

40:17 All the nations are insignificant before him; they are regarded as absolutely nothing.

40:18 To whom can you compare God? To what image can you liken him?

40:19 A craftsman casts an idol; a metalsmith overlays it with gold and forges silver chains for it.

40:20 To make a contribution one selects wood that will not rot; he then seeks a skilled craftsman to make an idol that will not fall over.

40:21 Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told to you since the very beginning? Have you not understood from the time the earth's foundations were made?

40:22 He is the one who sits on the earth's horizon; its inhabitants are like grasshoppers before him. He is the one who stretches out the sky like a thin curtain, and spreads it out like a pitched tent.

40:23 He is the one who reduces rulers to nothing; he makes the earth's leaders insignificant.

40:24 Indeed, they are barely planted; yes, they are barely sown; yes, they barely take root in the earth, and then he blows on them, causing them to dry up, and the wind carries them away like straw.

40:25 "To whom can you compare me? Whom do I resemble?" says the Holy One.

40:26 Look up at the sky! Who created all these heavenly lights? He is the one who leads out their ranks; he calls them all by name. Because of his absolute power and awesome strength, not one of them is missing.

40:27 Why do you say, Jacob, Why do you say, Israel, "The Lord is not aware of what is happening to me, My God is not concerned with my vindication"?

40:28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is an eternal God, the creator of the whole earth. He does not get tired or weary; there is no limit to his wisdom.

40:29 He gives strength to those who are tired; to the ones who lack power, he gives renewed energy.

40:30 Even youths get tired and weary; even strong young men clumsily stumble.

40:31 But those who wait for the Lord's help find renewed strength; they rise up as if they had eagles' wings, they run without growing weary, they walk without getting tired.

### **The Lord Challenges the Nations**

41:1 "Listen to me in silence, you coastlands! Let the nations find renewed strength! Let them approach and then speak; let us come together for debate!

41:2 Who stirs up this one from the east? Who officially commissions him for service? He hands nations over to him, and enables him to subdue kings. He makes them like dust with his sword, like windblown straw with his bow.

41:3 He pursues them and passes by unharmed; he advances with great speed.

41:4 Who acts and carries out decrees? Who summons the successive generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, am present at the very beginning, and at the very end – I am the one.

41:5 The coastlands see and are afraid; the whole earth trembles; they approach and come.

41:6 They help one another; one says to the other, 'Be strong!'

41:7 The craftsman encourages the metalsmith, the one who wields the hammer encourages the one who pounds on the anvil. He approves the quality of the welding, and nails it down so it won't fall over."

### **The Lord Encourages His People**

41:8 "You, my servant Israel, Jacob whom I have chosen, offspring of Abraham my friend,

41:9 you whom I am bringing back from the earth's extremities, and have summoned from the remote regions – I told you, "You are my servant." I have chosen you and not rejected you.

41:10 Don't be afraid, for I am with you! Don't be frightened, for I am your God! I strengthen you – yes, I help you – yes, I uphold you with my saving right hand!

41:11 Look, all who were angry at you will be ashamed and humiliated; your adversaries will be reduced to nothing and perish.

41:12 When you will look for your opponents, you will not find them; your enemies will be reduced to absolutely nothing.

41:13 For I am the Lord your God, the one who takes hold of your right hand, who says to you, 'Don't be afraid, I am helping you.'

41:14 Don't be afraid, despised insignificant Jacob, men of Israel. I am helping you," says the Lord, your protector, the Holy One of Israel.

41:15 "Look, I am making you like a sharp threshing sledge, new and double-edged. You will thresh the mountains and crush them; you will make the hills like straw.

41:16 You will winnow them and the wind will blow them away; the wind will scatter them. You will rejoice in the Lord; you will boast in the Holy One of Israel.

41:17 The oppressed and the poor look for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched from thirst. I, the Lord, will respond to their prayers; I, the God of Israel, will not abandon them.

41:18 I will make streams flow down the slopes and produce springs in the middle of the valleys. I will turn the desert into a pool of water and the arid land into springs.

41:19 I will make cedars, acacias, myrtles, and olive trees grow in the wilderness; I will make evergreens, firs, and cypresses grow together in the desert.

41:20 I will do this so people will observe and recognize, so they will pay attention and understand that the Lord's power has accomplished this, and that the Holy One of Israel has brought it into being."

### **The Lord Challenges the Pagan Gods**

41:21 "Present your argument," says the Lord. "Produce your evidence," says Jacob's king.

41:22 "Let them produce evidence! Let them tell us what will happen! Tell us about your earlier predictive oracles, so we may examine them and see how they were fulfilled. Or decree for us some future events!

41:23 Predict how future events will turn out, so we might know you are gods. Yes, do something good or bad, so we might be frightened and in awe.

41:24 Look, you are nothing, and your accomplishments are nonexistent; the one who chooses to worship you is disgusting.

41:25 I have stirred up one out of the north and he advances, one from the eastern horizon who prays in my name. He steps on rulers as if they were clay, like a potter treading the clay.

41:26 Who decreed this from the beginning, so we could know? Who announced it ahead of time, so we could say, 'He's correct'? Indeed, none of them decreed it! Indeed, none of them announced it! Indeed, no one heard you say anything!

41:27 I first decreed to Zion, 'Look, here's what will happen!' I sent a herald to Jerusalem.

41:28 I look, but there is no one, among them there is no one who serves as an adviser, that I might ask questions and receive answers.

41:29 Look, all of them are nothing, their accomplishments are nonexistent; their metal images lack any real substance.

### **PRAYER**

Lord, You assure us that You will one day return and make things right. May I praise You daily and rest in the certainty that my eternity is safe in Your hands. You are omnipotent and holy, and You are perfectly

and righteously disgusted with false gods and those who follow them – as they are the inventions of Satan. May I be careful to avoid anything like an idol or a superstition or that otherwise displaces You in my life.

## SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Isaiah continued the prophesy of the final return of the Lord as He redeems those who are His.

He used the phrase “Look, the sovereign Lord comes as a victorious warrior; his military power establishes his rule ...” which may have been what some religious leaders later misunderstood as defining the nature of the Messiah.

Isaiah shared a series of declarations about the exceptional characteristics of the Lord God, summarizing “To whom can you compare God? To what image can you liken him?”

He observed the foolish thinking even of the fathers of the faith “Why do you say, Jacob, Why do you say, Israel, “The Lord is not aware of what is happening to me, My God is not concerned with my vindication?””

Isaiah lifted praise for the mercy and provision of the Lord God to His children “But those who wait for the Lord’s help find renewed strength; they rise up as if they had eagles’ wings, they run without growing weary, they walk without getting tired.”

Isaiah shared the Lord God’s challenge to the nations to recognize that it was He who allowed, and even summoned, them to rise and fall “Who acts and carries out decrees? Who summons the successive generations from the beginning? I, the Lord, am present at the very beginning, and at the very end – I am the one.”

He then shared what the Lord God said about how He would gather His people together, empower them to remove all of their enemies, and provide for them all that they needed. And again, it would draw people’s attention to Him “I will do this so people will observe and recognize, so they will pay attention and understand that the Lord’s power has accomplished this, and that the Holy One of Israel has brought it into being.”

Isaiah, continuing His service to the Lord, then rhetorically-challenged the false gods to display their histories of accurate fore-telling prophesy, or to make some new one right then and there. Then summarizing, said “Look, you are nothing, and your accomplishments are nonexistent; the one who chooses to worship you is disgusting.”

## INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

### CONSIDER



There is no doubt whatsoever that the Lord God will one day return and restore the earth to pre-Fall conditions, but without any possibility for sin ever again. The nations, even rebellious Israel, often forgot the all-powerful Lord God and pridefully imagined that they were purely the makers of their own destiny – when it had often been obvious that the hand of God was upon history.

### **DISCUSS**

Why would Jacob or Israel (speaking rhetorically of them and their descendants) not have known better than to doubt the presence and caring-awareness of the Lord God? What is the value of causing people to recognize both the nature and involvement of the Lord God?

### **REFLECT**

When one reviews the amazing characteristics of the Lord God one is struck with awe. Ridiculing the false gods, and those who followed them, was a powerful way to illustrate their powerlessness and absence of positive value.

### **SHARE**

When have you been exhausted emotionally and/or spiritually and the Lord God breathed new strength into you? When have you experienced an event which caused you to pause and to recognize the Lord's hand in things?

### **FAITH IN ACTION**

### **PRAY**

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a place where He has, or He is, or He is going to bless you with "... renewed strength ... to run without growing weary ... walk without getting tired." and to reveal to you someone He wants you to pray for, and perhaps to evangelize/disciple, who is looking to a false idol instead of the One True Lord God.

### **ACT**

Today I will praise the Lord and share my awe and love and trust with a fellow believer. I will faithfully pray, and as He leads, personally-connect with the one to whom He has led me. As is appropriate I will ask a fellow believer to pray in-agreement with me.

Be Specific \_\_\_\_\_

## **Wednesday ([Isaiah 42-48](#))**

42:1 The Lord Commissions His Special Servant

“Here is my servant whom I support, my chosen one in whom I take pleasure. I have placed my spirit on him; he will make just decrees for the nations.

42:2 He will not cry out or shout; he will not publicize himself in the streets.

42:3 A crushed reed he will not break, a dim wick he will not extinguish; he will faithfully make just decrees.

42:4 He will not grow dim or be crushed before establishing justice on the earth; the coastlands will wait in anticipation for his decrees.”

42:5 This is what the true God, the Lord, says – the one who created the sky and stretched it out, the one who fashioned the earth and everything that lives on it, the one who gives breath to the people on it, and life to those who live on it:

42:6 “I, the Lord, officially commission you; I take hold of your hand. I protect you and make you a covenant mediator for people, and a light to the nations,

42:7 to open blind eyes, to release prisoners from dungeons, those who live in darkness from prisons.

### **The Lord Intervenes**

42:8 I am the Lord! That is my name! I will not share my glory with anyone else, or the praise due me with idols.

42:9 Look, my earlier predictive oracles have come to pass; now I announce new events. Before they begin to occur, I reveal them to you.”

42:10 Sing to the Lord a brand new song! Praise him from the horizon of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and everything that lives in it, you coastlands and those who live there!

42:11 Let the desert and its cities shout out, the towns where the nomads of Kedar live! Let the residents of Sela shout joyfully; let them shout loudly from the mountaintops.

42:12 Let them give the Lord the honor he deserves; let them praise his deeds in the coastlands.

42:13 The Lord emerges like a hero, like a warrior he inspires himself for battle; he shouts, yes, he yells, he shows his enemies his power.

42:14 “I have been inactive for a long time; I kept quiet and held back. Like a woman in labor I groan; I pant and gasp.

42:15 I will make the trees on the mountains and hills wither up; I will dry up all their vegetation. I will turn streams into islands, and dry up pools of water.

42:16 I will lead the blind along an unfamiliar way; I will guide them down paths they have never traveled. I will turn the darkness in front of them into light, and level out the rough ground. This is what I will do for them. I will not abandon them.

42:17 Those who trust in idols will turn back and be utterly humiliated, those who say to metal images, 'You are our gods.'"

### **The Lord Reasons with His People**

42:18 "Listen, you deaf ones! Take notice, you blind ones!

42:19 My servant is truly blind, my messenger is truly deaf. My covenant partner, the servant of the Lord, is truly blind.

42:20 You see many things, but don't comprehend; their ears are open, but do not hear."

42:21 The Lord wanted to exhibit his justice by magnifying his law and displaying it.

42:22 But these people are looted and plundered; all of them are trapped in pits and held captive in prisons. They were carried away as loot with no one to rescue them; they were carried away as plunder, and no one says, "Bring that back!"

42:23 Who among you will pay attention to this? Who will listen attentively in the future?

42:24 Who handed Jacob over to the robber? Who handed Israel over to the looters? Was it not the Lord, against whom we sinned? They refused to follow his commands; they disobeyed his law.

42:25 So he poured out his fierce anger on them, along with the devastation of war. Its flames encircled them, but they did not realize it; it burned against them, but they did notice.

### **The Lord Will Rescue His People**

43:1 Now, this is what the Lord says, the one who created you, O Jacob, and formed you, O Israel: "Don't be afraid, for I will protect you. I call you by name, you are mine.

43:2 When you pass through the waters, I am with you; when you pass through the streams, they will not overwhelm you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not harm you.

43:3 For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your deliverer. I have handed over Egypt as a ransom price, Ethiopia and Seba in place of you.

43:4 Since you are precious and special in my sight, and I love you, I will hand over people in place of you, nations in place of your life.

43:5 Don't be afraid, for I am with you. From the east I will bring your descendants; from the west I will gather you.

43:6 I will say to the north, 'Hand them over!' and to the south, 'Don't hold any back!' Bring my sons from distant lands, and my daughters from the remote regions of the earth,

43:7 everyone who belongs to me, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed – yes, whom I made!

### **The Lord Declares His Sovereignty**

43:8 Bring out the people who are blind, even though they have eyes, those who are deaf, even though they have ears!

43:9 All nations gather together, the peoples assemble. Who among them announced this? Who predicted earlier events for us? Let them produce their witnesses to testify they were right; let them listen and affirm, 'It is true.'

43:10 You are my witnesses," says the Lord, "my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may consider and believe in me, and understand that I am he. No god was formed before me, and none will outlive me.

43:11 I, I am the Lord, and there is no deliverer besides me.

43:12 I decreed and delivered and proclaimed, and there was no other god among you. You are my witnesses," says the Lord, "that I am God.

43:13 From this day forward I am he; no one can deliver from my power; I will act, and who can prevent it?"

### **The Lord Will Do Something New**

43:14 This is what the Lord says, your protector, the Holy One of Israel: "For your sake I send to Babylon and make them all fugitives, turning the Babylonians' joyful shouts into mourning songs.

43:15 I am the Lord, your Holy One, the one who created Israel, your king."

