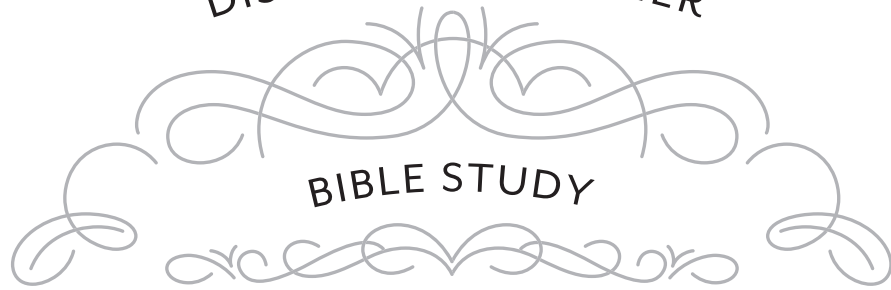


DISCOVER TOGETHER



# ISAIAH

*Discovering Assurance Through Prophecies  
About Your Mighty King*



*Sue Edwards*

LEADER'S GUIDE



*Isaiah: Discovering Assurance Through Prophecies About Your Mighty King*  
Leader's Guide © 2022 Sue Edwards

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## Before You Begin . . .

### WHY I'M EXCITED ABOUT THIS STUDY

Hope comforts. Hope empowers. As our culture unravels, we desperately need hope to see beyond the headlines and disunity that plagues our world today. This study offers women substantive hope that God is in control and moving forward to establish a final culmination of all chaos. He promises his followers new life in a future kingdom, a glorious place of peace, justice, and righteousness. Isaiah prophesied about this new life in Jesus's kingdom, and his message is particularly relevant today. I fervently pray that as you lead women through this study, you will all find the hope in Christ that uplifts, sustains, and propels you forward to a fruitful life regardless of outward challenges.

I'm delighted that you have chosen to unearth this study's riches. Although you may use this study guide for personal devotions, consider inviting other women to join you to add depth to your quest. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the introductory sections of the study guide and this overview. Then, as you work your way through the study, read the week-by-week leader's guide. I have included discussion topics particular to that lesson, troubleshooting tips, and information to help you understand prophecy, activity ideas, and other pertinent information and counsel to aid in a productive group experience.

If you are new at leading a small group, be sure to digest the "Training Guide for Small-Group Leaders" before your first gathering. You'll find this resource on my website—[www.discovertogetherseries.com](http://www.discovertogetherseries.com)—along with other helpful tools. Even if you have led groups before, consider reviewing the instructions and tips in the Training Guide. Skilled leaders enhance the likelihood that a group will bond and thrive, but a poor leader usually stifles healthy interaction.

### ADAPTABLE OPTIONS FOR YOUR CALENDAR

This study contains nine lessons. If you desire to extend your study by one or two weeks, consider spending the first week bonding by getting to know one another better and the second week becoming familiar with the introductory sections of the study through discussion or teaching. Learn more in *Effective Use of Introductory Sections* on page 6.

You can also extend the study by adding a final week after you complete lesson nine. I've used this final week as a celebration, with special foods, gifts exchanges, or a time to share prayer requests and pray for one another. Consider how you can make the final week together a memorable time.

Also, I’ve challenged participants early in the study to consider how they might express what they’ve learned by creating a piece of art. Examples include a poem, play, dance, song, sculpture, painting, or mural. I made this optional for those who weren’t “artsy” or were too busy. For the final week, I gave women a place to display their creations and time for everyone to circulate, while the creator explained their piece of art and what they learned.

Another semester-end activity that’s works well is to give women time to stand and verbally express how God’s Word blessed them during the study.

## **GOALS OF THE STUDY**

One goal of this study is to energize participants to evaluate their priorities in light of eternity. Another goal is to prepare Christians to overcome a sense of hopelessness that easily results if we keep our eyes downward instead of looking up to focus on our relationship with Jesus and the marvelous future ahead. Of course, we all battle fear and worry as we deal with life in a fallen world. When we encounter a crisis, it’s only human to feel discouraged. God has emotions and we are made in his image. This means we are blessed with emotions too. Without healthy emotions, we would be little robots, unfeeling and uncaring. Our emotions are an integral part of what makes us able to love, experience joy, feel empathy and passion, and delight at the beauty of God’s creation. However, when negative emotions like fear, panic, and hopelessness take over our lives, we find ourselves enslaved and unable to flourish. When women immerse themselves in God’s Word about hope in Christ and the amazing kingdom where they will one day reside, they can strengthen their armory of faith and overcome emotional bondage by learning biblical attitudes, thinking patterns, and actions.

## **HOW TO LEAD IF LESSON TIME IS LIMITED**

A thorough study of any biblical text is vital for biblical literacy resulting in sound application but if you aren’t able to go through all the questions without rushing or giving everyone time to participate, consider these tips:

- As the leader, quickly summarize any introductory material and move into the questions. Don’t read notes or other lesson sections unless needed for clarification.
- Answer observations from the text yourself as the leader or limit the response to one person.
- Skip questions that you discern are not central to the meaning of the biblical text.

