

BETHEL GOSPEL CHAPEL
BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Introduction to the Book of Isaiah

The prophet Isaiah begins his ministry at a crucial point in the history of Israel. The glory and power of the nation, manifested in the kingdoms of David and Solomon had passed. The kingdom has been broken into two parts. The Northern Kingdom of 10 tribes, Israel, was ruled over by a succession of kings, none of whom acknowledged the Lord's authority. They all did evil in His sight and during the lifetime of Isaiah these ten tribes are carried away into captivity by the Assyrians.

The Southern Kingdom of 2 tribes, Judah, was ruled over by the direct descendants of David. They too, were threatened with extinction as the Assyrians, Egyptians and the Babylonians in their turn came to power. But this is the nation with whom God has made His covenants, first to Abraham then Moses then David. These people are the people of God. If this nation falls, how can faith be maintained?

It is Isaiah's monumental task through his prophetic ministry, to provide the vision which will sustain the faith of his people. He, led by the Spirit of God, ties together in his book the past, the present and the future of the nation in a magnificent presentation of the sovereignty of God.

Centuries later the Apostle Paul, writing to the Romans asks:

"Did God reject His people? By no means!" Rom.11:1 (NIV)

"Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all!" Rom.11:11 (NIV)

As Paul worked out what is in fact God's purpose, we have the hymn of praise which we hope will also be our response as we work through Isaiah and see the faithfulness of God:

*"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out!*

Who has known the mind of the Lord?

Or who has been His counselor?

Who has ever given to God,

That God should repay him?

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.

To Him be the glory forever! Amen."

Rom. 11:33-36 (NIV)

OUR PLAN FOR STUDYING THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

Study 1 - Its Place In History READ: Isaiah 1:1-31 (chapters 2 through 5)

Study 2 - Isaiah's Call and the Coming Kingdom READ: Isaiah 6:1-13 (chapters 7 through 12)

Study 3 - The Sovereignty of God Over the Nations READ: Isaiah 24-26 (chapters 13 through 23)

Study 4 - The Sovereignty of God Over Israel and Judah READ: Isaiah 35:1-10 (chapter 24 through 34)

Study 5 - The Promises of God READ: Isaiah 40:1-31 (chapters 36 through 39)

Study 6 - The Servant of the Lord READ: Isaiah 48:1-22 (chapters 41 through 47)

Study 7 - The Means of Salvation READ: Isaiah 53:1-12 (chapters 49 through 55)

Study 8 - The Results of Salvation READ: Isaiah 58:1-14 (chapters 56 through 60)

Study 9 - The Kingdom Restored READ: Isaiah 61:1-11 (chapters 62 through 64)

Study 10- The Purpose of God Accomplished READ: Isaiah 65:1-25 (chapter 66)

This is not an exhaustive study of Isaiah, but your understanding of the book will be improved if you read it, keeping in mind the historical setting in which it was written (see chart). As you study the assigned chapter you will find it to your advantage to have read the chapters which appear in parenthesis. As you read, identify:

1. To whom the prophet's message is addressed - *Israel? Judah? The nations?*
2. Distinguish between the historical and prophetic parts of the message.
3. Decide if this prophecy was fulfilled:
 - ⇒ in the prophet's lifetime;
 - ⇒ within the historical period covered by the Old Testament;
 - ⇒ in the historical period covered by the New Testament, or,
 - ⇒ is it a prophecy which is yet to be fulfilled?

If you run into a problem when reading the assigned chapters or in answering the study questions, do not let it stop you. Make a note in your study guide so that you will remember to ask for an answer or explanation when your group meets. REMEMBER that the reading of this material before you come to the study is particularly important! Do not hesitate to ask supplementary questions which will help us all come to a better understanding of this important book.

SURVEY OF ISAIAH

Study 1 - Its Place in History

You were asked to read the entire book of Isaiah over the summer months. It is our intention to study only selected chapters in detail but you will find it helpful to be familiar with the setting in which the chapters are found. As you read, keep in mind the suggested guides to understanding this material as listed in the introduction to your study guide.