43:16 This is what the Lord says, the one who made a road through the sea, a pathway through the surging waters,

43:17 the one who led chariots and horses to destruction, together with a mighty army. They fell down, never to rise again; they were extinguished, put out like a burning wick:

43:18 “Don’t remember these earlier events; don’t recall these former events.

43:19 “Look, I am about to do something new. Now it begins to happen! Do you not recognize it? Yes, I will make a road in the desert and paths in the wilderness.

43:20 The wild animals of the desert honor me, the jackals and ostriches, because I put water in the desert and streams in the wilderness, to quench the thirst of my chosen people,

43:21 the people whom I formed for myself, so they might praise me.”

### **The Lord Rebukes His People**

43:22 “But you did not call for me, O Jacob; you did not long for me, O Israel.

43:23 You did not bring me lambs for your burnt offerings; you did not honor me with your sacrifices. I did not burden you with offerings; I did not make you weary by demanding incense.

43:24 You did not buy me aromatic reeds; you did not present to me the fat of your sacrifices. Yet you burdened me with your sins; you made me weary with your evil deeds.

43:25 I, I am the one who blots out your rebellious deeds for my sake; your sins I do not remember.

43:26 Remind me of what happened! Let’s debate! You, prove to me that you are right!

43:27 The father of your nation sinned; your spokesmen rebelled against me.

43:28 So I defiled your holy princes, and handed Jacob over to destruction, and subjected Israel to humiliating abuse.”

### **The Lord Will Renew Israel**

44:1 “Now, listen, Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen!”

44:2 This is what the Lord, the one who made you, says – the one who formed you in the womb and helps you: “Don’t be afraid, my servant Jacob, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen!

44:3 For I will pour water on the parched ground and cause streams to flow on the dry land. I will pour my spirit on your offspring and my blessing on your children.

44:4 They will sprout up like a tree in the grass, like poplars beside channels of water.

44:5 One will say, 'I belong to the Lord,' and another will use the name 'Jacob.' One will write on his hand, 'The Lord's,' and use the name 'Israel.'"

### **The Absurdity of Idolatry**

44:6 This is what the Lord, Israel's king, says, their protector, the Lord who commands armies: "I am the first and I am the last, there is no God but me.

44:7 Who is like me? Let him make his claim! Let him announce it and explain it to me – since I established an ancient people – let them announce future events!

44:8 Don't panic! Don't be afraid! Did I not tell you beforehand and decree it? You are my witnesses! Is there any God but me? There is no other sheltering rock; I know of none.

44:9 All who form idols are nothing; the things in which they delight are worthless. Their witnesses cannot see; they recognize nothing, so they are put to shame.

44:10 Who forms a god and casts an idol that will prove worthless?

44:11 Look, all his associates will be put to shame; the craftsmen are mere humans. Let them all assemble and take their stand! They will panic and be put to shame.

44:12 A blacksmith works with his tool and forges metal over the coals. He forms it with hammers; he makes it with his strong arm. He gets hungry and loses his energy; he drinks no water and gets tired.

44:13 A carpenter takes measurements; he marks out an outline of its form; he scrapes it with chisels, and marks it with a compass. He patterns it after the human form, like a well-built human being, and puts it in a shrine.

44:14 He cuts down cedars and acquires a cypress or an oak. He gets trees from the forest; he plants a cedar and the rain makes it grow.

44:15 A man uses it to make a fire; he takes some of it and warms himself. Yes, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Then he makes a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it.

44:16 Half of it he burns in the fire – over that half he cooks meat; he roasts a meal and fills himself. Yes, he warms himself and says, 'Ah! I am warm as I look at the fire.'

44:17 With the rest of it he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships it. He prays to it, saying, 'Rescue me, for you are my god!'

44:18 They do not comprehend or understand, for their eyes are blind and cannot see; their minds do not discern.

44:19 No one thinks to himself, nor do they comprehend or understand and say to themselves: 'I burned half of it in the fire – yes, I baked bread over the coals; I roasted meat and ate it. With the rest of it should I make a disgusting idol? Should I bow down to dry wood?'

44:20 He feeds on ashes; his deceived mind misleads him. He cannot rescue himself, nor does he say, 'Is this not a false god I hold in my right hand?'

44:21 Remember these things, O Jacob, O Israel, for you are my servant. I formed you to be my servant; O Israel, I will not forget you!

44:22 I remove the guilt of your rebellious deeds as if they were a cloud, the guilt of your sins as if they were a cloud. Come back to me, for I protect you."

44:23 Shout for joy, O sky, for the Lord intervenes; shout out, you subterranean regions of the earth. O mountains, give a joyful shout; you too, O forest and all your trees! For the Lord protects Jacob; he reveals his splendor through Israel.

### **The Lord Empowers Cyrus**

44:24 This is what the Lord, your protector, says, the one who formed you in the womb: "I am the Lord, who made everything, who alone stretched out the sky, who fashioned the earth all by myself,

44:25 who frustrates the omens of the empty talkers and humiliates the omen readers, who overturns the counsel of the wise men and makes their advice seem foolish,

44:26 who fulfills the oracles of his prophetic servants and brings to pass the announcements of his messengers, who says about Jerusalem, 'She will be inhabited,' and about the towns of Judah, 'They will be rebuilt, her ruins I will raise up,'

44:27 who says to the deep sea, 'Be dry! I will dry up your sea currents,'

44:28 who commissions Cyrus, the one I appointed as shepherd to carry out all my wishes and to decree concerning Jerusalem, 'She will be rebuilt,' and concerning the temple, 'It will be reconstructed.'"

45:1 This is what the Lord says to his chosen one, to Cyrus, whose right hand I hold in order to subdue nations before him, and disarm kings, to open doors before him, so gates remain unclosed:

45:2 “I will go before you and level mountains. Bronze doors I will shatter and iron bars I will hack through.

45:3 I will give you hidden treasures, riches stashed away in secret places, so you may recognize that I am the Lord, the one who calls you by name, the God of Israel.

45:4 For the sake of my servant Jacob, Israel, my chosen one, I call you by name and give you a title of respect, even though you do not recognize me.

45:5 I am the Lord, I have no peer, there is no God but me. I arm you for battle, even though you do not recognize me.

45:6 I do this so people will recognize from east to west that there is no God but me; I am the Lord, I have no peer.

45:7 I am the one who forms light and creates darkness; the one who brings about peace and creates calamity. I am the Lord, who accomplishes all these things.

45:8 O sky, rain down from above! Let the clouds send down showers of deliverance! Let the earth absorb it so salvation may grow, and deliverance may sprout up along with it. I, the Lord, create it.

### **The Lord Gives a Warning**

45:9 One who argues with his creator is in grave danger, one who is like a mere shard among the other shards on the ground! The clay should not say to the potter, “What in the world are you doing? Your work lacks skill!”

45:10 Danger awaits one who says to his father, “What in the world are you fathering?” and to his mother, “What in the world are you bringing forth?”

45:11 This is what the Lord says, the Holy One of Israel, the one who formed him, concerning things to come: “How dare you question me about my children! How dare you tell me what to do with the work of my own hands!

45:12 I made the earth, I created the people who live on it. It was me – my hands stretched out the sky, I give orders to all the heavenly lights.

45:13 It is me – I stir him up and commission him; I will make all his ways level. He will rebuild my city; he will send my exiled people home, but not for a price or a bribe,” says the Lord who commands armies.

### **The Lord is the Nations’ Only Hope**



45:14 This is what the Lord says: “The profit of Egypt and the revenue of Ethiopia, along with the Sabeans, those tall men, will be brought to you and become yours. They will walk behind you, coming along in chains. They will bow down to you and pray to you: ‘Truly God is with you; he has no peer; there is no other God!’”

45:15 Yes, you are a God who keeps hidden, O God of Israel, deliverer!

45:16 They will all be ashamed and embarrassed; those who fashion idols will all be humiliated.

45:17 Israel will be delivered once and for all by the Lord; you will never again be ashamed or humiliated.

45:18 For this is what the Lord says, the one who created the sky – he is the true God, the one who formed the earth and made it; he established it, he did not create it without order, he formed it to be inhabited – “I am the Lord, I have no peer.

45:19 I have not spoken in secret, in some hidden place. I did not tell Jacob’s descendants, ‘Seek me in vain!’ I am the Lord, the one who speaks honestly, who makes reliable announcements.

45:20 Gather together and come! Approach together, you refugees from the nations! Those who carry wooden idols know nothing, those who pray to a god that cannot deliver.

45:21 Tell me! Present the evidence! Let them consult with one another! Who predicted this in the past? Who announced it beforehand? Was it not I, the Lord? I have no peer, there is no God but me, a God who vindicates and delivers; there is none but me.

45:22 Turn to me so you can be delivered, all you who live in the earth’s remote regions! For I am God, and I have no peer.

45:23 I solemnly make this oath – what I say is true and reliable: ‘Surely every knee will bow to me, every tongue will solemnly affirm;

45:24 they will say about me, “Yes, the Lord is a powerful deliverer.”’ All who are angry at him will cower before him.

45:25 All the descendants of Israel will be vindicated by the Lord and will boast in him.

### **The Lord Carries His People**

46:1 Bel kneels down, Nebo bends low. Their images weigh down animals and beasts. Your heavy images are burdensome to tired animals.

46:2 Together they bend low and kneel down; they are unable to rescue the images; they themselves head off into captivity.

46:3 “Listen to me, O family of Jacob, all you who are left from the family of Israel, you who have been carried from birth, you who have been supported from the time you left the womb.

46:4 Even when you are old, I will take care of you, even when you have gray hair, I will carry you. I made you and I will support you; I will carry you and rescue you.

46:5 To whom can you compare and liken me? Tell me whom you think I resemble, so we can be compared!

46:6 Those who empty out gold from a purse and weigh out silver on the scale hire a metalsmith, who makes it into a god. They then bow down and worship it.

46:7 They put it on their shoulder and carry it; they put it in its place and it just stands there; it does not move from its place. Even when someone cries out to it, it does not reply; it does not deliver him from his distress.

46:8 Remember this, so you can be brave! Think about it, you rebels!

46:9 Remember what I accomplished in antiquity! Truly I am God, I have no peer; I am God, and there is none like me,

46:10 who announces the end from the beginning and reveals beforehand what has not yet occurred, who says, ‘My plan will be realized, I will accomplish what I desire,’

46:11 who summons an eagle from the east, from a distant land, one who carries out my plan. Yes, I have decreed, yes, I will bring it to pass; I have formulated a plan, yes, I will carry it out.

46:12 Listen to me, you stubborn people, you who distance yourself from doing what is right.

46:13 I am bringing my deliverance near, it is not far away; I am bringing my salvation near, it does not wait. I will save Zion; I will adorn Israel with my splendor.”

### **Babylon Will Fall**

47:1 “Fall down! Sit in the dirt, O virgin daughter Babylon! Sit on the ground, not on a throne, O daughter of the Babylonians! Indeed, you will no longer be called delicate and pampered.

47:2 Pick up millstones and grind flour! Remove your veil, strip off your skirt, expose your legs, cross the streams!

47:3 Let your private parts be exposed! Your genitals will be on display! I will get revenge; I will not have pity on anyone,”

47:4 says our protector – the Lord who commands armies is his name, the Holy One of Israel.

47:5 “Sit silently! Go to a hiding place, O daughter of the Babylonians! Indeed, you will no longer be called ‘Queen of kingdoms.’

47:6 I was angry at my people; I defiled my special possession and handed them over to you. You showed them no mercy; you even placed a very heavy burden on old people.

47:7 You said, ‘I will rule forever as permanent queen!’ You did not think about these things; you did not consider how it would turn out.

47:8 So now, listen to this, O one who lives so lavishly, who lives securely, who says to herself, ‘I am unique! No one can compare to me! I will never have to live as a widow; I will never lose my children.’

47:9 Both of these will come upon you suddenly, in one day! You will lose your children and be widowed. You will be overwhelmed by these tragedies, despite your many incantations and your numerous amulets.

47:10 You were complacent in your evil deeds; you thought, ‘No one sees me.’ Your self-professed wisdom and knowledge lead you astray, when you say, ‘I am unique! No one can compare to me!’

47:11 Disaster will overtake you; you will not know how to charm it away. Destruction will fall on you; you will not be able to appease it. Calamity will strike you suddenly, before you recognize it.

47:12 Persist in trusting your amulets and your many incantations, which you have faithfully recited since your youth! Maybe you will be successful – maybe you will scare away disaster.

47:13 You are tired out from listening to so much advice. Let them take their stand – the ones who see omens in the sky, who gaze at the stars, who make monthly predictions – let them rescue you from the disaster that is about to overtake you!

47:14 Look, they are like straw, which the fire burns up; they cannot rescue themselves from the heat of the flames. There are no coals to warm them, no firelight to enjoy.

47:15 They will disappoint you, those you have so faithfully dealt with since your youth. Each strays off in his own direction, leaving no one to rescue you.”

**The Lord Appeals to the Exiles**

48:1 Listen to this, O family of Jacob, you who are called by the name 'Israel,' and are descended from Judah, who take oaths in the name of the Lord, and invoke the God of Israel – but not in an honest and just manner.

48:2 Indeed, they live in the holy city; they trust in the God of Israel, whose name is the Lord who commands armies.

48:3 "I announced events beforehand, I issued the decrees and made the predictions; suddenly I acted and they came to pass.

48:4 I did this because I know how stubborn you are. Your neck muscles are like iron and your forehead like bronze.

48:5 I announced them to you beforehand; before they happened, I predicted them for you, so you could never say, 'My image did these things, my idol, my cast image, decreed them.'

48:6 You have heard; now look at all the evidence! Will you not admit that what I say is true? From this point on I am announcing to you new events that are previously unrevealed and you do not know about.

48:7 Now they come into being, not in the past; before today you did not hear about them, so you could not say, 'Yes, I know about them.'