- Just focus on one section of the lesson that you sense is most applicable to your particular group. That’s better than skipping around and choosing a question here and there. Understanding the flow of the text is important and builds toward valid application. Otherwise, you risk Scripture-twisting.

## A SAFE PLACE

Making the group an open, protected place will be especially important as you discuss these serious issues. We need a place where we can be brutally honest about our opinions, shortcomings, doubts, and fears. We need a place where no questions are off-limits. Your role as a leader is to create a safe place to process and share. Safe places destroy roadblocks to faith, resulting in spiritual, emotional, and mental health. As you guide the group with skill and a caring heart, students may actually change the way they think, feel, and act. What a privilege!

In order to help them work through hopelessness, we need to process these issues in our own lives, so I’ve asked related share questions. If you are leading a new group of strangers, these questions may be a bit daunting. Do all you can to create a safe place but realize that some women are uncomfortable talking about deep hurts with people they don’t know well. You may need to set the example for them by sharing your own hurts. If the women refuse to discuss some of the questions, don’t be discouraged and don’t try to force them. Simply do the best you can and focus on the questions that require less vulnerability or talk about some of the introductory material before lesson 1. As they learn to know and trust one another, you’ll likely see more depth in sharing.

## DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Each lesson walks you, verse by verse, through a portion of text. Observation, interpretation, application, correlation, opinion, and share questions guide you through the passages to help you grasp God’s intended meaning and apply it to life today. This methodical approach is based on sound interpretive principles designed to reduce error and speculation. Occasionally women will be asked to place themselves into the setting or the shoes of people in the text. This exercise, although somewhat speculative, helps the passage come alive in the mind’s eye of contemporary readers. Opinion and share questions aid in application to current and personal issues.

The goal is more than head knowledge—it’s life change. The lessons are designed to facilitate authentic growth that includes new convictions and attitudes, moving the student’s learning from head to heart to hand.

I will provide short commentaries on unclear or perplexing passages. My goal in this Leader’s Guide is not to overwhelm you with massive amounts of information but

instead to give you concise answers that will help you guide your group through any rough spots. I also provide additional quality resources for further study on your own.

You’ll want to acquaint yourself and your students with the resources available to enhance your study experience:

- *Memory Verse.* Each lesson begins with an optional memory verse related to the main topic that week. Use this tool on a volunteer basis only.
- *Digging Deeper.* Some participants will want to work the optional “digging deeper” questions located in the margins of the study guide. Determine with your group how you want to use these study prompts. You may want to include them in your discussion, use them at the end if time allows, or simply suggest that those who want to spend more time in deeper study work on these on their own. If a particular student shows an aptitude for Scripture study, you may want to ask her to tackle a particular digging deeper question and report her findings in the next session. Then ask if any other women also worked on that particular digging deeper, widening the discussion if possible.
- *Quotes, Background Info, and Extras.* Soak up the inspiring sidebars that relate to particular parts of each lesson. If one especially resonates with you, use it as a springboard for discussion or personal application.

In addition, take advantage of the “Training Guide for Small-Group Leaders” available at [www.discovertogetherseries.com](http://www.discovertogetherseries.com).

## EFFECTIVE USE OF INTRODUCTORY SECTIONS

Biblical illiteracy is becoming a serious problem in our churches today, even among women who attend Bible study. As a result, I’ve created new introductory sections to help students learn more about how to overcome this trend in their own lives:

- *Why and How to Study the Bible*
- *How to Get the Most Out of a Discover Together Bible Study*
- *What Is an Inductive Study and Why Is It So Powerful?*

I’ve also created resources specific to this study:

- *Why Study Isaiah?*
- *To Infuse Us with Courage While Dwelling in a Weary World*
- *To Increase Our Confidence That the Bible Is True*
- *The Author’s Perspective on End Times*

- *The Author’s Perspective on the Terms “Heaven” and the “Millennial Kingdom” in Isaiah*
- *How to Disagree Agreeably*
- *The Nature of Divine Prophetic Literature*
- *Background Information*
- *What We Know About the Prophet Isaiah*
- *Isaiah’s World*

Consider whether or not those in your study would benefit from discussing this introductory material before they begin Lesson 1. You might spend your first week together, possibly two weeks, bonding as a group by getting to know one another better and complementing that time discussing and/or teaching concepts from these important introductory sections.

### **WILL YOU END EACH LESSON WITH A WRAP-UP MESSAGE?**

Leading small groups and teaching are different skills. When you wear your small group leader’s hat, you do not lecture! But you may want to end your time by putting on a teacher’s hat. Participants often enjoy hearing a message to crystallize biblical truth. Your wrap-up might be a ten-minute informal presentation, allowing for interaction and questions, or a thirty-minute formal lecture, more like a senior pastor’s Sunday message. If your study consists of several small groups, you may prefer a formal lecture. If you’re meeting in a home, your group may prefer a more interactive format. Tailor your wrap-up to the number of participants. Use what works for you and your group.