Write down any questions and / or problems you have so that this may be discussed and used to bring us all to a better understanding of this important book.

READ: Isaiah 1:1-31 (chapters 2-5)

1. On what is Isaiah's prophetic ministry focussed?
2. How would you describe the following rulers of Judah:
 - Uzziah - II Kings 15:1-7 (II Chronicles 26:1-23)
 - Ahaz - II Kings 16:1-20 (II Chronicles 28:1-27)
 - Jotham - II Kings 15:32-38 (II Chronicles 27:1-9)
 - Hezekiah - II Kings 18:1- Chapter 20:21 (II Chronicles 29:1-32:33)
3. In the Lord's general indictment of Israel He describes the people:
 - As having less intelligence than (vs.1-3)
 - Their condition is a result of (vs.4)
 - To what does God compare the nation? (vs.5-6)
 - What is the visible evidence of the Lord's displeasure? (vs.7-9)
4. List the activities in which these people were engaged. (vs.10-15)
5. What is the Lord's response to these activities?
6. Why is this an appropriate response?

7. How can these people correct their situation (vs.16-20)?

8. Why is life in this city so dangerous? (vs. 21-23)

9. What is the Lord going to do about it? (vs. 24-31)

Study 2 - Isaiah's Call and the Coming Kingdom

In your reading of Isaiah 7-12 watch for the many promises of God in regard to the establishment of the Kingdom and note especially how this is to be accomplished. Chapter 12 contains the appropriate response made by those who have come to understand God's gracious provision for His people.

READ: Isaiah 6:1-13 (Chapters 7-12)

1. This experience of Isaiah's occurred in the year that King Uzziah died. Review the reign of this man as it is recorded in II Chr. 26:1-23. Why is this an appropriate time for Isaiah to see the Lord?

2. What does Isaiah learn about the Lord in this vision? (vs. 1 -4)

3. Why does he respond as he does? (v.5)

4. What provision is made for Isaiah (vs.6-7)

5. Why is this a necessary precondition to service?

6. Put Isaiah's commission in your own words. (vs. 9-10)

7. Isaiah's commission must be understood in light of the information given about these people in chapters 1-5. See the Lord's use of this scripture in Matthew 13:10-15 and Paul's use of it in Acts 28:17-28. What important principle is being taught here?

8. List the predictions made as to the future of these people. (vs.11-12)

9. The terms of which Old Testament Covenant are set aside and why?

10. Why is the judgement of God not total? (v.13)

Because of the questions raised in this chapter by Isaiah's commission and its results, you will find it worthwhile to read Paul's argument on this subject as found in Romans chapters 9-11.

Study 3 - The Sovereignty of God Over the Nations

REMEMBER: Write down any questions you have concerning the sovereignty of God as demonstrated in chapters 13-23.

READ: Isaiah 24, 25, 26 (Chapters 13-23)

In these chapters the prophet Isaiah has a word from the Lord concerning the following cities and nations

Chapters

13 & 14 - Babylon

14 - Assyria

14 - Philistines

15 & 16 - Moab

17 - Damascus

18 - Cush

Chapters

19 - Egypt

20 - Egypt & Cush

21 - Babylon

21 - Edom & Arabia

22 - Jerusalem

23 - Tyre

The fate of Judah over the next 300 years seems to depend on the friendship or hostility of these nations. In the face of the power and wealth of these pagan people Judah's survival was being called into question. The covenants and promises of God to the nation of Israel were hanging in the balance. Many in Judah had already given up hope. Their fatalistic attitude was "*let us eat and drink....for tomorrow we die.*" (Isaiah 22:13)

The truth was that all of these cities and nations were but rods in the hand of God (Isaiah 10:5). The divine perspective is well put in these words:

*Oh, the raging of many nations
They rage like the raging seas!
Oh, the uproar of the peoples
They roar like the roaring of great waters!
Although the peoples roar like the
Roar of surging waters
When He rebukes them they flee away
Driving before the wind like chaff on the hills
like tumbleweed before a gale."
Isaiah 17:12-13*

It was this knowledge that led men of faith to hold fast to the promises of God in the midst of adverse circumstances.