48:8 You did not hear, you do not know, you were not told beforehand. For I know that you are very deceitful; you were labeled a rebel from birth.

48:9 For the sake of my reputation I hold back my anger; for the sake of my prestige I restrain myself from destroying you.

48:10 Look, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have purified you in the furnace of misery.

48:11 For my sake alone I will act, for how can I allow my name to be defiled? I will not share my glory with anyone else!

48:12 Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I summoned! I am the one; I am present at the very beginning and at the very end.

48:13 Yes, my hand founded the earth; my right hand spread out the sky. I summon them; they stand together.

48:14 All of you, gather together and listen! Who among them announced these things? The Lord's ally will carry out his desire against Babylon; he will exert his power against the Babylonians.

48:15 I, I have spoken – yes, I have summoned him; I lead him and he will succeed.

48:16 Approach me! Listen to this! From the very first I have not spoken in secret; when it happens, I am there.” So now, the sovereign Lord has sent me, accompanied by his spirit.

48:17 This is what the Lord, your protector, says, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the Lord your God, who teaches you how to succeed, who leads you in the way you should go.

48:18 If only you had obeyed my commandments, prosperity would have flowed to you like a river, deliverance would have come to you like the waves of the sea.

48:19 Your descendants would have been as numerous as sand, and your children like its granules. Their name would not have been cut off and eliminated from my presence.

48:20 Leave Babylon! Flee from the Babylonians! Announce it with a shout of joy! Make this known! Proclaim it throughout the earth! Say, “The Lord protects his servant Jacob.

48:21 They do not thirst as he leads them through dry regions; he makes water flow out of a rock for them; he splits open a rock and water flows out.’

48:22 There will be no prosperity for the wicked,” says the Lord.

## PRAYER

Lord, You love Your children but You do not tolerate disobedience and rebellion. You are so faithful even as we are unfaithful. May I recognize and honor Your grace through a humble heart that repents of sin and cries-out for Your reconciliation and restoration of my relationship with You. You alone are God, there is no other. May I praise You for Your lovingkindness, Your unchanging justice, and Your promise of eternity to Your children. You decide whom You will rescue and whom You will punish; Your justice is perfect and your power irresistible. You require of us that we repent, be reconciled to You, and then our relationship restored to pre-Fall purity. May I praise You for Your enduring love.

## SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Isaiah delivered the Lord God’s prophesy of commissioning an ideal king [to become the Lord Jesus, because no other could meet the standard].

He delivered the proclamation of the Lord God that He would one day return and would make things right again on earth “I am the Lord! That is my name! I will not share my glory with anyone else, or the praise due me with idols.”

Isaiah proclaimed the Lord's observation that His people had become unable to hear or see Him due to their chronic rebellion and status of punishment-exile "My covenant partner, the servant of the Lord, is truly blind."

Isaiah delivered the Lord God's promise that He would recall His people from bondage and to displace those who reject Him to those nations-of-bondage "Since you are precious and special in my sight, and I love you, I will hand over people in place of you, nations in place of your life."

The Lord God proclaimed through Isaiah that He would restore Himself as their king, then He instructed them that what was to come was completely separate from the past and that none of those time and place-specific miracles were relevant to what He was about to do "Don't remember these earlier events; don't recall these former events. "Look, I am about to do something new. Now it begins to happen! Do you not recognize it?"

He then challenged them, much as He previously challenged Job, to show how they were right and He was wrong "Remind me of what happened! Let's debate! You, prove to me that you are right!" and that His desire is repentance, reconciliation, and restoration "I, I am the one who blots out your rebellious deeds for my sake; your sins I do not remember."

Once again, via Isaiah, the Lord God affirmed that He intended to one day restore Israel – not the rebellious Israel – but the Israel He had always desired. He addresses Israel as like a child "This is what the Lord, the one who made you, says – the one who formed you in the womb and helps you: "Don't be afraid, my servant Jacob, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen!"

Isaiah introduced the challenge of the Lord God to the absurdity of idolatry "This is what the Lord, Israel's king, says, their protector, the Lord who commands armies: "I am the first and I am the last, there is no God but me."

He described the process of creating a physical image of a false idol, explaining how the tree is cut down then part of the wood used to carve the idol and the rest used as firewood to cook a meal, explaining that the wood remained as powerless as when it was a tree or firewood, nor were their mere human 'creators' capable of adding spiritual value to them "All who form idols are nothing; the things in which they delight are worthless. Their witnesses cannot see; they recognize nothing, so they are put to shame."

The Lord God calls to Israel "I remove the guilt of your rebellious deeds as if they were a cloud, the guilt of your sins as if they were a cloud. Come back to me, for I protect you ..." and encourages them to recognize Him "Shout for joy, O sky, for the Lord intervenes; shout out, you subterranean regions of the earth. O mountains, give a joyful shout; you too, O forest and all your trees! For the Lord protects Jacob; he reveals his splendor through Israel."

Isaiah concluded with the Lord's declaration of the commissioning of Cyrus "... the one I appointed as shepherd to carry out all my wishes and to decree concerning Jerusalem, 'She will be rebuilt,' and concerning the temple, 'It will be reconstructed.'"

Isaiah reported the Lord God's calling and equipping of Persian king Cyrus, neither an Israelite nor a gentile believer in Him "For the sake of my servant Jacob, Israel, my chosen one, I call you by name and give you a title of respect, even though you do not recognize me."

He announced the Lord's warning against anyone who would question His sovereign commissioning of Cyrus. He then described how He would give riches and success to Cyrus to assure him success in liberating Israel.

Isaiah declared the Lord's solitary power to accomplish the liberation of Israel and His intention to do so despite any mere human resistance. He prophesied the fall of the Babylonian empire.

He then appealed to the Israelites to repent of their rebellion and to turn to Him, their only redeemer and renewed His promise to redeem "Zion".

## INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

### CONSIDER

The phrase in these texts "I formed you in the womb" is interesting since it describes both the nation of Israel and Cyrus the man, therefore it is not a literal but a figurative illustration. It does not mean that the Lord God is not involved in the formation of a human life, that is made clear elsewhere; He breathes a human soul into the otherwise non-human 'blob of protoplasm', thereby making conception a miraculous event, every time it occurs. "Israel" and "Zion" became Biblical-metaphors for those who have a saving relationship through the Messiah. The ideal perfect king for Israel could not be anyone lesser than the perfect Redeemer, the Messiah, Jesus the Christ.

### DISCUSS

Why would anyone have even considered doubting the Lord God's right- representation of history or their need to repent and to be reconciled and restored? How could a man use the same wood to carve an idol, which he then worships, and then use the leftovers as firewood – and not be aware of the absurdity? Why would people later confuse Cyrus with the Messiah, given Isaiah's clear description of the nature of the unique missions of the two? Why would it be important for the Lord God to clear the field of all alternative false gods and idols?

### REFLECT

How amazing is the grace of the Lord God that He continues to desire our repentance so that He may reconcile and restore us? Is the deception around idols not clearly of the same kind of deception of Adam and Eve in the Garden? Cyrus would not come to liberate Israel for 250 years after Isaiah's prophesy, he would be misunderstood by some to be the Messiah, and neither he nor the people would rise to the desired state of righteousness required of the Lord's proclamation. Much more time would pass prior to the arrival of the Messiah and even more until His second coming. Despite the terrible conduct of His chosen people the Lord God desired a way to redeem them, even if only a remnant.

#### SHARE

When have you discovered that some worldly thing was a distraction from your relationship with the Lord God? When have you been 'rescued' by an unlikely person, someone clearly sent by the Lord, but not a fellow believer?

#### FAITH IN ACTION

#### PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a new clarity as to His new relationship and His new era in His unfolding plan for all of His creation, to reveal to you something that remains an idol in your life; overvalued by you, and interfering with your relationship with Him, and a place in your life where He wants you to surrender and then partner with Him to move towards righteousness – in anticipation of the return of Jesus.

#### ACT

Today I will pause and pray in praise and thanksgiving for a loving God whose great desire is to reconcile and restore all who will repent of their rebellion against His Lordship of their lives – and most specifically of my life. I will joyfully surrender that place in my life that is not right before the Lord. I will ask a fellow believer to pray in-agreement, and to be my accountability partner, and I walk with the Holy Spirit to greater maturity.

Be Specific \_\_\_\_\_

### Thursday ([Isaiah 49–54](#))

Ideal Israel Delivers the Exiles

49:1 Listen to me, you coastlands! Pay attention, you people who live far away! The Lord summoned me from birth; he commissioned me when my mother brought me into the world.

49:2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword, he hid me in the hollow of his hand; he made me like a sharpened arrow, he hid me in his quiver.



49:3 He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, through whom I will reveal my splendor."

49:4 But I thought, "I have worked in vain; I have expended my energy for absolutely nothing." But the Lord will vindicate me; my God will reward me.

49:5 So now the Lord says, the one who formed me from birth to be his servant – he did this to restore Jacob to himself, so that Israel might be gathered to him; and I will be honored in the Lord's sight, for my God is my source of strength –

49:6 he says, "Is it too insignificant a task for you to be my servant, to reestablish the tribes of Jacob, and restore the remnant of Israel? I will make you a light to the nations, so you can bring my deliverance to the remote regions of the earth."

49:7 This is what the Lord, the protector of Israel, their Holy One, says to the one who is despised and rejected by nations, a servant of rulers: "Kings will see and rise in respect, princes will bow down, because of the faithful Lord, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen you."

49:8 This is what the Lord says: "At the time I decide to show my favor, I will respond to you; in the day of deliverance I will help you; I will protect you and make you a covenant mediator for people, to rebuild the land and to reassign the desolate property.

49:9 You will say to the prisoners, 'Come out,' and to those who are in dark dungeons, 'Emerge.' They will graze beside the roads; on all the slopes they will find pasture.

49:10 They will not be hungry or thirsty; the sun's oppressive heat will not beat down on them, for one who has compassion on them will guide them; he will lead them to springs of water.

49:11 I will make all my mountains into a road; I will construct my roadways."

49:12 Look, they come from far away! Look, some come from the north and west, and others from the land of Sinim!

49:13 Shout for joy, O sky! Rejoice, O earth! Let the mountains give a joyful shout! For the Lord consoles his people and shows compassion to the oppressed.

### **The Lord Remembers Zion**

49:14 "Zion said, 'The Lord has abandoned me, the sovereign master has forgotten me.'

49:15 Can a woman forget her baby who nurses at her breast? Can she withhold compassion from the child she has borne? Even if mothers were to forget, I could never forget you!

49:16 Look, I have inscribed your name on my palms; your walls are constantly before me.

49:17 Your children hurry back, while those who destroyed and devastated you depart.

49:18 Look all around you! All of them gather to you. As surely as I live," says the Lord, "you will certainly wear all of them like jewelry; you will put them on as if you were a bride.

49:19 Yes, your land lies in ruins; it is desolate and devastated. But now you will be too small to hold your residents, and those who devoured you will be far away.

49:20 Yet the children born during your time of bereavement will say within your hearing, 'This place is too cramped for us, make room for us so we can live here.'

49:21 Then you will think to yourself, 'Who bore these children for me? I was bereaved and barren, dismissed and divorced. Who raised these children? Look, I was left all alone; where did these children come from?'"

49:22 This is what the sovereign Lord says: "Look I will raise my hand to the nations; I will raise my signal flag to the peoples. They will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders.

49:23 Kings will be your children's guardians; their princesses will nurse your children. With their faces to the ground they will bow down to you and they will lick the dirt on your feet. Then you will recognize that I am the Lord; those who wait patiently for me are not put to shame.

49:24 Can spoils be taken from a warrior, or captives be rescued from a conqueror?

49:25 Indeed," says the Lord, "captives will be taken from a warrior; spoils will be rescued from a conqueror. I will oppose your adversary and I will rescue your children.

49:26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh; they will get drunk on their own blood, as if it were wine. Then all humankind will recognize that I am the Lord, your deliverer, your protector, the powerful ruler of Jacob."

50:1 This is what the Lord says: "Where is your mother's divorce certificate by which I divorced her? Or to which of my creditors did I sell you? Look, you were sold because of your sins; because of your rebellious acts I divorced your mother.

50:2 Why does no one challenge me when I come? Why does no one respond when I call? Is my hand too weak to deliver you? Do I lack the power to rescue you? Look, with a mere shout I can dry up the sea; I can turn streams into a desert, so the fish rot away and die from lack of water.

50:3 I can clothe the sky in darkness; I can cover it with sackcloth.”

### **The Servant Perseveres**

50:4 The sovereign Lord has given me the capacity to be his spokesman, so that I know how to help the weary. He wakes me up every morning; he makes me alert so I can listen attentively as disciples do.

50:5 The sovereign Lord has spoken to me clearly; I have not rebelled, I have not turned back.

50:6 I offered my back to those who attacked, my jaws to those who tore out my beard; I did not hide my face from insults and spitting.

50:7 But the sovereign Lord helps me, so I am not humiliated. For that reason I am steadfastly resolved; I know I will not be put to shame.

50:8 The one who vindicates me is close by. Who dares to argue with me? Let us confront each other! Who is my accuser? Let him challenge me!

50:9 Look, the sovereign Lord helps me. Who dares to condemn me? Look, all of them will wear out like clothes; a moth will eat away at them.

50:10 Who among you fears the Lord? Who obeys his servant? Whoever walks in deep darkness, without light, should trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God.

50:11 Look, all of you who start a fire and who equip yourselves with flaming arrows, walk in the light of the fire you started and among the flaming arrows you ignited! This is what you will receive from me: you will lie down in a place of pain.

### **There is Hope for the Future**

51:1 “Listen to me, you who pursue godliness, who seek the Lord! Look at the rock from which you were chiseled, at the quarry from which you were dug!

51:2 Look at Abraham, your father, and Sarah, who gave you birth. When I summoned him, he was a lone individual, but I blessed him and gave him numerous descendants.