If you believe that God may want you to teach the Bible, step out and try. Women love to hear their own leaders teach them rather than hear virtual teachers. Resources to sharpen your teaching skills are listed below. At first, your skills may not be as honed as more experienced teachers, but in time and with practice you should improve. And you have advantages over a virtual teacher. People need models they can watch, hug, and talk to. And when one of their own steps out and is used by God, it inspires everyone to step forward and use their gifts too. So, if something in you says, “Teach!”—then go for it!

### **OH, DEAR, NO ONE IS WILLING OR ABLE TO TEACH**

If you have relied on video teachers, you may encounter a situation where no one has the time or feels qualified to teach the Bible. However, Bible teachers are in your midst. The Holy Spirit endows a number of women with the spiritual gift of teaching,

but they may not be aware of their gift or they may not have developed it, partially due to the appearance that there’s no place for them to use it. Here is a stopgap idea that may remedy this situation while future Bible teachers identify their gift, develop it, and equip for their calling:

Ask students to bring their smartphones, tablets, or laptops to class but not to use them (unless they refer to the Bible on their phone) until after the group has discussed the lesson. During the discussion, ask everyone to jot down unanswered questions, interesting background information they’d like to know more about, or other topics that relate to the lesson.

Consider taking a quick break and when you return, divide up these ideas for further study. Then spend some time together researching answers from online Bible dictionaries, websites, and commentaries like Dr. Constable’s notes ([www.planof-biblechapel.org/soniclight](http://www.planof-biblechapel.org/soniclight)).

Pair up people who are not tech savvy with those who are. Pull up pictures of the geography, related historical insights, and different experts’ views. Then graciously discuss what you find. This exercise will help students see how much they can learn by using available resources that can deepen their understanding of the passage. In the process, you may find several women discover the possibility that they may be spiritually gifted to teach the Bible. If so, help them find resources and provide opportunities for them to learn. See the section on *Enlist Women to Teach with You* for more information.

## **ADDITIONAL INTRODUCTORY TEACHING IDEAS**

If you plan to include a lecture in your format, you may want to begin with a message about our future hope and destiny as Christ followers. Delve into research on the topic and encourage women to look up and gain the perspective that accompanies a thorough understanding of our amazing future!

Don’t be afraid to share your own struggles. If you take on a teaching role, do they need to get to know you as their teacher? Do they need an opportunity to learn more about each other? Do they need time to interact, building trust and comfort in the group? Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you as you consider how to prepare your group for the study.

## **ENLIST WOMEN TO TEACH WITH YOU**

Others have something to say that would benefit the group. Listen attentively when they tell how God works in their lives. Identify participants who inspire others. Who holds a high view of the Bible and has spent time studying? Who walks close to Jesus?



Who lives wisely? Who is articulate? Passionate? Growing? Mature? Organized in their thinking?

If you add a teaching element to your Bible study format, consider asking one of these women to share a short testimony or deliver the message for the entire group that week. She will need a cooperative attitude. When you give a woman the platform, you give her influence. I’ve worked with a few women who took advantage of this opportunity. They spoke twice as long as time allotted. Or they refused to prepare, wandering aimlessly. Or they became so emotional that they broke down, upsetting women in the study.

To alleviate these problems, set a time limit and ask them to write out what they will say. Insist they review their message with you. Stress that if they’re a “time hog,” group time will be shorter, irritating group participants. Use wisdom as you select presenters, but consider how much others will benefit by hearing a variety of voices.

If you decide on a “teaching team” approach, offer training. See the book list below to read and discuss together. Write out your messages and give them to each other before teaching the larger group. Meet together to ensure cohesive teaching around a common theme to smooth out a disjointed feeling in the series. Seek out training, live or online, but vet it first. For in-depth transformational training consider seminary. Today, many seminaries, including the one where I teach, offer online options as well as hybrid and intensive courses that make a seminary degree feasible from anywhere in the world. Check out a school’s website!

## **RESOURCES TO HELP YOU TEACH WITH ACCURACY AND SKILL**

Bruce, Barbara. *7 Ways of Teaching the Bible to Adults: Using Our Multiple Intelligences to Build Faith*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000.

Mathews, Alice P. *Preaching That Speaks to Women*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.

Robinson, Haddon W. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.

Stanley, Andy, and Lane Jones. *Communicating for a Change*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2006.

Stott, John R. W. *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.

Swindoll, Charles R. *Touching Others with Your Words*. New York: Faith Words, 2012.

## RESOURCES TO HELP YOU STUDY ISAIAH

### **Online**

Excellent free online resources are the Bible notes of Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Dallas Seminary Professor. His commentaries are thorough, clear, and practical, but not overly detailed or tedious. They provide quality help for both academic and lay teachers and leaders. Find them on [www.planobiblechapel.org/soniclight](http://www.planobiblechapel.org/soniclight).

