

WEEK 3

ISAIAH

THE LORD SAVES

CHECK-IN

Before you dig into the passage

Ask your group to share how it went applying the passage from last week: Which of the imperatives in Is. 1:16-17 did you commit to practising and how did it go? How did it go practising regular confession and repentance? How has your thinking or approach to worship changed? How can the group keep praying for you? Remind your group of the gospel and God's commitment to make us more like Jesus.

READ

Isaiah 1:21-31

As the text is central to the discussion, read the week's text together. Consider using a few different translations.

OBSERVE

*Make text-based observations (**What?**)*

Guide your group to make observations from the text. Focus on elements such as words, grammar, structure, tone, literary devices, genre, etc.

1. What metaphor does Isaiah use to describe the city of Jerusalem (v. 21-16)? What movement/progression do you notice? (*What was the city, what did it become, what will it be again?*)
2. What are the effects of the people's unfaithfulness to God on society? Compare this with what God's people were supposed to be like (Deut. 10:17-18, Ps 68:5).

3. How does God refer to those who sin against him? (*See verse 24 in particular*)
4. How will God deal with his disobedient people?
5. What is the choice that Isaiah presents to the people of Jerusalem and what are the consequences of each choice?

INTERPRET

*What does the passage mean (**So what?**)?*

Based on the observations, what did the text mean to its original audience? What is God saying?

1. What does the language used to describe sin/sinful people reveal about how God feels about sin?
2. What do the images of silver becoming dross and wine diluted by water show about the effects and power of sin?
3. What does it mean that God will “turn [his] hand against” his people (v. 25)? (*In context, this introduces God’s work of restoration. Through the discipline of his people, God achieves purification and restoration.*)
4. What does it mean that God will **redeem** the repentant by justice and righteousness (v. 27)?
5. What are the effects of idol worship as described by Isaiah (v. 29-31)?

APPLY

*What should we do and why (**Now what?**)?*

In light of the meaning of the text in its context, what principles apply to us today?

1. What destruction in our society do you wish to lament, just as Isaiah laments the social decay in Jerusalem?
 - a. How should you think about sinful leaders and moral decay in light of this passage? Is there hope?
 - b. What is the true remedy for social destruction? (*The gospel! Repentance and faith in Christ our Redeemer.*)
2. The covenant between God and his people is described as a marriage covenant (Is. 54:5). Similarly, the Church (all believers) is described as Jesus’s bride (2 Cor 11:1-3, Eph 5:22-33, Rev 19:6-9, 21:2, 9-11). How is the promise in verse 27 fulfilled in Jesus? How does this passage act as both a source of warning and of hope for believers today?

3. Notice the titles of God and emphasis on *his* actions in verses 24-26. Do you rely solely on God for your salvation, or are there ways in which you trust in your own merit? How could these verses encourage you and help you wholeheartedly trust that “the Lord saves” (Isaiah’s name meaning)?
4. In Ephesians 1:7 we read that we are redeemed by Jesus through his blood, and therefore we are not our own (1 Cor. 6). What are the implications of this for your life?
5. Verses 28-31 describe how God’s people worshipped idols of wood instead of God, and the destructive consequences that follow. What created things do you worship or trust in instead of your Creator and in what ways have you experienced shame, disgrace or even self-destruction (v. 29-31)? By contrast, what are the consequences of worshipping our Creator, God?
6. The choice presented by Isaiah to God’s people is the choice before us today. As Ray Ortlund puts it, “Will we repent and be redeemed, or rebel and be consumed? What will you choose?”

PRAYER

Lead your group in prayer as you reflect together on all we’ve learned from Isaiah 1.