51:3 Certainly the Lord will console Zion; he will console all her ruins. He will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the Garden of the Lord. Happiness and joy will be restored to her, thanksgiving and the sound of music.

51:4 Pay attention to me, my people! Listen to me, my people! For I will issue a decree, I will make my justice a light to the nations.

51:5 I am ready to vindicate, I am ready to deliver, I will establish justice among the nations. The coastlands wait patiently for me; they wait in anticipation for the revelation of my power.

51:6 Look up at the sky! Look at the earth below! For the sky will dissipate like smoke, and the earth will wear out like clothes; its residents will die like gnats. But the deliverance I give is permanent; the vindication I provide will not disappear.

51:7 Listen to me, you who know what is right, you people who are aware of my law! Don't be afraid of the insults of men; don't be discouraged because of their abuse!

51:8 For a moth will eat away at them like clothes; a clothes moth will devour them like wool. But the vindication I provide will be permanent; the deliverance I give will last."

51:9 Wake up! Wake up! Clothe yourself with strength, O arm of the Lord! Wake up as in former times, as in antiquity! Did you not smash the Proud One? Did you not wound the sea monster?

51:10 Did you not dry up the sea, the waters of the great deep? Did you not make a path through the depths of the sea, so those delivered from bondage could cross over?

51:11 Those whom the Lord has ransomed will return; they will enter Zion with a happy shout. Unending joy will crown them, happiness and joy will overwhelm them; grief and suffering will disappear.

51:12 "I, I am the one who consoles you. Why are you afraid of mortal men, of mere human beings who are as short-lived as grass?

51:13 Why do you forget the Lord, who made you, who stretched out the sky and founded the earth? Why do you constantly tremble all day long at the anger of the oppressor, when he makes plans to destroy? Where is the anger of the oppressor?

51:14 The one who suffers will soon be released; he will not die in prison, he will not go hungry.

51:15 I am the Lord your God, who churns up the sea so that its waves surge. The Lord who commands armies is his name!

### **Zion's Time to Celebrate**

51:16 I commission you as my spokesman; I cover you with the palm of my hand, to establish the sky and to found the earth, to say to Zion, "You are my people."

51:17 Wake up! Wake up! Get up, O Jerusalem! You drank from the cup the Lord passed to you, which was full of his anger! You drained dry the goblet full of intoxicating wine.

51:18 There was no one to lead her among all the children she bore; there was no one to take her by the hand among all the children she raised.

51:19 These double disasters confronted you. But who feels sorry for you? Destruction and devastation, famine and sword. But who consoles you?

51:20 Your children faint; they lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a snare. They are left in a stupor by the Lord's anger, by the battle cry of your God.

51:21 So listen to this, oppressed one, who is drunk, but not from wine!

51:22 This is what your sovereign master, the Lord your God, says: "Look, I have removed from your hand the cup of intoxicating wine, the goblet full of my anger. You will no longer have to drink it.

51:23 I will put it into the hand of your tormentors who said to you, 'Lie down, so we can walk over you.' You made your back like the ground, and like the street for those who walked over you."

52:1 Wake up! Wake up!

Clothe yourself with strength, O Zion! Put on your beautiful clothes, O Jerusalem, holy city! For uncircumcised and unclean pagans will no longer invade you.

52:2 Shake off the dirt! Get up, captive Jerusalem! Take off the iron chains around your neck, O captive daughter Zion!

52:3 For this is what the Lord says: "You were sold for nothing, and you will not be redeemed for money."

52:4 For this is what the sovereign Lord says: "In the beginning my people went to live temporarily in Egypt; Assyria oppressed them for no good reason.

52:5 And now, what do we have here?" says the Lord. "Indeed my people have been carried away for nothing, those who rule over them taunt," says the Lord, "and my name is constantly slandered all day long.

52:6 For this reason my people will know my name, for this reason they will know at that time that I am the one who says, 'Here I am.'"

52:7 How delightful it is to see approaching over the mountains the feet of a messenger who announces peace, a messenger who brings good news, who announces deliverance, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

52:8 Listen, your watchmen shout; in unison they shout for joy, for they see with their very own eyes the Lord's return to Zion.

52:9 In unison give a joyful shout, O ruins of Jerusalem! For the Lord consoles his people; he protects Jerusalem.

52:10 The Lord reveals his royal power in the sight of all the nations; the entire earth sees our God deliver.

52:11 Leave! Leave! Get out of there! Don't touch anything unclean! Get out of it! Stay pure, you who carry the Lord's holy items!

52:12 Yet do not depart quickly or leave in a panic. For the Lord goes before you; the God of Israel is your rear guard.

### **The Lord Will Vindicate His Servant**

52:13 "Look, my servant will succeed! He will be elevated, lifted high, and greatly exalted –

52:14 (just as many were horrified by the sight of you) he was so disfigured he no longer looked like a man;

52:15 his form was so marred he no longer looked human – so now he will startle many nations. Kings will be shocked by his exaltation, for they will witness something unannounced to them, and they will understand something they had not heard about.

53:1 Who would have believed what we just heard? When was the Lord's power revealed through him?

53:2 He sprouted up like a twig before God, like a root out of parched soil; he had no stately form or majesty that might catch our attention, no special appearance that we should want to follow him.

53:3 He was despised and rejected by people, one who experienced pain and was acquainted with illness; people hid their faces from him; he was despised, and we considered him insignificant.

53:4 But he lifted up our illnesses, he carried our pain; even though we thought he was being punished, attacked by God, and afflicted for something he had done.

53:5 He was wounded because of our rebellious deeds, crushed because of our sins; he endured punishment that made us well; because of his wounds we have been healed.

53:6 All of us had wandered off like sheep; each of us had strayed off on his own path, but the Lord caused the sin of all of us to attack him.

53:7 He was treated harshly and afflicted, but he did not even open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughtering block, like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not even open his mouth.

53:8 He was led away after an unjust trial – but who even cared? Indeed, he was cut off from the land of the living; because of the rebellion of his own people he was wounded.

53:9 They intended to bury him with criminals, but he ended up in a rich man’s tomb, because he had committed no violent deeds, nor had he spoken deceitfully.

53:10 Though the Lord desired to crush him and make him ill, once restitution is made, he will see descendants and enjoy long life, and the Lord’s purpose will be accomplished through him.

53:11 Having suffered, he will reflect on his work, he will be satisfied when he understands what he has done. “My servant will acquit many, for he carried their sins.

53:12 So I will assign him a portion with the multitudes, he will divide the spoils of victory with the powerful, because he willingly submitted to death and was numbered with the rebels, when he lifted up the sin of many and intervened on behalf of the rebels.”

### **Zion Will Be Secure**

54:1 “Shout for joy, O barren one who has not given birth! Give a joyful shout and cry out, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one are more numerous than the children of the married woman,” says the Lord.

54:2 Make your tent larger, stretch your tent curtains farther out! Spare no effort, lengthen your ropes, and pound your stakes deep.

54:3 For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your children will conquer nations and will resettle desolate cities.

54:4 Don’t be afraid, for you will not be put to shame! Don’t be intimidated, for you will not be humiliated! You will forget about the shame you experienced in your youth; you will no longer remember the disgrace of your abandonment.

54:5 For your husband is the one who made you – the Lord who commands armies is his name. He is your protector, the Holy One of Israel. He is called “God of the entire earth.”

54:6 “Indeed, the Lord will call you back like a wife who has been abandoned and suffers from depression, like a young wife when she has been rejected,” says your God.

54:7 “For a short time I abandoned you, but with great compassion I will gather you.

54:8 In a burst of anger I rejected you momentarily, but with lasting devotion I will have compassion on you,” says your protector, the Lord.

54:9 “As far as I am concerned, this is like in Noah’s time, when I vowed that the waters of Noah’s flood would never again cover the earth. In the same way I have vowed that I will not be angry at you or shout at you.

54:10 Even if the mountains are removed and the hills displaced, my devotion will not be removed from you, nor will my covenant of friendship be displaced,” says the Lord, the one who has compassion on you.

54:11 “O afflicted one, driven away, and unconsolated! Look, I am about to set your stones in antimony and I lay your foundation with lapis-lazuli.

54:12 I will make your pinnacles out of gems, your gates out of beryl, and your outer wall out of beautiful stones.

54:13 All your children will be followers of the Lord, and your children will enjoy great prosperity.

54:14 You will be reestablished when I vindicate you. You will not experience oppression; indeed, you will not be afraid. You will not be terrified, for nothing frightening will come near you.

54:15 If anyone dares to challenge you, it will not be my doing! Whoever tries to challenge you will be defeated.

54:16 Look, I create the craftsman, who fans the coals into a fire and forges a weapon. I create the destroyer so he might devastate.

54:17 No weapon forged to be used against you will succeed; you will refute everyone who tries to accuse you. This is what the Lord will do for his servants – I will vindicate them,” says the Lord.

## PRAYER

Lord, when we act against You, we harm our relationship with you. May I nurture my relationship with You through honor given to Your holiness and obedience to Your teaching. You desire reconciliation and restoration but we must come to You with genuine repentance.

## SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Isaiah had reported the Lord God’s calling and equipping of Persian king Cyrus, neither an Israelite nor a gentile believer in Him “For the sake of my servant Jacob, Israel, my chosen one, I call you by name and give you a title of respect, even though you do not recognize me.”



He announced the Lord's warning against anyone who would question His sovereign commissioning of Cyrus. He then described how He would give riches and success to Cyrus to assure him success in liberating Israel.

Isaiah declared the Lord's solitary power to accomplish the liberation of Israel and His intention to do so despite any mere human resistance. He prophesied the fall of the Babylonian empire.

He then appealed to the Israelites to repent of their rebellion and to turn to Him, their only redeemer and renewed His promise to redeem "Zion".

The Lord God, continuing to speak through Isaiah, questioned the lack of understanding of the Israelites. Speaking rhetorically He asked them to what creditor sold them or in what worldly divorce certificate was His divorce of their mother [the prior generation] recorded. He then answered His question "... you were sold because of your sins; because of your rebellious acts I divorced your mother."

Isaiah presented a defense of himself to those who attacked and ridiculed him "The sovereign Lord has given me the capacity to be his spokesman, so that I know how to help the weary. He wakes me up every morning; he makes me alert so I can listen attentively as disciples do. The sovereign Lord has spoken to me clearly; I have not rebelled, I have not turned back. I offered my back to those who attacked, my jaws to those who tore out my beard; I did not hide my face from insults and spitting. But the sovereign Lord helps me, so I am not humiliated. For that reason I am steadfastly resolved; I know I will not be put to shame."

Then he warned them "Look, all of you who start a fire and who equip yourselves with flaming arrows, walk in the light of the fire you started and among the flaming arrows you ignited! This is what you will receive from me: you will lie down in a place of pain."

Isaiah delivered the Lord God's reminder "Listen to me, you who pursue godliness, who seek the Lord! Look at the rock from which you were chiseled, at the quarry from which you were dug! Look at Abraham, your father, and Sarah, who gave you birth. When I summoned him, he was a lone individual, but I blessed him and gave him numerous descendants."

He then shared His promise "Certainly the Lord will console Zion; he will console all her ruins. He will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the Garden of the Lord. Happiness and joy will be restored to her, thanksgiving and the sound of music."

Isaiah concluded with the message that Israel should celebrate and then act without fear to return home "The Lord reveals his royal power in the sight of all the nations; the entire earth sees our God deliver. Leave! Leave! Get out of there! Don't touch anything unclean! Get out of it! Stay pure, you who carry the Lord's holy items! Yet do not depart quickly or leave in a panic. For the Lord goes before you; the God of Israel is your rear guard."

Jesus is prophesied, first in the moments following His false trial, conviction, and abuse "... his form was so marred he no longer looked human ..." And then, upon His return ... so now he will startle many nations ... Kings will be shocked by his exaltation, for they will witness something unannounced to them, and they will understand something they had not heard about."

Isaiah proclaimed the ministry of propitiation of Jesus, beginning with the origins of His human form "He sprouted up like a twig before God, like a root out of parched soil; he had no stately form or majesty that might catch our attention, no special appearance that we should want to follow him." Then the nature of His ministry which challenged religious traditions and worldly expectations "He was despised and rejected by people, one who experienced pain and was acquainted with illness; people hid their faces from him; he was despised, and we considered him insignificant." The His assumption of our sin on to Himself, One Who had lived without any sin of His own "But he lifted up our illnesses, he carried our pain; even though we thought he was being punished, attacked by God, and afflicted for something he had done. He was wounded because of our rebellious deeds, crushed because of our sins; he endured punishment that made us well; because of his wounds we have been healed. All of us had wandered off like sheep; each of us had strayed off on his own path, but the Lord caused the sin of all of us to attack him."

He continued the prophesy of His final moments prior to the Cross "He was treated harshly and afflicted, but he did not even open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughtering block, like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not even open his mouth. He was led away after an unjust trial – but who even cared?" Then on to the consequence of assuming our sin "Indeed, he was cut off from the land of the living; because of the rebellion of his own people he was wounded."

Isaiah prophesied the post-Cross expectations of those who failed to understand "They intended to bury him with criminals, but he ended up in a rich man's tomb, because he had committed no violent deeds, nor had he spoken deceitfully."

He described the demands of perfect justice "Though the Lord desired to crush him and make him ill, once restitution is made, he will see descendants and enjoy long life, and the Lord's purpose will be accomplished through him." And the consequence of Him meeting the demands of justice in our place "Having suffered, he will reflect on his work, he will be satisfied when he understands what he has done. "My servant will acquit many, for he carried their sins." And finally His exalted standing among the multitudes and powerful "So I will assign him a portion with the multitudes, he will divide the spoils of victory with the powerful, because he willingly submitted to death and was numbered with the rebels, when he lifted up the sin of many and intervened on behalf of the rebels."