### **Books**

Davis, Andrew M. *Exalting Jesus in Isaiah*. Christ-Centered Exposition Commentaries, edited by David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2017.

Motyer, J. Alec. *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

Walvoord, John F., and Roy B. Zuck, eds. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985.

Webb, Barry G. *The Message of Isaiah: On Eagles’ Wings*. The Bible Speaks Today series, edited by J. A. Motyer. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

## LESSON 1

# Your King Commissions Isaiah—and You

### GET ACQUAINTED

Open with prayer. Should you pray or invite one of the participants to do so? Be sensitive to the women. If they're comfortable praying out loud, give them opportunity. If not, you, as the leader, pray. Then spend some time getting to know one another. You might, for example, ask each woman to introduce herself by telling something about family, hobbies, what she likes to do on a Saturday night, a pet peeve, or what she hopes to gain from the study. If time allows, spend your first meeting connecting with questions or icebreaker games.

To help your group bond or focus on the study theme, google icebreakers, community builder games, or locate an activity that suits your purpose for the first gathering. You might also tell a great story or provide an illustration about people who overcame hopelessness by focusing on their eternal destiny with Jesus in his kingdom. Relate the story or exercise to the upcoming study where the group will learn how to apply what they are learning. Remind them that they will need one another, as well as God, to succeed. You may want to pray for one another as you close.

### GET FOCUSED

Look over the study guide with your group and express your excitement about the topic. Create and discuss ground rules. If women join later, remember to orient them. Stress the importance of confidentiality.

Some women come to Bible study for the sole purpose of studying Scripture. Others come for community, to find friends. Regardless of your own bent, honor both desires. We all need a relationship with God through serious Bible study *and* we all need relationships through connecting in authentic community. Be sure the schedule reflects time for both.

### DISCUSS LESSON 1

Did you ask the women to come prepared to discuss the first lesson? If so, dive in. Paraphrase parts of the introductory section and ask the first question. Spend more time on the share and opinion questions, but don't skip observation (What does the text say?) and interpretation (What does the text mean?) questions. If you do, you will interrupt the flow of the discussion, as many questions are based on previous ques-

tions. If you don’t want to spend time discussing the observation question, you may summarize the answer yourself and then move into other kinds of questions.

If you run out of time, cut questions that do hinder the logical flow of the lesson. If you don’t have enough time to cover all the questions well, you may simply want to discuss one part of the lesson thoroughly and not address every section. Make the questions work for you and your group.

Point out that the lesson is peppered with notes to help with difficult passages and to give helpful background. Tell them to read the quotes in the sidebars as time allows. If they desire more study, encourage them to tackle the Digging Deeper questions. These added elements should bring alive the truths of the lesson and you may even want to discuss them.

## LESSON CONTENT

The purpose of lesson one is to acquaint students with the prophet Isaiah and a defining moment in his life when God called him into ministry. Also, the lesson emphasizes that God has a calling on every Christian’s life. Our primary calling is to grow more like Jesus but our secondary calling centers around our spiritual gifts. They enable us to serve God in various ways for our joy and for his glory. Awakening each participant to this truth is the ultimate goal of the lesson.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

Question 13 instructs students to reread Isaiah 6:6–7. Then the question asks, “What do you think the burning coal in the angel’s tongs foreshadows? How do these verses in Isaiah’s vision symbolize Jesus’s future mission on earth?” Barry G. Webb writes,

The altar . . . symbolizes the entire provision which God had made in the temple and its services for the sins of his people. Isaiah is cleansed, not by his own efforts, but purely by the grace of God. The same grace was available to Israel as a whole (1:18), but by their arrogance they had cut themselves off from it.<sup>1</sup>

The live coal, showing God as a consuming fire, also represents God’s purification and grace to the repentant. This action prepared Isaiah for his calling which would soon follow.

Question 19 reads, “The Bible uses the term *remnant* in several prophetic books and also in Romans. From these verses, what do you think this term means in Scrip-

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1. Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah: On Eagles’ Wings*, The Bible Speaks Today series, ed. J. A. Motyer (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 60.

ture and how does it relate to the tenth in Isaiah 6:13?” The term *remnant* refers to those who remain faithful regardless of strong pressure to abandon their faith in God. Throughout the Bible, God affirms that a *remnant* will always remain, and that group will be part of the beautiful throng of people who will enter Jesus’s kingdom when he returns to the earth. None of us know who is included in that remnant, so it’s wise to treat all people as if they are or could be.

As you lead, do your best not to allow the discussion to drift off into questions about God’s sovereignty and people’s free will to choose salvation. This mystery is beyond our ability to understand, although the Bible tells us that both are true. We are wise to live in light of that reality. If someone in the group is especially interested in these two seemingly contradictory ideas, refer them to J. I. Packer’s excellent little classic, *Evangelism & The Sovereignty of God* (InterVarsity Press, 1961).

### CREATIVE ARTS IDEAS

Find a spiritual gifts assessment online and ask participants to work through it in hopes of identifying how God might want them to focus on an area of service. Take time to discuss the assessment together and help one another brainstorm possibilities.