1. Choose from chapter 24:1-13 the illustration that best describes for you the results of the Lord's judgement of the earth.
2. What reason is given for this judgement?
3. "Shouts of Joy" (v.14) seem to be a strange response to the judgement of God. What is the reason for these shouts of joy?
4. What will the final results of this judgement be?
5. List the things for which the Lord is praised in 25:1-8.
6. What is required in order to recognize that God is at work and will accomplish His purpose on the earth?
7. Explain in your own words the meaning of the promise given in 26:3.
8. Is this promise universally true? Why or why not?
9. What is the response of the righteous to the works of God? (v.7-11)
10. What is the response of the wicked to the works of God? (v.7-11)
11. Explain the argument being made in vs. 12-19.

Study 4 The Sovereignty of God Over Israel and Judah

The Lord says:

*These people come near me with their mouth
And honour me with their lips,
But their hearts are far from me.
Their worship of me
Is made up only of rules taught by men.*
Isaiah 29:13

Given the situation as recorded in these verses, it is certain that the judgement of God will fall. The Lord cannot continue to bless those who choose deliberately to ignore the commandments upon which his blessing is based. Israel, the Northern Kingdom of ten tribes, has now been carried into captivity by the Assyrians. Judah, the Southern Kingdom, is also under judgement but, mixed in with the predicted judgements, there are promises of deliverance:

*In the days to come Jacob will take root,
Israel will bud and blossom
And fill all the world with fruit.*
Isaiah 27:6

The means by which this will ultimately be accomplished is also stated:

*This is what the sovereign Lord says:
See, I lay a stone in Zion,
A tested stone,
A precious cornerstone for a sure foundation;
The one who trusts will never be dismayed.*
Isaiah 28:16

Peter tells us in his first letter that this prophecy finds its fulfilment in Christ, 1 Peter 2:6. But these chapters in Isaiah also make it clear that God does not revoke his previous covenants with Abraham, Moses and David. Through Abraham, his descendants are given the promise of the land. Through David these people receive the promise of a king who will reign in righteousness. But each generation's enjoyment of blessing in the land was conditional on their obedience to the Mosaic Covenant (PLEASE READ Deuteronomy 28:1-68). The judgements being predicted in Isaiah are right, and necessary. Nevertheless God remains faithful so that one day "he who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his own will" (Eph.1:11) will bring his people into the inheritance promised in Isaiah 35:9,10.

READ: Isaiah 35:1-10 (chapters 27-34)

1. What will be the first sign of the blessing to come on these people? (vs. 1-2)
2. Put vs.3-4 in your own words.
3. Why do you think that the certainty of God's judgement is used as a basis for encouragement?
4. List the results that will follow their salvation. Vs.5-7.
5. Who is excluded from the way of holiness? Vs.8-9
6. In the context of the prophecy, who are the ransomed of the Lord? V.10
7. What is another name for Zion? V.10
8. What blessing is promised? V.10
9. On the basis of the information given in this chapter, when do you think this blessing will become a reality? On what do you base your conclusion?

BE SURE TO READ DEUTERONOMY 28:1-68 BECAUSE IT IS ONLY AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THESE BLESSINGS AND CURSES THAT THE ACTUAL EXPERIENCE OF THESE PEOPLE THROUGHOUT HISTORY CAN BE UNDERSTOOD.

Study 5 - The Promises of God

Chapters 36 through 39 are historical. They refer to things that actually happened during the reign of Hezekiah, King of Judah. The prophecy concerning the Babylonian captives would be fulfilled in due course. Chapter 40 begins a whole new section where the promises of God and the means by which salvation will be accomplished become the focus of Isaiah's prophetic ministry. In your study of this section you should keep in mind the statement of 1 Peter 1:10-12:

"Concerning this salvation, the prophets who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the suffering of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven. Even angels long to look into these things."