The redemption made possible by Jesus was likened to a temporarily fractured marriage "... your husband is the one who made you – the Lord who commands armies is his name. He is your protector, the Holy One of Israel. He is called "God of the entire earth." "Indeed, the Lord will call you back like a wife

who has been abandoned and suffers from depression, like a young wife when she has been rejected,” says your God. “For a short time I abandoned you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In a burst of anger I rejected you momentarily, but with lasting devotion I will have compassion on you,” says your protector, the Lord.”

Isaiah concluded this section of text with the Lord God’s reminder that His reconciliation and restoration was conditional – based upon their genuine repentance “Seek the Lord while he makes himself available; call to him while he is nearby! The wicked need to abandon their lifestyle and sinful people their plans. They should return to the Lord, and he will show mercy to them, and to their God, for he will freely forgive them.”

## **INTERACT WITH THE TEXT**

### **CONSIDER**

“Israel” and “Zion” became Biblical-metaphors for those who have a saving relationship through the Messiah. The Israelites were confused as to why the Lord God had allowed them into captivity. Jesus, God in a temporary glory-free human form, came to be our sacrifice – because no fallen human – however imperfectly righteous, could meet the demand of justice for a perfectly sin-free substitute.

### **DISCUSS**

Why would people later confuse Cyrus with the Messiah, given Isaiah’s clear description of the nature of the unique missions of the two? Why would Israelites have attacked and ridiculed Isaiah? Why was it important the Jesus in human form be lacking the sort of “Saul” or “David” physically-attractive appearance?

### **REFLECT**

Cyrus would not come to liberate Israel for 250 years after Isaiah’s prophesy, he would be misunderstood by some to be the Messiah, and neither he nor the people would rise to the desired state of righteousness required of the Lord’s proclamation – therefore much more time would come prior to the arrival of the Messiah and even more until His second coming. The Lord God promised Israel redemption, but they were to be righteous along the way. The Lord God saw His covenant with Israel like a marriage where the wife strayed and the husband chose a temporary separation as she was punished. He remained ready to reconcile and restore, and He created a process by which the relationship could be restored, then invited “her” to join Him when she was ready to repent and to surrender again to the covenant.

### **SHARE**

When have you been ‘rescued’ by an unlikely person, someone clearly sent by the Lord, but not a fellow believer? When have you been puzzled as to why you were struggling and only later realized that it was

because you had broken-fellowship with the Lord? When have you experienced or observed a Christian leader whose physically-attractive appearance became an impediment to focus on Jesus?

## FAITH IN ACTION

### PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a place in your life where He wants you to surrender and then partner with Him to move towards righteousness – in anticipation of the return of Jesus, to reveal to you an opportunity He is creating to draw you nearer to Him, and to remind you of something in your life, a distraction from your relational intimacy with Him, which He has overcome in order to improve your relationship.

### ACT

Today I will joyfully surrender that place in my life that is not right before the Lord. I will ask a fellow believer to pray in-agreement, and to be my accountability partner, and I walk with the Holy Spirit to greater maturity. I will joyfully celebrate the opportunity to draw nearer to the Lord God and will follow where He leads me in prayer and study, praise and service. I will give Him all the praise and will prayerfully seek-out other areas where I may partner with the Holy Spirit to continue the process of improving my relationship with the Lord God.

Be Specific \_\_\_\_\_

## Friday ([Isaiah 55–59](#))

### The Lord Gives an Invitation

55:1 “Hey, all who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come! Buy and eat! Come! Buy wine and milk without money and without cost!

55:2 Why pay money for something that will not nourish you? Why spend your hard-earned money on something that will not satisfy? Listen carefully to me and eat what is nourishing! Enjoy fine food!

55:3 Pay attention and come to me! Listen, so you can live! Then I will make an unconditional covenantal promise to you, just like the reliable covenantal promises I made to David.

55:4 Look, I made him a witness to nations, a ruler and commander of nations.”

55:5 Look, you will summon nations you did not previously know; nations that did not previously know you will run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he bestows honor on you.

55:6 Seek the Lord while he makes himself available; call to him while he is nearby! 55:7 The wicked need to abandon their lifestyle and sinful people their plans. They should return to the Lord, and he will show mercy to them, and to their God, for he will freely forgive them.

55:8 “Indeed, my plans are not like your plans, and my deeds are not like your deeds,

55:9 for just as the sky is higher than the earth, so my deeds are superior to your deeds and my plans superior to your plans.

55:10 The rain and snow fall from the sky and do not return, but instead water the earth and make it produce and yield crops, and provide seed for the planter and food for those who must eat.

55:11 In the same way, the promise that I make does not return to me, having accomplished nothing. No, it is realized as I desire and is fulfilled as I intend.”

55:12 Indeed you will go out with joy; you will be led along in peace; the mountains and hills will give a joyful shout before you, and all the trees in the field will clap their hands.

55:13 Evergreens will grow in place of thorn bushes, firs will grow in place of nettles; they will be a monument to the Lord, a permanent reminder that will remain.

### **The Lord Invites Outsiders to Enter**

56:1 This is what the Lord says, “Promote justice! Do what is right! For I am ready to deliver you; I am ready to vindicate you openly.

56:2 The people who do this will be blessed, the people who commit themselves to obedience, who observe the Sabbath and do not defile it, who refrain from doing anything that is wrong.

56:3 No foreigner who becomes a follower of the Lord should say, “The Lord will certainly exclude me from his people.’ The eunuch should not say, ‘Look, I am like a dried-up tree.’”

56:4 For this is what the Lord says: “For the eunuchs who observe my Sabbaths and choose what pleases me and are faithful to my covenant,

56:5 I will set up within my temple and my walls a monument that will be better than sons and daughters. I will set up a permanent monument for them that will remain.

56:6 As for foreigners who become followers of the Lord and serve him, who love the name of the Lord and want to be his servants – all who observe the Sabbath and do not defile it, and who are faithful to my covenant –

56:7 I will bring them to my holy mountain; I will make them happy in the temple where people pray to me. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar, for my temple will be known as a temple where all nations may pray.”

56:8 The sovereign Lord says this, the one who gathers the dispersed of Israel: “I will still gather them up.”

### **The Lord Denounces Israel’s Paganism**

56:9 All you wild animals in the fields, come and devour, all you wild animals in the forest!

56:10 All their watchmen are blind, they are unaware. All of them are like mute dogs, unable to bark. They pant, lie down, and love to snooze.

56:11 The dogs have big appetites; they are never full. They are shepherds who have no understanding; they all go their own way, each one looking for monetary gain.

56:12 Each one says, ‘Come on, I’ll get some wine! Let’s guzzle some beer! Tomorrow will be just like today! We’ll have everything we want!’

57:1 The godly perish, but no one cares. Honest people disappear, when no one minds that the godly disappear because of evil.

57:2 Those who live uprightly enter a place of peace; they rest on their beds.

57:3 But approach, you sons of omen readers, you offspring of adulteresses and prostitutes!

57:4 At whom are you laughing? At whom are you opening your mouth and sticking out your tongue? You are the children of rebels, the offspring of liars,

57:5 you who practice ritual sex under the oaks and every green tree, who slaughter children near the streams under the rocky overhangs.

57:6 Among the smooth stones of the stream are the idols you love; they, they are the object of your devotion. You pour out liquid offerings to them, you make an offering. Because of these things I will seek vengeance.

57:7 On every high, elevated hill you prepare your bed; you go up there to offer sacrifices.

57:8 Behind the door and doorpost you put your symbols. Indeed, you depart from me and go up and invite them into bed with you. You purchase favors from them, you love their bed, and gaze longingly on their genitals.

57:9 You take olive oil as tribute to your king, along with many perfumes. You send your messengers to a distant place; you go all the way to Sheol.

57:10 Because of the long distance you must travel, you get tired, but you do not say, 'I give up.' You get renewed energy, so you don't collapse.

57:11 Whom are you worried about? Whom do you fear, that you would act so deceitfully and not remember me or think about me? Because I have been silent for so long, you are not afraid of me.

57:12 I will denounce your so-called righteousness and your deeds, but they will not help you.

57:13 When you cry out for help, let your idols help you! The wind blows them all away, a breeze carries them away. But the one who looks to me for help will inherit the land and will have access to my holy mountain."

57:14 He says, "Build it! Build it! Clear a way! Remove all the obstacles out of the way of my people!"

57:15 For this is what the high and exalted one says, the one who rules forever, whose name is holy: "I dwell in an exalted and holy place, but also with the discouraged and humiliated, in order to cheer up the humiliated and to encourage the discouraged.

57:16 For I will not be hostile forever or perpetually angry, for then man's spirit would grow faint before me, the life-giving breath I created.

57:17 I was angry because of their sinful greed; I attacked them and angrily rejected them, yet they remained disobedient and stubborn.

57:18 I have seen their behavior, but I will heal them and give them rest, and I will once again console those who mourn.

57:19 I am the one who gives them reason to celebrate. Complete prosperity is available both to those who are far away and those who are nearby," says the Lord, "and I will heal them.

57:20 But the wicked are like a surging sea that is unable to be quiet; its waves toss up mud and sand.

57:21 There will be no prosperity," says my God, "for the wicked."

### **The Lord Desires Genuine Devotion**

58:1 "Shout loudly! Don't be quiet! Yell as loud as a trumpet! Confront my people with their rebellious deeds; confront Jacob's family with their sin!

58:2 They seek me day after day; they want to know my requirements, like a nation that does what is right and does not reject the law of their God. They ask me for just decrees; they want to be near God.

58:3 They lament, 'Why don't you notice when we fast? Why don't you pay attention when we humble ourselves?' Look, at the same time you fast, you satisfy your selfish desires, you oppress your workers.

58:4 Look, your fasting is accompanied by arguments, brawls, and fistfights. Do not fast as you do today, trying to make your voice heard in heaven.

58:5 Is this really the kind of fasting I want? Do I want a day when people merely humble themselves, bowing their heads like a reed and stretching out on sackcloth and ashes? Is this really what you call a fast, a day that is pleasing to the Lord?

58:6 No, this is the kind of fast I want. I want you to remove the sinful chains, to tear away the ropes of the burdensome yoke, to set free the oppressed, and to break every burdensome yoke.

58:7 I want you to share your food with the hungry and to provide shelter for homeless, oppressed people. When you see someone naked, clothe him! Don't turn your back on your own flesh and blood!

58:8 Then your light will shine like the sunrise; your restoration will quickly arrive; your godly behavior will go before you, and the Lord's splendor will be your rear guard.

58:9 Then you will call out, and the Lord will respond; you will cry out, and he will reply, 'Here I am.' You must remove the burdensome yoke from among you and stop pointing fingers and speaking sinfully.

58:10 You must actively help the hungry and feed the oppressed. Then your light will dispel the darkness, and your darkness will be transformed into noonday.

58:11 The Lord will continually lead you; he will feed you even in parched regions. He will give you renewed strength, and you will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring that continually produces water.

58:12 Your perpetual ruins will be rebuilt; you will reestablish the ancient foundations. You will be called, 'The one who repairs broken walls, the one who makes the streets inhabitable again.'

58:13 You must observe the Sabbath rather than doing anything you please on my holy day. You must look forward to the Sabbath and treat the Lord's holy day with respect. You must treat it with respect by refraining from your normal activities, and by refraining from your selfish pursuits and from making business deals.

58:14 Then you will find joy in your relationship to the Lord, and I will give you great prosperity, and cause crops to grow on the land I gave to your ancestor Jacob." Know for certain that the Lord has spoken.



## Injustice Brings Alienation from God

59:1 Look, the Lord's hand is not too weak to deliver you; his ear is not too deaf to hear you.

59:2 But your sinful acts have alienated you from your God; your sins have caused him to reject you and not listen to your prayers.

59:3 For your hands are stained with blood and your fingers with sin; your lips speak lies, your tongue utters malicious words.

59:4 No one is concerned about justice; no one sets forth his case truthfully. They depend on false words and tell lies; they conceive of oppression and give birth to sin.

59:5 They hatch the eggs of a poisonous snake and spin a spider's web. Whoever eats their eggs will die, a poisonous snake is hatched.

59:6 Their webs cannot be used for clothing; they cannot cover themselves with what they make. Their deeds are sinful; they commit violent crimes.

59:7 They are eager to do evil, quick to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are sinful; they crush and destroy.

59:8 They are unfamiliar with peace; their deeds are unjust. They use deceitful methods, and whoever deals with them is unfamiliar with peace.

## Israel Confesses its Sin

59:9 For this reason deliverance is far from us and salvation does not reach us. We wait for light, but see only darkness; we wait for a bright light, but live in deep darkness.

59:10 We grope along the wall like the blind, we grope like those who cannot see; we stumble at noontime as if it were evening. Though others are strong, we are like dead men.

59:11 We all growl like bears, we coo mournfully like doves; we wait for deliverance, but there is none, for salvation, but it is far from us.

59:12 For you are aware of our many rebellious deeds, and our sins testify against us; indeed, we are aware of our rebellious deeds; we know our sins all too well.

59:13 We have rebelled and tried to deceive the Lord; we turned back from following our God. We stir up oppression and rebellion; we tell lies we concocted in our minds.

59:14 Justice is driven back; godliness stands far off. Indeed, honesty stumbles in the city square and morality is not even able to enter.

59:15 Honesty has disappeared; the one who tries to avoid evil is robbed. The Lord watches and is displeased, for there is no justice.

### The Lord Intervenes

59:16 He sees there is no advocate; he is shocked that no one intervenes. So he takes matters into his own hands; his desire for justice drives him on.

59:17 He wears his desire for justice like body armor, and his desire to deliver is like a helmet on his head. He puts on the garments of vengeance and wears zeal like a robe.

59:18 He repays them for what they have done, dispensing angry judgment to his adversaries and punishing his enemies. He repays the coastlands.

59:19 In the west, people respect the Lord's reputation; in the east they recognize his splendor. For he comes like a rushing stream driven on by wind sent from the Lord.