Acquaint your women with The Giftedness Center, <http://www.thegiftedness-center.com>, and consider taking advantage of the resources there to complement what you are learning about your individual callings to serve the Lord.

Find a quality podcast to play and discuss that relates to calling, spiritual gifts, and giftedness.

## LESSON 2

# Celebrate the Only Perfect King

### LESSON CONTENT

Lesson 2 emphasizes the need for Christians to shift their loyalty to King Jesus if they are trusting in human leaders for safety and security. This discussion could easily digress into politics. DON'T allow this to occur! One way to prevent this is to announce graciously before the discussion begins that participants may hold different perspectives on politics and you are asking everyone to refrain from talking about specific political parties or leaders, but instead to focus on our loyalty to King Jesus as the only leader who won't ultimately disappoint us.

### TROUBLESHOOTING

Question 13 may be difficult for those who struggle to understand God's tough love. The question asks, "Who will orchestrate this future discipline (7:17)? Any thoughts as to why? What does this teach us about God's love for his people? Why does God discipline his beloved children (Hebrews 12:7–13)?"

To understand God's impending judgment on the Jewish nation, we must also understand that the nation had, like Ahaz, rejected faith in God and were now mixing their religion with worshipping horrific idols like Baal. They had refused over and over God's pleas through his prophets to return to him. Now, God tells them that he will orchestrate a severe mercy, hoping to bring them to the end of themselves in their arrogance and rebellion, resulting in their redemption and return to the fold.

Hebrews 12:7–13 relates to our heavenly Father's love for us when we stray into such perilous territory that we are endangering ourselves and others. Just like a brokenhearted parent may resort to what might be viewed as harsh consequences if their teen becomes a drug addict, resorts to stealing from them, lying to them, and entangling themselves in all kinds of harmful actions, God does the same. However, he always acts out of love and in his beloved's best interest long-term. God's fierce love results in a tough, redemptive, and hopefully cleansing love designed to awaken a change of heart and direction in the prodigal.

To be comfortable with these kinds of answers, one must understand the character of God—that he is both loving *and* holy. This means he cannot overlook sin. He is not personally vengeful as some believe but must be true to his character of holiness. Helpful resources include *Knowing God* by J. I. Packer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* by A. W. Tozer, and *The Great Divorce* by C. S. Lewis.

If women in your group struggle with these concepts, you might try to help them understand that those who reject the gospel have chosen not to be with God, and he honors their request. You can offer the recommended books or bring in a respected theologian in person, via the internet, or through an online podcast to talk about these truths.

Sometimes investigators ask, “Who is responsible to ensure that anyone who truly desires to know God will have that opportunity?” Second Chronicles 16:9 provides an answer. The first part of the verse reads, “For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.” This text is one of the reasons I became a believer. I had a genuine problem with the idea that if someone had not heard about Christ, God rejected them. However, in a seeker’s meeting when I was twenty-four years old, a gentleman used this passage to show me that God looks throughout the whole earth to find those who want to know him, and he reveals himself to them if they really do.

Sometimes it’s through dreams, as we see in Muslim countries today. Sometimes it’s through literature as it was in Russia during the Cold War. Because of God’s character, he cannot and will not let anyone perish who has a heart for him. Again, understanding the character of God is vital to gaining insight into deep theological questions that can hinder seekers from accepting Christ. If someone in your group struggles with this question, feel free to refer them to my answer in the leader’s guide. As a leader, do your best to move the discussion in these directions, possibly by asking for input from more mature Christians.

The digging deeper question adjacent to question 4 asks, “Who do you think God was referring to as ‘these two smoldering stubs of firewood’ (7:4)? What was he communicating to Ahaz through this analogy?”

The two smoldering stubs of firewood symbolize Ahaz’s enemies that the Lord could easily distinguish if Ahaz would place his trust in God rather than trusting in earthly human leaders by making alliances with these foreign powers. They are “only” men. Rejecting the way of faith and the Lord’s promises would spell severe discipline for Judah and final heart-hardening for Ahaz.

The digging deeper question adjacent to question 18 asks, “Why do you think Isaiah, Matthew, and Jesus referred to ‘Galilee of the nations,’ also translated ‘Galilee of the Gentiles’? See also Luke 2:29–32. What was the hidden message in these words?”

The passage in Luke refers to the time Jesus’s parents brought him to the Temple to be dedicated to God and circumcised. Simeon and Anna were two faithful Temple workers who had been waiting for the coming of the Messiah all their lives. God had revealed to Simeon that he would not die before he saw the coming King. When he

saw Jesus, he declared that his eyes had seen God’s “salvation,” but not just for the Jews. In verses 31 and 32, Simeon declared that this child would provide salvation “in the sight of all nations, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.”