We know from the New Testament that many of the times and circumstances of which the prophets spoke are now history. Many of the Scriptures have been fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus, but not all. So, we too are called to a life of faith to declare in turn to our own generation that we expect God to keep His word. *"What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all!"* (Romans 3:3-4)

As Isaiah speaks now of the great promises of God, he gives us many insights into the character of God so that our faith may be strengthened and we will, like Abraham, *"be fully persuaded that God has the power to do what He has promised."* (Romans 4:21)

READ: Isaiah 40:1-31 (Chapters 36-39)

1. To whom is this message of comfort sent? (vs. 1-2)

2. What does the New Testament teach about the prophecies of vs.3-5? (See Matt.3:1-6)

3. What is the purpose of the simile used in vs. 6-8?

4. Put the commission of vs. 9-11 into your own words.

5. What do we come to understand from:

a) the questions asked in vs. 12-14?

b) the evaluations made in vs. 15-17?

6. List the differences between idols and God - vs.18-26.

7. Why are the people discouraged - v.27?

8. What is the remedy for discouragement - v.28?

9. What is God teaching us in vs.29-31?

Study 6 - The Servant of the Lord

As you read this section you will notice that the LORD repeatedly challenges these people to test the power of their gods. Do they have the ability to predict the future? If not, they are worthless.

*Remember this, fix it in your mind,
Take it to heart, you rebels.
Remember the former things, those of long ago.
I am God, and there is no other;
I am God and there is none like me.
I make known the end from the beginning,
From ancient times, what is still to come.
I say: "my purpose will stand,
and I will do all that I please."
Isaiah 46:8-11*

In the immediate future lies the rise to power of the Babylonians, but this nation is but an instrument in God's hand. They will in turn be broken as the Lord raises up Cyrus the Mede to do his will. "He (Cyrus) will say of Jerusalem, "let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "let its foundation be laid." (Isaiah 44:28)

After this there is to come a still greater Servant and through him justice will be brought to the nations. (See Matt.12:17-21)

*Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
My chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my spirit on him
And he will bring justice to the nations.
He will not shout or cry out,
Or raise his voice in the streets.
A bruised reed he will not break,
And a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;
He will not falter or be discouraged
Till He establishes justice on the earth.
In his law the islands will put their hope.
(Isaiah 42:1-4)*

It is in the context of these provisions from God himself that Israel is challenged to rethink their attitude toward God.

READ: Isaiah 48:1-12 (Chapters 41-47)

1. The favoured position of the "*house of Jacob*" is the grounds for criticism.

Why? vs.1-2

2. List the reasons why predictive prophecies about these people had been made.

vs. 3-6

3. Identify the reasons why new predictions are being made. Vs.6-11

4. What is the purpose of the statements made in vs. 12-13?

5. Who is the Lord's servant in vs. 14-15?

6. The Lord declares He has taught these people. Identify the method used. vs. 16-18.

7. What two responses to the Lord's teaching are possible? v.18

8. What are the results of each of the above responses? vs.18 and 22

9. Explain the meaning, in this context of the statement of "*the Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob*" v.20

10. Why is this a reason for celebration?

Study 7 - The Means of Salvation

Introduction:

The prophecies of this book were made between 740 and 695 B.C. It is obvious as we read the rest of the Old Testament and pass over into the New that there were people who passed on some very definite expectations from generation to generation. These were based on the promises of God concerning their salvation. Despite the passage of time there were men and women who believed that the God who had promised was faithful.