59:20 "A protector comes to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their rebellious deeds," says the Lord.

59:21 "As for me, this is my promise to them," says the Lord. "My spirit, who is upon you, and my words, which I have placed in your mouth, will not depart from your mouth or from the mouths of your children and descendants from this time forward," says the Lord.

### PRAYER

Lord, May I never believe nor tolerate the belief that there is anything remotely like a "cheap and easy grace". There is no eternal grace absent genuine repentance; an honest confession, turning away from sin/rebellion, requesting and receiving forgiveness, and surrendering everything to the Lordship of Christ. You are our hope and our accountability; our relationship with You is on Your terms and not ours. May I learn to know you better so that I may live rightly before You. You hold us accountable and expect us to hold one-another accountable. You want a real relationship with us, and You want us to have real relationships with one-another, relationships characterized by love and not legalistic rituals and selfish expectations. May I reflect daily on my progress toward maturity in a life that is lived as You would have it, not as the world teaches.

### SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Jesus was prophesied via Isaiah; this may be seen in the moments following His false trial, conviction, and abuse "... his form was so marred he no longer looked human ..." And then, upon His return ... so now he

will startle many nations ... Kings will be shocked by his exaltation, for they will witness something unannounced to them, and they will understand something they had not heard about.”

Isaiah proclaimed the ministry of propitiation of Jesus, beginning with the origins of His human form “He sprouted up like a twig before God, like a root out of parched soil; he had no stately form or majesty that might catch our attention, no special appearance that we should want to follow him.” Then the nature of His ministry which challenged religious traditions and worldly expectations “He was despised and rejected by people, one who experienced pain and was acquainted with illness; people hid their faces from him; he was despised, and we considered him insignificant.” The His assumption of our sin on to Himself, One Who had lived without any sin of His own “But he lifted up our illnesses, he carried our pain; even though we thought he was being punished, attacked by God, and afflicted for something he had done. He was wounded because of our rebellious deeds, crushed because of our sins; he endured punishment that made us well; because of his wounds we have been healed. All of us had wandered off like sheep; each of us had strayed off on his own path, but the Lord caused the sin of all of us to attack him.”

He continued the prophesy of His final moments prior to the Cross “He was treated harshly and afflicted, but he did not even open his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughtering block, like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not even open his mouth. He was led away after an unjust trial – but who even cared?” Then on to the consequence of assuming our sin “Indeed, he was cut off from the land of the living; because of the rebellion of his own people he was wounded.”

Isaiah prophesied the post-Cross expectations of those who failed to understand “They intended to bury him with criminals, but he ended up in a rich man’s tomb, because he had committed no violent deeds, nor had he spoken deceitfully.”

He described the demands of perfect justice “Though the Lord desired to crush him and make him ill, once restitution is made, he will see descendants and enjoy long life, and the Lord’s purpose will be accomplished through him.” And the consequence of Him meeting the demands of justice in our place “Having suffered, he will reflect on his work, he will be satisfied when he understands what he has done. “My servant will acquit many, for he carried their sins.” And finally His exalted standing among the multitudes and powerful “So I will assign him a portion with the multitudes, he will divide the spoils of victory with the powerful, because he willingly submitted to death and was numbered with the rebels, when he lifted up the sin of many and intervened on behalf of the rebels.”

The redemption made possible by Jesus was likened to a temporarily fractured marriage “... your husband is the one who made you – the Lord who commands armies is his name. He is your protector, the Holy One of Israel. He is called “God of the entire earth.” “Indeed, the Lord will call you back like a wife who has been abandoned and suffers from depression, like a young wife when she has been rejected,” says your God. “For a short time I abandoned you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In a burst

of anger I rejected you momentarily, but with lasting devotion I will have compassion on you,” says your protector, the Lord.”

Isaiah delivered the Lord God’s reminder that His reconciliation and restoration was conditional – based upon their genuine repentance “Seek the Lord while he makes himself available; call to him while he is nearby! The wicked need to abandon their lifestyle and sinful people their plans. They should return to the Lord, and he will show mercy to them, and to their God, for he will freely forgive them.”

Isaiah continued the proclamation of the Lord God, beginning with a reminder that His offer of reconciliation and restoration was conditioned on repentant-obedience “Promote justice! Do what is right! For I am ready to deliver you; I am ready to vindicate you openly.”

He then addressed the non-Jew among the Israelites who surrendered themselves to the Lord God, making it clear that they had equal standing before Him, and that He would honor the faith of the eunuch (generically, a single and/or childless person) as well.

Isaiah delivered the challenge of the Lord God against those who worshiped idols “Whom are you worried about? Whom do you fear, that you would act so deceitfully and not remember me or think about me? Because I have been silent for so long, you are not afraid of me. I will denounce your so-called righteousness and your deeds, but they will not help you. When you cry out for help, let your idols help you! The wind blows them all away, a breeze carries them away. But the one who looks to me for help will inherit the land and will have access to my holy mountain.”“

He declared the hope that came from the Lord God “I dwell in an exalted and holy place, but also with the discouraged and humiliated, in order to cheer up the humiliated and to encourage the discouraged. For I will not be hostile forever or perpetually angry, for then man’s spirit would grow faint before me, the life-giving breath I created.”

He concluded with the consequences to those who remain rebellious “... the wicked are like a surging sea that is unable to be quiet; its waves toss up mud and sand. There will be no prosperity,” says my God, “for the wicked.”“

Isaiah began with the Lord God’s call for accountability “Shout loudly! Don’t be quiet! Yell as loud as a trumpet! Confront my people with their rebellious deeds; confront Jacob’s family with their sin!”

He then declared God’s disgust with the hypocrisy of people who complained the He did not respond to their cries for help but who fasted, argued, and fought all at the same time. Even a peaceful ritual was not acceptable “Do I want a day when people merely humble themselves, bowing their heads like a reed and stretching out on sackcloth and ashes? Is this really what you call a fast, a day that is pleasing to the Lord?”

Isaiah then described what the Lord God wanted "... this is the kind of fast I want. I want you to remove the sinful chains, to tear away the ropes of the burdensome yoke, to set free the oppressed, and to break every burdensome yoke. I want you to share your food with the hungry and to provide shelter for homeless, oppressed people. When you see someone naked, clothe him! Don't turn your back on your own flesh and blood!"

The result of obedient behavior from hearts inclined toward the Lord God would be "Then your light will shine like the sunrise; your restoration will quickly arrive; your godly behavior will go before you, and the Lord's splendor will be your rear guard. Then you will call out, and the Lord will respond ..."

Isaiah delivered the wisdom teaching "... your sinful acts have alienated you from your God; your sins have caused him to reject you and not listen to your prayers ... They are unfamiliar with peace; their deeds are unjust. They use deceitful methods, and whoever deals with them is unfamiliar with peace."

Distance from the Lord God is always our fault, He stands ready and willing to reconcile and to restore, but "For this reason deliverance is far from us and salvation does not reach us. We wait for light, but see only darkness; we wait for a bright light, but live in deep darkness."

The consequence of rebellion is always apparent in the form of a troubled civilization "We stir up oppression and rebellion; we tell lies we concocted in our minds. Justice is driven back; godliness stands far off. Indeed, honesty stumbles in the city square and morality is not even able to enter. Honesty has disappeared; the one who tries to avoid evil is robbed. The Lord watches and is displeased, for there is no justice."

## INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

### CONSIDER

Jesus, God in a temporary glory-free human form, came to be our sacrifice – because no fallen human – however imperfectly righteous, could meet the demand of justice for a perfectly sin-free substitute. The Lord God loves singles and the childless and even in Isaiah's time made a special effort to affirm and to honor them - in the face of a culture that was obsessed with marriage and children. In the NT the apostle Paul re-affirmed the Lord God's love for those who are single and/or childless. Unloving legalism and heartless rituals are not Biblically acceptable. The Lord God does not move away from us, though our choice to push Him away, to build walls, and/or to engage in reprehensible conduct repels Him in His perfect holiness.

### DISCUSS

Why was it important the Jesus in human form be lacking the sort of "Saul" or "David" physically-attractive appearance? Why would people think that they could pretend to honor the Lord God and still continue their disgusting practices in the temples to false pagan idols? How could the people have drifted

so far that they imagined such vile behavior during their fasts and other gatherings, and their improper behavior on the Sabbath, could be acceptable to the Lord God? When the consequence of rebellion against the Lord God is so obviously negative why is humankind so quick to offend Him in the pursuit of temporary fleshly lusts?

## REFLECT

The Lord God saw His covenant with Israel like a marriage where the wife strayed and the husband chose a temporary separation as she was punished. He remained ready to reconcile and restore, and He created a process by which the relationship could be restored, then invited “her” to join Him when she was ready to repent and to surrender again to the covenant. Reconciliation and restoration are possible when we repent and surrender. Caring for “the least of these” has been a long-standing expectation of the Lord God. Notice that He is speaking of believers, He is specific in the use of the phrase “Don’t turn your back on your own flesh and blood!”

## SHARE

When have you experienced or observed a Christian leader whose physically-attractive appearance became an impediment to focus on Jesus? When have you experienced or observed the double-mindedness of claiming to be a true child of God through Jesus while still living in many worldly ways? When have you discovered that you were at one extreme or another in your practice of the religious elements of your faith, either imbalanced on the emotional side, or imbalanced on the intellectual/legalistic side? When have you been in an environment suffering from many troubles and discovered that those who were at the heart of the troubles were estranged from the Lord God? When have you experienced or observed an individual with an opportunity to be blessed but who threw it all away because they refused to repent of their poor life choices?

## FAITH IN ACTION

### PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of something in your life, a distraction from your relational intimacy with Him, which He has overcome in order to improve your relationship, to reveal to you a place in your life where you are still living outside of His moral will for your righteousness; essentially making that thing which He finds disgusting an idol – separating you and Him, and/or an opportunity to “... share your food with the hungry and to provide shelter for homeless, oppressed people. When you see someone naked, clothe him! Don’t turn your back on your own flesh and blood!”

### ACTION

Today I will give Him all the praise and will prayerfully seek-out other areas where I may partner with the Holy Spirit to continue the process of improving my relationship with the Lord God. I will repent, seek

and receive His forgiveness, and surrender to the Holy Spirit as He leads me to a more-righteous walk with Him. I will obey the prompting of the Holy Spirit and either join with others in the efforts of an existing ministry, or else I will start my own, perhaps serving the person who sits next to me in Sunday fellowship or another fellow Christian of whose need I am made aware.

Be Specific \_\_\_\_\_

## **Saturday ([Isaiah 60–66](#))**

### **Zion's Future Splendor**

60:1 "Arise! Shine! For your light arrives! The splendor of the Lord shines on you!

60:2 For, look, darkness covers the earth and deep darkness covers the nations, but the Lord shines on you; his splendor appears over you.

60:3 Nations come to your light, kings to your bright light.

60:4 Look all around you! They all gather and come to you – your sons come from far away and your daughters are escorted by guardians.

60:5 Then you will look and smile, you will be excited and your heart will swell with pride. For the riches of distant lands will belong to you and the wealth of nations will come to you.

60:6 Camel caravans will cover your roads, young camels from Midian and Ephah. All the merchants of Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense and singing praises to the Lord.

60:7 All the sheep of Kedar will be gathered to you; the rams of Nebaioth will be available to you as sacrifices. They will go up on my altar acceptably, and I will bestow honor on my majestic temple.

60:8 Who are these who float along like a cloud, who fly like doves to their shelters?

60:9 Indeed, the coastlands look eagerly for me, the large ships are in the lead, bringing your sons from far away, along with their silver and gold, to honor the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has bestowed honor on you.

60:10 Foreigners will rebuild your walls; their kings will serve you. Even though I struck you down in my anger, I will restore my favor and have compassion on you.

60:11 Your gates will remain open at all times; they will not be shut during the day or at night, so that the wealth of nations may be delivered, with their kings leading the way.

60:12 Indeed, nations or kingdoms that do not serve you will perish; such nations will be totally destroyed.

60:13 The splendor of Lebanon will come to you, its evergreens, firs, and cypresses together, to beautify my palace; I will bestow honor on my throne room.

60:14 The children of your oppressors will come bowing to you; all who treated you with disrespect will bow down at your feet. They will call you, 'The City of the Lord, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.'

60:15 You were once abandoned and despised, with no one passing through, but I will make you a permanent source of pride and joy to coming generations.

60:16 You will drink the milk of nations; you will nurse at the breasts of kings. Then you will recognize that I, the Lord, am your deliverer, your protector, the powerful ruler of Jacob.

60:17 Instead of bronze, I will bring you gold, instead of iron, I will bring you silver, instead of wood, I will bring you bronze, instead of stones, I will bring you iron. I will make prosperity your overseer, and vindication your sovereign ruler.

60:18 Sounds of violence will no longer be heard in your land, or the sounds of destruction and devastation within your borders. You will name your walls, 'Deliverance,' and your gates, 'Praise.'

60:19 The sun will no longer supply light for you by day, nor will the moon's brightness shine on you; the Lord will be your permanent source of light – the splendor of your God will shine upon you.

60:20 Your sun will no longer set; your moon will not disappear; the Lord will be your permanent source of light; your time of sorrow will be over.

60:21 All of your people will be godly; they will possess the land permanently. I will plant them like a shoot; they will be the product of my labor, through whom I reveal my splendor.

60:22 The least of you will multiply into a thousand; the smallest of you will become a large nation. When the right time comes, I the Lord will quickly do this!"

### **The Lord Will Rejuvenate His People**

61:1 The spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon me, because the Lord has chosen me. He has commissioned me to encourage the poor, to help the brokenhearted, to decree the release of captives, and the freeing of prisoners,

61:2 to announce the year when the Lord will show his favor, the day when our God will seek vengeance, to console all who mourn,



61:3 to strengthen those who mourn in Zion, by giving them a turban, instead of ashes, oil symbolizing joy, instead of mourning, a garment symbolizing praise, instead of discouragement. They will be called oaks of righteousness, trees planted by the Lord to reveal his splendor.