This is just one of several revelations that God was now including faithful Gentiles in a new way through Christ. Other passages that express this truth include Luke 4:14–29 and Acts 2:1–13. In the first example, Luke describes a time when Jesus returned to his hometown Nazareth to teach in the synagogue, but when he mentioned God blessing two Gentiles, a widow in Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian, the townspeople tried to throw Jesus off a cliff. In the second instance, when the Holy Spirit indwelt Jesus’s followers, they were able to speak and understand different languages, again implying that his message would be for the whole world and not just the Jews. If you have time in your discussion, this digging deeper question might be a good one to emphasize.

### **CREATIVE ARTS IDEAS**

If any ballet or modern dancers attend your study or your church, ask them to choreograph a dance that illustrates God’s tough love on behalf of his beloved children. Then culminate your time together watching an artistic portrayal of this severe mercy.

Choose a worship song that complements this week’s lesson and sing it together in praise and anticipation of the truths you’ve learned. To make it extra special, enlist someone who signs for the deaf to illustrate the song in hand motions.



## LESSON 3

# Rejoice in Your Just King

### LESSON CONTENT

In chapter 10 Isaiah prophesied that God would use Assyria to discipline the nations of Israel and Judah, but after that Assyria would be felled like a giant tree never to grow back again. In contrast, in Lesson 3, we observe that although the nations of Israel and Judah would also fall like a huge tree, they would grow back again. Thus, 11:1 begins, “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.” Jesse was David’s father. The stump is the house or lineage of David. The shoot and Branch refer to the Messiah, Jesus. This prophecy reveals that Jesus will come through the line of David.

Lesson 3 emphasizes Jesus’s humble beginnings to enable him to understand and sympathize with human suffering. In addition, this lesson focuses on the beautiful reality that although injustice sometimes prevails in our fallen world, when King Jesus returns to set up the millennial kingdom, he will inaugurate complete justice and righteousness.

### TROUBLESHOOTING

Question 16 asks, “What does Isaiah call King Jesus in 11:10? What might this name signify compared to calling him a shoot or a branch?”

In 11:10 Jesus is called the Root of Jesse. So, in a real sense, Jesse sprang from Jesus, who is the root and origin of the family into which Jesus would be born. In other words, Jesus came before Jesse, as part of the eternal Godhead, and is the creator of Jesse. J. Alec Motyer writes, “Among the kings, David alone was ‘the son of Jesse,’ and the unexpected reference to Jesse here has tremendous force: when Jesse produces a shoot it must be David. But to call the expected king *the Root of Jesse* is altogether another matter for this means that Jesse sprang from him [Jesus]; he is the root support and origin of the Messianic family in which he would be born.” (*The Prophecy of Isaiah, An Introduction & Commentary* [IVP Academic, 1993], 121).

### END-TIMES EMPHASIS

Many passages in this lesson open our eyes to our future life in the millennial kingdom. This literal one-thousand-year kingdom on the earth was prophesied in Revelation 20:4–6. Those who belong to King Jesus’s family will never die “but they will

be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years” (20:6b). Much of our study in Isaiah will focus on details showing us what our lives will be like during those thousand years.

### **CREATIVE ARTS IDEA**

Locate a podcast or video on the millennial kingdom by Dr. Mark Hitchcock or other end times experts, watch it together, and then discuss.

## LESSON 4

# Pictures of Your Glorious Kingdom Home

### LESSON CONTENT

The Bible contains a variety of truths about our glorious futures but they, like puzzle pieces, are scattered throughout the Old and New Testaments. God expects that we will know his Word so well that we will be able to put them all together. The book of Isaiah as well as several other books of the Bible contain pieces of the puzzle. In this lesson, I guide participants to some of these truths peppered throughout. These are among the most exciting truths in the entire Bible!

### TROUBLESHOOTING

Question 5 asks participants to read Isaiah 2:4 where Isaiah writes that King Jesus will turn all prior nations' swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Swords and spears are instruments of war but in the millennial kingdom war will be no more! Instead, these instruments for killing will be turned into agricultural instruments for growing and gardening. This may express that this kingdom will be more like the peaceful and gorgeous garden of Eden where we will be communing with God as a natural part of life, without the devil's domination.

Question 12 sends students to Zechariah 13:2 where God says he will banish idols, the prophets, and a spirit of impurity from the kingdom. The author isn't referring to Isaiah or other righteous prophets but to the false prophets that led God's people astray.

Question 13 asks, "Who will finally reap the consequences of the pain and suffering inflicted on the earth? Describe the consequences they've brought upon themselves" (24:21–22). Verse 21 refers to "the powers in the heavens above." These powers refer to Satan and his fallen angels who encouraged humans to commit atrocious acts of cruelty.

Question 14 has students read Isaiah 24:23 where the moon and sun are personified with human feelings. The verse says these celestial bodies are dismayed and ashamed. We know that the moon and sun don't have human emotions, but this is the author's way of expressing that the whole earth is horrified by the terrible deeds of Satan, his fallen angels, and those he has influenced to commit these horrific acts throughout history.

### **CREATIVE ARTS IDEA**

Identify Christian artists in your church or community and ask them to create an artistic representation of what life will be like for believers in the millennial kingdom. Give them an opportunity to share and explain their creations.