Mary said:

*My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.
He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful to Abraham
and his descendants forever,
even as he said to our fathers.
Luke 1:46-47 and 54-55.*

Zechariah said:

*Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come and has redeemed his people.
He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David
(as he said through his holy prophets long ago),
Salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us-
to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant,
the oath he swore to our father Abraham.
Luke 1:68-73*

Anna gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. Luke 2:38

The expectations of these people were based on a knowledge of the covenants which God had made with Abraham, Moses, and David, combined with the prophecies which promised that the day of salvation and restoration would come.

Isaiah puts it this way:

*The Lord will surely comfort Zion
and will look with compassion on all her ruins;
he will make her deserts like Eden,
her wastelands like the garden of the LORD.
Joy and gladness will be found in her,*

thanksgiving and the sound of singing.
Isaiah 51:3

*The ransomed of the LORD will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*
Isaiah 51:11

*How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion,
"Your God reigns!"
Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices;
together they shout for joy.
When the LORD returns to Zion,
they will see it with their own eyes.
Burst into songs of joy together,
you ruins of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
The LORD will lay bare his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth will see
the salvation of our God.*
Isaiah 52:7-10

*.... he (the LORD) says:
It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to restore the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.*
Isaiah 49:6

From the historical record of the New Testament it appears that the fulfilment of these prophecies was tied, in the peoples' minds, to the coming of the king and the establishment of his kingdom. That the Christ should have to die to accomplish salvation is a concept that apparently never occurred to them. It is from Jesus himself that this new interpretation of Scripture comes to his disciples.

From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Matthew 16:21 (see also Mark 8:31-32; Luke 9:21-22; Luke 17:20-25)

But it is only after his resurrection that his disciples came to correctly understand these Scriptures.

How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Luke 24:26-26 (See also Luke 24:45-49)

Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, the disciples from this time forward consistently taught that Jesus in his death and resurrection was fulfilling what was written about him in the Scriptures.

Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

Acts 2:22-24 (See also Acts 3:17-19; 4:27-30; 26:22-23)

That Isaiah 53 should be interpreted in the same way is clearly taught in Acts 8:26-35. We are told that in response to the question:

"Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

Acts 8:34-35

Paul, in writing about the means of salvation says:

Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified; a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 1:22-24

READ: Isaiah 52:13-15, 53:1-12 (Chapters 49-55)

1. Explain the meaning of v.1 in the light of its use by Jesus and Paul in the New Testament - John 12:37-38; Romans 10:16-17.

2. What do you learn about the appearance of Jesus from v.2?

3. Put v.3 into your own words. (See John 1:10-11)

4. Why is the response of v.4 inappropriate? (See Luke 23:35-43)

5. V.5 is used as a proof text to support the teaching that physical healing is available to us all through the gospel. Is this a valid use of this scripture? Be prepared to support your answer.

6. List the things you learn about yourself and Jesus in vs. 6 and 7.

7. Read one of the New Testament accounts of the crucifixion and explain the meaning of vs. 8 and 9.

8. Why did Jesus die - v.10? (Compare with Acts 2:23-24)

9. Make a list of the results of Christ's death as recorded in this chapter.

10. Read Hebrews 2:5-18. Why is Jesus the means of salvation?

Study 8 - The Results of Salvation

READ: Isaiah 58:1-14 (Chapters 56-60)

This week's reading begins:

*This is what the Lord says:
Maintain justice and do what is right,
for my salvation is close at hand
and my righteousness will soon be revealed.
(Isaiah 56:1)*

There is an appropriate response to the salvation which comes from the Lord. Here we have a call to live in harmony with the revealed character of God and to be his agents by doing what is right. Along with a changed behaviour there is an acceptable attitude toward God which brings the blessing of the Lord.

*For this is what the high and lofty One says-
he who lives forever, whose name is holy:
"I live in a high and holy place,
but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit,
to revive the spirit of the lowly
and to revive the heart of the contrite."
Isaiah 57:15*

READ: Isaiah 56:1 - 8

1. From the context in which these verses are found, which covenant is being referred to?
2. In Chapter 58:1 what is Isaiah specifically told to do?
3. Explain the meaning of v.2.
4. Identify the behaviour which these people believe merits God's attention - v.3.