61:4 They will rebuild the perpetual ruins and restore the places that were desolate; they will reestablish the ruined cities, the places that have been desolate since ancient times.

61:5 “Foreigners will take care of your sheep; foreigners will work in your fields and vineyards.

61:6 You will be called, ‘the Lord’s priests, servants of our God.’ You will enjoy the wealth of nations and boast about the riches you receive from them.

61:7 Instead of shame, you will get a double portion; instead of humiliation, they will rejoice over the land they receive. Yes, they will possess a double portion in their land and experience lasting joy.

61:8 For I, the Lord, love justice and hate robbery and sin. I will repay them because of my faithfulness; I will make a permanent covenant with them.

61:9 Their descendants will be known among the nations, their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will recognize that the Lord has blessed them.”

61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; I will be overjoyed because of my God. For he clothes me in garments of deliverance; he puts on me a robe symbolizing vindication. I look like a bridegroom when he wears a turban as a priest would; I look like a bride when she puts on her jewelry.

61:11 For just as the ground produces its crops and a garden yields its produce, so the sovereign Lord will cause deliverance to grow, and give his people reason to praise him in the sight of all the nations.

### **The Lord Takes Delight in Zion**

62:1 “For the sake of Zion I will not be silent; for the sake of Jerusalem I will not be quiet, until her vindication shines brightly and her deliverance burns like a torch.”

62:2 Nations will see your vindication, and all kings your splendor. You will be called by a new name that the Lord himself will give you.

62:3 You will be a majestic crown in the hand of the Lord, a royal turban in the hand of your God.

62:4 You will no longer be called, “Abandoned,” and your land will no longer be called “Desolate.” Indeed, you will be called “My Delight is in Her,” and your land “Married.” For the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married to him.

62:5 As a young man marries a young woman, so your sons will marry you. As a bridegroom rejoices over a bride, so your God will rejoice over you.

62:6 I post watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they should keep praying all day and all night. You who pray to the Lord, don't be silent!

62:7 Don't allow him to rest until he reestablishes Jerusalem, until he makes Jerusalem the pride of the earth.

62:8 The Lord swears an oath by his right hand, by his strong arm: "I will never again give your grain to your enemies as food, and foreigners will not drink your wine, which you worked hard to produce.

62:9 But those who harvest the grain will eat it, and will praise the Lord. Those who pick the grapes will drink the wine in the courts of my holy sanctuary."

62:10 Come through! Come through the gates! Prepare the way for the people! Build it! Build the roadway! Remove the stones! Lift a signal flag for the nations!

62:11 Look, the Lord announces to the entire earth: "Say to Daughter Zion, 'Look, your deliverer comes! Look, his reward is with him and his reward goes before him!'"

62:12 They will be called, "The Holy People, the Ones Protected by the Lord." You will be called, "Sought After, City Not Abandoned."

### **The Victorious Divine Warrior**

63:1 Who is this who comes from Edom, dressed in bright red, coming from Bozrah? Who is this one wearing royal attire, who marches confidently because of his great strength? "It is I, the one who announces vindication, and who is able to deliver!"

63:2 Why are your clothes red? Why do you look like someone who has stomped on grapes in a vat?

63:3 "I have stomped grapes in the winepress all by myself; no one from the nations joined me. I stomped on them in my anger; I trampled them down in my rage. Their juice splashed on my garments, and stained all my clothes.

63:4 For I looked forward to the day of vengeance, and then payback time arrived.

63:5 I looked, but there was no one to help; I was shocked because there was no one offering support. So my right arm accomplished deliverance; my raging anger drove me on.

63:6 I trampled nations in my anger, I made them drunk in my rage, I splashed their blood on the ground.”

### A Prayer for Divine Intervention

63:7 I will tell of the faithful acts of the Lord, of the Lord’s praiseworthy deeds. I will tell about all the Lord did for us, the many good things he did for the family of Israel, because of his compassion and great faithfulness.

63:8 He said, “Certainly they will be my people, children who are not disloyal.” He became their deliverer.

63:9 Through all that they suffered, he suffered too. The messenger sent from his very presence delivered them. In his love and mercy he protected them; he lifted them up and carried them throughout ancient times.

63:10 But they rebelled and offended his holy Spirit, so he turned into an enemy and fought against them.

63:11 His people remembered the ancient times. Where is the one who brought them up out of the sea, along with the shepherd of his flock? Where is the one who placed his holy Spirit among them,

63:12 the one who made his majestic power available to Moses, who divided the water before them, gaining for himself a lasting reputation,

63:13 who led them through the deep water? Like a horse running on flat land they did not stumble.

63:14 Like an animal that goes down into a valley to graze, so the Spirit of the Lord granted them rest. In this way you guided your people, gaining for yourself an honored reputation.

63:15 Look down from heaven and take notice, from your holy, majestic palace! Where are your zeal and power? Do not hold back your tender compassion!

63:16 For you are our father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not recognize us. You, Lord, are our father; you have been called our protector from ancient times.

63:17 Why, Lord, do you make us stray from your ways, and make our minds stubborn so that we do not obey you? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your inheritance!

63:18 For a short time your special nation possessed a land, but then our adversaries knocked down your holy sanctuary.

63:19 We existed from ancient times, but you did not rule over them, they were not your subjects.

64:1 If only you would tear apart the sky and come down! The mountains would tremble before you!

64:2 As when fire ignites dry wood, or fire makes water boil, let your adversaries know who you are, and may the nations shake at your presence!

64:3 When you performed awesome deeds that took us by surprise, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.

64:4 Since ancient times no one has heard or perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who intervenes for those who wait for him.

64:5 You assist those who delight in doing what is right, who observe your commandments. Look, you were angry because we violated them continually. How then can we be saved?

64:6 We are all like one who is unclean, all our so-called righteous acts are like a menstrual rag in your sight. We all wither like a leaf; our sins carry us away like the wind.

64:7 No one invokes your name, or makes an effort to take hold of you. For you have rejected us and handed us over to our own sins.

64:8 Yet, Lord, you are our father. We are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the product of your labor.

64:9 Lord, do not be too angry! Do not hold our sins against us continually! Take a good look at your people, at all of us!

64:10 Your chosen cities have become a desert; Zion has become a desert, Jerusalem is a desolate ruin.

64:11 Our holy temple, our pride and joy, the place where our ancestors praised you, has been burned with fire; all our prized possessions have been destroyed.

64:12 In light of all this, how can you still hold back, Lord? How can you be silent and continue to humiliate us?

### **The Lord Will Distinguish Between Sinners and the Godly**

65:1 "I made myself available to those who did not ask for me; I appeared to those who did not look for me. I said, 'Here I am! Here I am!' to a nation that did not invoke my name.

65:2 I spread out my hands all day long to my rebellious people, who lived in a way that is morally unacceptable, and who did what they desired.

65:3 These people continually and blatantly offend me as they sacrifice in their sacred orchards and burn incense on brick altars.

65:4 They sit among the tombs and keep watch all night long. They eat pork, and broth from unclean sacrificial meat is in their pans.

65:5 They say, 'Keep to yourself! Don't get near me, for I am holier than you!' These people are like smoke in my nostrils, like a fire that keeps burning all day long.

65:6 Look, I have decreed: I will not keep silent, but will pay them back; I will pay them back exactly what they deserve,

65:7 for your sins and your ancestors' sins," says the Lord. "Because they burned incense on the mountains and offended me on the hills, I will punish them in full measure."

65:8 This is what the Lord says: "When juice is discovered in a cluster of grapes, someone says, 'Don't destroy it, for it contains juice.' So I will do for the sake of my servants – I will not destroy everyone.

65:9 I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah people to take possession of my mountains. My chosen ones will take possession of the land; my servants will live there.

65:10 Sharon will become a pasture for sheep, and the Valley of Achor a place where cattle graze; they will belong to my people, who seek me.

65:11 But as for you who abandon the Lord and forget about worshiping at my holy mountain, who prepare a feast for the god called 'Fortune,' and fill up wine jugs for the god called 'Destiny' –

65:12 I predestine you to die by the sword, all of you will kneel down at the slaughtering block, because I called to you, and you did not respond, I spoke and you did not listen. You did evil before me; you chose to do what displeases me."

65:13 So this is what the sovereign Lord says: "Look, my servants will eat, but you will be hungry! Look, my servants will drink, but you will be thirsty! Look, my servants will rejoice, but you will be humiliated!

65:14 Look, my servants will shout for joy as happiness fills their hearts! But you will cry out as sorrow fills your hearts; you will wail because your spirits will be crushed.

65:15 Your names will live on in the curse formulas of my chosen ones. The sovereign Lord will kill you, but he will give his servants another name.

65:16 Whoever pronounces a blessing in the earth will do so in the name of the faithful God; whoever makes an oath in the earth will do so in the name of the faithful God. For past problems will be forgotten; I will no longer think about them.

65:17 For look, I am ready to create new heavens and a new earth! The former ones will not be remembered; no one will think about them anymore.

65:18 But be happy and rejoice forevermore over what I am about to create! For look, I am ready to create Jerusalem to be a source of joy, and her people to be a source of happiness.

65:19 Jerusalem will bring me joy, and my people will bring me happiness. The sound of weeping or cries of sorrow will never be heard in her again.

65:20 Never again will one of her infants live just a few days or an old man die before his time. Indeed, no one will die before the age of a hundred, anyone who fails to reach the age of a hundred will be considered cursed.

65:21 They will build houses and live in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

65:22 No longer will they build a house only to have another live in it, or plant a vineyard only to have another eat its fruit, for my people will live as long as trees, and my chosen ones will enjoy to the fullest what they have produced.

65:23 They will not work in vain, or give birth to children that will experience disaster. For the Lord will bless their children and their descendants.

65:24 Before they even call out, I will respond; while they are still speaking, I will hear.

65:25 A wolf and a lamb will graze together; a lion, like an ox, will eat straw, and a snake's food will be dirt. They will no longer injure or destroy on my entire royal mountain," says the Lord.

66:1 This is what the Lord says: "The heavens are my throne and the earth is my footstool. Where then is the house you will build for me? Where is the place where I will rest?

66:2 My hand made them; that is how they came to be," says the Lord. I show special favor to the humble and contrite, who respect what I have to say.

66:3 The one who slaughters a bull also strikes down a man; the one who sacrifices a lamb also breaks a dog's neck; the one who presents an offering includes pig's blood with it; the one who offers incense also praises an idol. They have decided to behave this way; they enjoy these disgusting practices.

66:4 So I will choose severe punishment for them; I will bring on them what they dread, because I called, and no one responded, I spoke and they did not listen. They did evil before me; they chose to do what displeases me.”

66:5 Hear the word of the Lord, you who respect what he has to say! Your countrymen, who hate you and exclude you, supposedly for the sake of my name, say, “May the Lord be glorified, then we will witness your joy.” But they will be put to shame.

66:6 The sound of battle comes from the city; the sound comes from the temple! It is the sound of the Lord paying back his enemies.

66:7 Before she goes into labor, she gives birth! Before her contractions begin, she delivers a boy!

66:8 Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen this? Can a country be brought forth in one day? Can a nation be born in a single moment? Yet as soon as Zion goes into labor she gives birth to sons!

66:9 “Do I bring a baby to the birth opening and then not deliver it?” asks the Lord. “Or do I bring a baby to the point of delivery and then hold it back?” asks your God.

66:10 Be happy for Jerusalem and rejoice with her, all you who love her! Share in her great joy, all you who have mourned over her!

66:11 For you will nurse from her satisfying breasts and be nourished; you will feed with joy from her milk-filled breasts.

66:12 For this is what the Lord says: “Look, I am ready to extend to her prosperity that will flow like a river, the riches of nations will flow into her like a stream that floods its banks. You will nurse from her breast and be carried at her side; you will play on her knees.

66:13 As a mother consoles a child, so I will console you, and you will be consoled over Jerusalem.”

66:14 When you see this, you will be happy, and you will be revived. The Lord will reveal his power to his servants and his anger to his enemies.

66:15 For look, the Lord comes with fire, his chariots come like a windstorm, to reveal his raging anger, his battle cry, and his flaming arrows.

66:16 For the Lord judges all humanity with fire and his sword; the Lord will kill many.

66:17 “As for those who consecrate and ritually purify themselves so they can follow their leader and worship in the sacred orchards, those who eat the flesh of pigs and other disgusting creatures, like mice – they will all be destroyed together,” says the Lord. 66:18 “I hate their deeds and thoughts! So I am coming

to gather all the nations and ethnic groups; they will come and witness my splendor. 66:19 I will perform a mighty act among them and then send some of those who remain to the nations – to Tarshish, Pul, Lud (known for its archers), Tubal, Javan, and to the distant coastlands that have not heard about me or seen my splendor. They will tell the nations of my splendor. 66:20 They will bring back all your countrymen from all the nations as an offering to the Lord. They will bring them on horses, in chariots, in wagons, on mules, and on camels to my holy hill Jerusalem,” says the Lord, “just as the Israelites bring offerings to the Lord’s temple in ritually pure containers. 66:21 And I will choose some of them as priests and Levites,” says the Lord. 66:22 “For just as the new heavens and the new earth I am about to make will remain standing before me,” says the Lord, “so your descendants and your name will remain. 66:23 From one month to the next and from one Sabbath to the next, all people will come to worship me,” says the Lord. 66:24 “They will go out and observe the corpses of those who rebelled against me, for the maggots that eat them will not die, and the fire that consumes them will not die out. All people will find the sight abhorrent.”