## LESSON 5

# Your Mighty King Rules with Compassion

### LESSON CONTENT

Isaiah has prophesied the discipline that's coming for the unrepentant nations of Israel and Judah, but in chapter 40, God brings comfort for his beloved people. This comfort was designed to encourage them during the seventy years of their miserable exile. A number of important truths are evident in 40:1–10: The Jews are still God's people despite their rebellion. God will forgive them on the basis of the atonement of Christ Jesus. And ultimately, God will bring them home.

We also observe in verse 5 that “all people will see it together.” In other words, these wonderful words of comfort are not just for the Jewish people but for all who trust in the Lord and encounter struggles. Another truth proclaimed is that all our lives are brief, but God and his Word are forever. In him, we live! These truths are so magnificent that Isaiah and all who love the Lord are commanded to “cry out” and proclaim these mighty wonders!

### TROUBLESHOOTING

In Question 1, several voices cry out and proclaim this beautiful truth: God will cover all sin of the repentant by sending the Messiah. The voices are probably God (1–2), John the Baptist (3–5), and Isaiah (6–10).

Question 3 asks why Isaiah 40 includes the role of John the Baptist in Jesus's ministry (40:3–5). The final part of the question reads, “Why do you think Isaiah includes this prophecy right after verses 1 and 2?” Both of these questions help the student understand that the faithful remnant of Jewish people will return from their exile and their sins will be forgiven on the basis of what Jesus will do on the cross. Their redemption is based on the retroactive work of Jesus on behalf of all his beloved. The answer to question 4 is based on the same truth.

Question 8 looks at verse 11 where we see that the King is a tender Shepherd. Attempt to help students see the contrast with verse 10 where God's sovereignty and strength are described. Understanding both sides of God's character—the holy righteous God *and* the God who loves deeply—is critical to a correct view of God's personhood leading to a mature faith.

In Question 10, students are asked to determine the theme of Isaiah 40:12 by the four questions. Each of these questions relates to God as the grand and mighty Creator. Question 12 asks the students to analyze four more questions in 40:13 and 14.

These questions relate to God’s vast knowledge. Help them understand the differences in these verses.

Questions 19 and 20 challenge us to consider idol worship today. Question 19 is a general question concerning what kinds of idols people tend to worship now. Guide the group to name as many different kinds of idols as they can. Examples include possessions, security, comfort, health, beauty, relationships, family, children, and fame. Question 20 is more personal. Let women volunteer to share and consider sharing first, as their leader, to prime the pump.

### **CREATIVE ARTS IDEAS**

Watch the film *Chariots of Fire* together and discuss how the movie relates to Isaiah 40. Another way to use this film is to show a clip of the lead character reading portions of Isaiah 40 in one outdoor scene.

Ask a dramatic reading group to present Isaiah 40 to the class either to kick off the lesson or to conclude it.

## LESSON 6

# The King's Servant Songs

### LESSON CONTENT

In this lesson, students immerse themselves in Isaiah's four sections that teach about Jesus as the Suffering Servant. These beautiful texts describe Jesus's atonement on behalf of both the faithful Jewish remnant as well as all Gentiles throughout history who have and will place their faith in Jesus.

### TROUBLESHOOTING

Question 4 asks, "How broad will God the Father and his servant Son's ministry be?"

In verse 6 God the Father says that he will make Jesus "a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles." Attempt to bring out the amazing reality that seven hundred years before Jesus's earthly ministry, Isaiah prophesied that through Christ all people, Jews and Gentiles, would have the opportunity to reconcile with God and spend eternity in the King's millennial kingdom and in the New Heavens and New Earth.

The digging deeper question on page 66 asks, "How do you know that Isaiah 53 is about Jesus Christ and could never be fulfilled by any future Jewish leader, as some Jews argue today?"

Andrew Davis, in his book *Christ-Centered Exposition, Exalting Jesus in Isaiah*,<sup>2</sup> lists several reasons. He argues that no one in Israel has ever fulfilled this exact prophecy—only Jesus who came from "the house of David" and is a substitutionary atonement for the sins of the world as specified in Isaiah 53. He writes that the matter is settled for believers in Acts 8 when the Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip, the evangelist, the meaning of Isaiah 53:7 and 8. The text explains that "Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus, beginning with that Scripture" (Acts 8:34–35). This verse reveals that Isaiah 53 prophesies about Jesus, and only Jesus.

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2. Andrew M. Davis, *Exalting Jesus in Isaiah*, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentaries, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida (Nashville, B&H Publishing Group, 2017), 317.

## LESSON 7

# Your Kingdom Rewards

### LESSON CONTENT

This lesson walks students through the plethora of passages that speak of kingdom rewards in both the Old and New Testaments. Some people resist this concept, but it is a theme throughout the whole Bible. In addition, it is the only way to reconcile the truths that eternal life is a free gift of God's grace and yet how we live matters. God bestows rewards on his beloved, but believers don't lose their salvation on the basis of their behavior. Otherwise, we can easily misunderstand grace by faith alone and replace it by a salvation based on works or the idea that a believer can lose their salvation. The doctrine of eternal rewards is an important tenet of the faith and helps us interpret the Bible correctly.