5. Why was their religious activity rejected - vs.3-5?

6. List the activities which demonstrate a true desire to honour God - vs. 6-10.

7. List the blessings to be experienced as a result of their changed behaviour - vs. 8-12.

8. Does the use of this chapter support the argument that the church should be actively pursuing social justice in our society today? Support your answer.

9. Come prepared to discuss the social implications of the Gospel.

Study 9 - The Kingdom Restored

READ: Isaiah 61:1-11 (Chapters 62-64)

This chapter was one of the foundations upon which the men and women of faith based their expectation that the kingdom would one day be restored to Israel. It is not surprising that after the resurrection Jesus' disciples asked: "*Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?*" Acts 1:6. Jesus does not reject their expectation. What he tells them is that the timing is wrong.

It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set in his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.
Acts 1:7-8

The grace of God is greater than they could comprehend but it certainly includes the promises already made.

1. List the activities to which the Servant of the Lord has been appointed (vs. 1-3)
2. Which of these activities appears to be out of harmony with the rest?
3. Why does this responsibility appear in this list? (Your opinion)
4. What will be the result of these blessings (v.3)?
5. What else is promised as the result of the activity of the Servant of the Lord (vs.4-5)?
6. Explain the meaning of v.6.
7. Why should this prophecy be considered as referring to events still future - v.7?

8. Based on our previous study of the Old Testament Covenants, what would you identify as "The Everlasting Covenant" (v. 8)

9. What is the response of those who have been clothed in the garments of salvation? (v.10)

10. List the similes used to illustrate the greatness of God's grace (vs. 10-11)

11. READ: Luke 4:16-21 to see how Jesus used and interpreted this prophecy. What conclusions can you draw, based on the use which Jesus made of this Scripture?

Study 10 - The Purpose of God Accomplished

The promise of salvation and restoration has been given and believed. The people of God can now look forward in anticipation. This is good news which must be shared:

*For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet,
till her righteousness shines out like the dawn,
her salvation like a blazing torch.*

Isaiah 62:1

Their desire is that God would act, that his power would be displayed:

*Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
That the mountains would tremble before you!*

Isaiah 64:1

Their prayer:

*Oh, look upon us, we pray,
for we are all your people.
Your sacred cities have become a desert;
even Zion is a desert, Jerusalem a desolation.
Our holy and glorious temple, where our fathers praised you,
has been burned with fire,
and all that we treasured lies in ruins.*

Isaiah 64:9b - 11

Their question:

*After all this, O LORD, will you hold yourself back?
Will you keep silent and punish us beyond measure?*

Isaiah 64:12

READ: Isaiah 65:1-25 (chapter 66)

1. What is the LORD'S response to their questions? (v.1)

2. List the actions and attitudes that have made it impossible for these particular people to experience the Lord's blessing (vs.2-5)

3. What principle is at work in vs. 6 and 7?

4. In spite of the judgement to come, what does the Lord promise to do - vs. 8-10?

5. Why is the judgement deserved - vs. 11-12?

6. List the contrasts which are made in vs. 13-16.

7. What do you learn about God's character from this list of contrasts?

8. Based on vs. 18 - 25 only, what would your expectations be?

9. READ the early chapters in Matthew, Mark or Luke. Note especially Matthew 4:23-25; Mark 1:27-28; Luke 3:15; Luke 7:16-17. Explain why the people had these reactions to John the Baptist and Jesus.

Through our study of Isaiah we can begin to understand why Jesus disciples held so strongly to their expectations regarding the kingdom. Their faith that God's purposes would be accomplished was based on their understanding of the Word of the LORD through the prophets. What they did not understand was that God's grace embraces the whole world. **This is a New Testament revelation.**

*For God was pleased to have all his fulness dwell in him, (Christ)
and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things
on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the
cross.*

Colossians 1:19-20