## PRAYER

Lord, when humankind could not provide a champion to meet the demands of Your perfect and holy justice, You came down from Heaven and provided Your way for us. Although it is impossible for me to ever properly thank You, may my heart be broken with gratitude every time Your Holy Spirit reminds me of what You have done. You exist as a Trinity of persons, yet are One. Mere humankind cannot fully understand this, just as humankind cannot comprehend other things about God. You desire to make the willing whole and to then welcome us to dwell with You. May I grow in a spiritual sense of Your vision for my future, and that of Your other children, that I may be strengthened for service.

## SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Isaiah prophesied the coming of the Messiah and His later return to purge evils and to restore an Edenic-like environment for His children “He sees there is no advocate; he is shocked that no one intervenes. So he takes matters into his own hands; his desire for justice drives him on ... “A protector comes to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their rebellious deeds,” says the Lord. “As for me, this is my promise to them,” says the Lord. “My spirit, who is upon you, and my words, which I have placed in your mouth, will not depart from your mouth or from the mouths of your children and descendants from this time forward,” says the Lord.”

Isaiah encouraged his listeners to see themselves in a promised but not yet actualized state of presence with the Lord God “... look, darkness covers the earth and deep darkness covers the nations, but the Lord shines on you; his splendor appears over you.”

He spoke of the coming Messiah and His later return, and in his phraseology he bonded his current reference to the Messiah (“my”) and the prior reference to the Lord God (“he”) together as an essential unity (the Son and the Father and the Holy Spirit are One) “They will go up on my altar acceptably, and I



will bestow honor on my majestic temple ... the coastlands look eagerly for me, the large ships are in the lead, bringing your sons from far away, along with their silver and gold, to honor the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has bestowed honor on you.”

Isaiah’s prophesy “The sun will no longer supply light for you by day, nor will the moon’s brightness shine on you; the Lord will be your permanent source of light – the splendor of your God will shine upon you.” was later echoed in John’s Revelation as Heaven was described.

The promised redemption, in a perfect state “All of your people will be godly; they will possess the land permanently. I will plant them like a shoot; they will be the product of my labor, through whom I reveal my splendor. The least of you will multiply into a thousand; the smallest of you will become a large nation. When the right time comes, I the Lord will quickly do this!”

Isaiah appeared to revisit the process and purpose of his calling as a prophet “The spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon me, because the Lord has chosen me.”

He described the idyllic outcome of a repentent Israel should they meet their part of the Lord God’s offered reconciliation and restoration “They will rebuild the perpetual ruins and restore the places that were desolate; they will reestablish the ruined cities, the places that have been desolate since ancient times.”

Isaiah declared the Lord God’s promise should His offered covenant be honored by Israel “For I, the Lord, love justice and hate robbery and sin. I will repay them because of my faithfulness; I will make a permanent covenant with them.”

He summarized his reaction should the covenant be realized “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; I will be overjoyed because of my God. For he clothes me in garments of deliverance; he puts on me a robe symbolizing vindication. I look like a bridegroom when he wears a turban as a priest would; I look like a bride when she puts on her jewelry. For just as the ground produces its crops and a garden yields its produce, so the sovereign Lord will cause deliverance to grow, and give his people reason to praise him in the sight of all the nations.”

Isaiah declared the Lord God’s intention to advocate for a repentant Israel “For the sake of Zion I will not be silent; for the sake of Jerusalem I will not be quiet, until her vindication shines brightly and her deliverance burns like a torch.”

The term “Israel” had been moving from literal to figurative in the Lord God’s communication through His prophets for many decades and here it shifts completely to the figurative “You will no longer be called, “Abandoned,” and your land will no longer be called “Desolate.” Indeed, you will be called “My Delight is in Her,” and your land “Married.” For the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married to

him. As a young man marries a young woman, so your sons will marry you. As a bridegroom rejoices over a bride, so your God will rejoice over you.”

Well before the Messiah descends to earth in human form Isaiah uses the symbolism of agriculture for a spiritual purpose “The Lord swears an oath by his right hand, by his strong arm: “I will never again give your grain to your enemies as food, and foreigners will not drink your wine, which you worked hard to produce. But those who harvest the grain will eat it, and will praise the Lord. Those who pick the grapes will drink the wine in the courts of my holy sanctuary.”

He continued with additional symbolism “Come through! Come through the gates! Prepare the way for the people! Build it! Build the roadway! Remove the stones! Lift a signal flag for the nations!”

And finally, the fore-telling prophesy of the Messiah “Look, the Lord announces to the entire earth: “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘Look, your deliverer comes! Look, his reward is with him and his reward goes before him!’” They will be called, “The Holy People, the Ones Protected by the Lord.””

Isaiah began with a description of the Messiah, drenched in blood from absorbing the sin of the world. [According to the NET Translator’s Notes he used Edom as “... an archetype for the Lord’s enemies. See verse 34:5.] Sin is our mortal enemy.

He then revisited the relationship of the Lord God to His people “I will tell of the faithful acts of the Lord, of the Lord’s praiseworthy deeds. I will tell about all the Lord did for us, the many good things he did for the family of Israel, because of his compassion and great faithfulness. He said, “Certainly they will be my people, children who are not disloyal.” He became their deliverer. Through all that they suffered, he suffered too. The messenger sent from his very presence delivered them. In his love and mercy he protected them; he lifted them up and carried them throughout ancient times. But they rebelled and offended his holy Spirit, so he turned into an enemy and fought against them.”

Isaiah then raised a plea on behalf of the people “Look down from heaven and take notice, from your holy, majestic palace! Where are your zeal and power? Do not hold back your tender compassion! For you are our father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not recognize us. You, Lord, are our father; you have been called our protector from ancient times.”

He concluded with an odd divergence from clarity and perspective, suggesting that the sinful lifestyle and spiritual rebellion of Israel was somehow the fault of the Lord God “Why, Lord, do you make us stray from your ways, and make our minds stubborn so that we do not obey you? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your inheritance! For a short time your special nation possessed a land, but then our adversaries knocked down your holy sanctuary. We existed from ancient times, but you did not rule over them, they were not your subjects.”

Isaiah continued to plead for the intervention of the Lord God.

He testified to the exceptionalism of the Lord God “Since ancient times no one has heard or perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who intervenes for those who wait for him.”

Isaiah confessed that there was nothing the people could do to cause their own salvation “You assist those who delight in doing what is right, who observe your commandments. Look, you were angry because we violated them continually. How then can we be saved?”

He lamented that the Lord God had allowed the people to dwell in the consequences of their rebellion such that “No one invokes your name, or makes an effort to take hold of you. For you have rejected us and handed us over to our own sins.”

Isaiah leaned upon the identity of Israel as defined by their relationship with the Lord God “Yet, Lord, you are our father. We are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the product of your labor. Lord, do not be too angry! Do not hold our sins against us continually! Take a good look at your people, at all of us!”

He then concluded with a plea “In light of all this, how can you still hold back, Lord? How can you be silent and continue to humiliate us?”

Isaiah reported the challenge of the Lord God “I made myself available to those who did not ask for me; I appeared to those who did not look for me. I said, ‘Here I am! Here I am!’ to a nation that did not invoke my name. I spread out my hands all day long to my rebellious people, who lived in a way that is morally unacceptable, and who did what they desired.”

He then continued with a report of the arrogance of the people toward the Lord God “They say, ‘Keep to yourself! Don’t get near me, for I am holier than you!’ These people are like smoke in my nostrils, like a fire that keeps burning all day long. Look, I have decreed: I will not keep silent, but will pay them back; I will pay them back exactly what they deserve ...”

Isaiah shared the grace of the Lord God toward a remnant of His people “This is what the Lord says: “When juice is discovered in a cluster of grapes, someone says, ‘Don’t destroy it, for it contains juice.’ So I will do for the sake of my servants – I will not destroy everyone. I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah people to take possession of my mountains. My chosen ones will take possession of the land; my servants will live there.”

He observed that the Lord God would “choose” those who responded to Him and would reject those who rejected Him “But as for you who abandon the Lord and forget about worshiping at my holy mountain, who prepare a feast for the god called ‘Fortune,’ and fill up wine jugs for the god called ‘Destiny’ – I predestine you to die by the sword, all of you will kneel down at the slaughtering block, because I called to you, and you did not respond, I spoke and you did not listen. You did evil before me; you chose to do what displeases me.”

Isaiah then brought the Lord God's vision of His restored Creation "Whoever pronounces a blessing in the earth will do so in the name of the faithful God; whoever makes an oath in the earth will do so in the name of the faithful God. For past problems will be forgotten; I will no longer think about them. For look, I am ready to create new heavens and a new earth! The former ones will not be remembered; no one will think about them anymore. But be happy and rejoice forevermore over what I am about to create! For look, I am ready to create Jerusalem to be a source of joy, and her people to be a source of happiness. Jerusalem will bring me joy, and my people will bring me happiness. The sound of weeping or cries of sorrow will never be heard in her again."

He concluded his symbolic representation, using concepts and images that would be understood in his time "Before they even call out, I will respond; while they are still speaking, I will hear. A wolf and a lamb will graze together; a lion, like an ox, will eat straw, and a snake's food will be dirt. They will no longer injure or destroy on my entire royal mountain," says the Lord."

Isaiah began with the Lord God's challenge to the people to recognize His uniqueness as God "This is what the Lord says: "The heavens are my throne and the earth is my footstool. Where then is the house you will build for me? Where is the place where I will rest?" ... and their required heart-condition if they are to receive His blessing ... "My hand made them; that is how they came to be," says the Lord. I show special favor to the humble and contrite, who respect what I have to say."

He then repeated the condemnation that the rebellious have brought upon themselves "I will bring on them what they dread, because I called, and no one responded, I spoke and they did not listen. They did evil before me; they chose to do what displeases me."

Isaiah continues to use illustrations and word-pictures that were familiar to the people to explain how the Lord God intended to complete what He started "Do I bring a baby to the birth opening and then not deliver it?" asks the Lord. "Or do I bring a baby to the point of delivery and then hold it back?" asks your God."

He brought the reminder that the Lord God will cleanse His creation "For look, the Lord comes with fire, his chariots come like a windstorm, to reveal his raging anger, his battle cry, and his flaming arrows. For the Lord judges all humanity with fire and his sword; the Lord will kill many."

Isaiah announced the prophesy "So I am coming to gather all the nations and ethnic groups; they will come and witness my splendor. I will perform a mighty act among them and then send some of those who remain to the nations – to Tarshish, Pul, Lud (known for its archers), Tubal, Javan, and to the distant coastlands that have not heard about me or seen my splendor. They will tell the nations of my splendor. They will bring back all your countrymen from all the nations as an offering to the Lord ... For just as the new heavens and the new earth I am about to make will remain standing before me," says the Lord, "so your descendants and your name will remain. From one month to the next and from one Sabbath to the next, all people will come to worship me," says the Lord."

## INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

### CONSIDER

Israel was never going to repent and therefore national reconciliation and restoration was impossible; it was rather an individual relationship of any member of humankind and their Lord God which would define spiritual "Israel". The Messiah came to rescue us from our mortal enemy, sin, and did so in a spiritual battle which was played-out on the battlefield of His temporarily-assumed human body – apart from His eternal heavenly glory. Israel remained in exile from the Promised Land, they remained trapped in their lifestyles of sin and their attitude of rebellion, and Isaiah was heartsick. The Lord God reaches out to everyone but "... because I called to you, and you did not respond" those who refuse Him miss out on the eternal blessings He has ready for them. The need for a choice is repeated, those who persist in rebellion will be destroyed, those who come "... humble and contrite, who respect what I [the Lord God] have to say." will be blessed.

### DISCUSS

Why was it important to give the people of Israel and believing Gentiles, new names or titles e.g. "My Delight is in Her," and your land "Married."?

### REFLECT

The Lord God is unwilling to allow those whose hearts are inclined toward Him to perish eternally. The Lord God desired to pour-out blessings on "... children who are not disloyal." - but He would not have that opportunity until the return of Christ and the great purge. The Lord "predestined" those who made a choice to ignore His call, He did not cause them to reject Him. The missionary work of the New Testament was described by Isaiah way back then.

### SHARE

When have you pondered the consistency of the Lord God in His promise of a Messiah from the moments following the Fall of Adam and Eve through the entirety of OT history? When have you pondered "... new heavens and a new earth" where "The former ones will not be remembered; no one will think about them anymore." and "The sound of weeping or cries of sorrow will never be heard in her [rhetorical Israel] again."?

## FAITH IN ACTION

### PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you ways that He would like you to "Prepare the way for the people! Build it! Build the roadway! Remove the stones! Lift a signal flag for the nations!", a renewed understanding of the battle that Jesus waged on your behalf, one which was fought upon his human form, a dream about

the "... new heavens and a new earth" where "A wolf and a lamb will graze together; a lion, like an ox, will eat straw, and a snake's food will be dirt. They will no longer injure or destroy on my entire royal mountain," says the Lord.", and what He has planned for you in His plan to "... tell the nations of my splendor."

## **ACTION**

Today I will pause to give thanks, then throughout the day I will seek an opportunities to share Him with others, and to again give thanks. I will tell His story, encourage the unsaved to consider-Christ, remove legalism and traditionalism and other sociological impediments to those considering-Christ, walk honorably before the Lord God and partner with the Holy Spirit to make my life a light in the darkness. I will gratefully receive the calling of the Lord God and will prayerfully consider how He has already prepared me, and the path, to that end. It may be the children next door in an unsaved family, someone where I study or work, someone I reach through electronic communications, someone I reach through art or music of explaining science from the Lord God's perspective, or maybe it will literally be to travel a great distance.

Be Specific \_\_\_\_\_

All Bible text is from the NET unless otherwise indicated - <http://bible.org>

Note 1: These Studies often rely upon the guidance of the NET Translators from their associated notes. Careful attention has been given to cite that source where it has been quoted directly or closely paraphrased. Feedback is encouraged where credit has not been sufficiently assigned.

Note 2: When NET text is quoted in commentary and discussion all pronouns referring to God are capitalized, though they are lower-case in the original NET text.

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