However, our attitude toward eternal rewards must be based on the fact that the Lord gives us the grace, power, and ability to accomplish good works for him. For this reason, we remain humble as we lay our crowns at Jesus's feet in gratitude, but this does not negate the truth that our life on earth determines our role in the millennial kingdom.

If you encounter women who resist this concept, give them the freedom to disagree and move forward in the discussion, trusting that the multiple passages that speak to the reality of eternal rewards cause them to reevaluate this idea.

Also, remember that the concept of eternal rewards can cause women to feel guilty that they have not spent their days well for the Lord. While authentic guilt can motivate us to do better, excessive guilt can be counterproductive and discourage us so much that we want to give up. It's preferable to move the participants more toward the idea that rewards are meant to motivate us from this day forward to serve God with joy and a humble attitude.

### CREATIVE ARTS IDEA

Ask someone in your study or community to create a drama based on *The BEMA, A Story About the Judgment Seat of Christ* by Tim Stevenson (Fair Havens Publications, 2000) and act it out sometime during your study.



## LESSON 8

# Behold the New Heavens and the New Earth

### LESSON CONTENT

After Jesus's thousand-year millennial kingdom, the Bible describes another form of end-times life called the New Heavens and the New Earth.

### TROUBLESHOOTING

Question X asks about the significance of the two sets of names that are written on the gates and on the foundations of our new eternal home. Revelation 21:12–14 reveals that the names of the twelve tribes of Israel will be written on the gates and the names of Jesus's twelve apostles will be written on the foundations.

#### **Insert number above**

The fact that both the twelve tribes of Israel and Jesus's twelve apostles are found there is no accident. Each tribe represents a primary group of people who will occupy the New Heavens and the New Earth. John F. Walvoord wrote,

The inclusion of Israel's twelve tribes should settle beyond any question the matter of inclusion of Old Testament saints. The divine intent is evident to show that the New Jerusalem will have among its citizens not only believers of the present age, but also Israel, or the faithful of other ages, whether in the Old Testament or in the Tribulation.<sup>3</sup>

The digging deeper question adjacent to the question above reads, "Why do you think there won't be any sea in the new universe? What did the sea symbolize in Genesis 6–9? Instead of the salty sea, what will God provide for his children in their new home (21:6; 22:1)?" Possible reasons include (1) the sea in the Bible symbolizes storms, chaos, and destruction; (2) water in the New Heavens and the New Earth is pictured as "the river of the water of life" and seems to be all we need (22:1); and (3) only rivers are described in Eden and in some ways the New Heavens and the New Earth are a

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3. John F. Walvoord, *Revelation*, The John Walvoord Prophecy Commentaries, rev. and ed. Philip E. Rawley and Mark Hitchcock (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2011), 334.

ISAIAH: *Discovering Assurance Through Prophecies About Your Mighty King*—Leader's Guide

return to a new Eden and its perfection, although Eden was a garden and the New Heavens and the New Earth will be a city.

### **CREATIVE ARTS IDEA**

Play the 4-minute video from Time of Grace using the link and discuss the question he asks at the end: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hkUBtUX9bU>.

## LESSON 9

# Wait Well for Your King and His Kingdom

### LESSON CONTENT

Throughout the New Testament, the Holy Spirit inspired its authors to include words of assurance that Jesus is coming back, bringing our eternal future with him. This final lesson focuses on some of those passages to ensure participants understand that this theme is peppered throughout the Bible. In addition, this lesson is heavy on application, challenging students to seriously consider how they will change their priorities to prepare for their eternal futures.

### **WILL YOU SAY GOODBYE OR GO ON TOGETHER?**

Is this a short-term group, or do you, as the leader, want to continue meeting? The first decision is yours. Count the cost. Is the group thriving? Bonding? Committed? Worth the effort you are investing? Answer these questions honestly. Every group has a beginning and an end. Is this the time for your group to disband? If so, tell the group your reasons, kindly but emphatically. Don't be pressured into continuing against your better judgment.

If you determine you're excited about leading the group through another study, you may want to poll the group to learn their desires. If so, plan a date to meet for a brainstorming session on what to study and what changes might be in order, if any.

(See [www.discovertogetherseries.com](http://www.discovertogetherseries.com) for additional study options.)

Either way, use this last gathering to review and celebrate what has been accomplished. Plan a time that fosters a sense of closure, possibly festive food, a potluck brunch or luncheon, or some other special activity. For example, you might talk about how God has helped you understand his great plan for your future with him. You could list benefits you enjoyed as a result of the study. You might talk about changes you observed in the members as a result of sharing this study. In some way, celebrate this final chapter in your group experience. Praise and thank God for what he has done in your lives individually and as a worshipping community. If any of the participants are leaving the group, be sure to say goodbye and pray for them.