

Answers

Study 1 Isaiah 38:1-22

Hezekiah's Faith Strengthened

Study Questions

1. Which were 'those days' the prophet is referring to? 38:1, 6

The days of the Assyrian invasions, especially the siege in 701 BC, as described in Isaiah 36, 37

2. What was the devastating news Hezekiah received? 38:1

Isaiah 38:1 In those days, Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover."

3. What was Hezekiah's response? What was the quality of Hezekiah's prayer? Was it long and complicated? 38:2-3

Isaiah 38:2 Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, ³ "Remember, O LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4. Did Hezekiah actually always walk faithfully, with wholehearted devotion and do what was good in God's eyes as he claimed? 38:3

Isaiah 38:3 "Remember, O LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

5. Did the LORD hear Hezekiah's prayer? How did the LORD answer Hezekiah's prayer? What did the LORD promise? 38:4-5

Isaiah 38:4 Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: ⁵ "Go and tell Hezekiah, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life.'

6. Apart from healing, what else did the LORD promise Hezekiah? What would the LORD do for Jerusalem regarding Assyria? 38:6

Isaiah 38:6 And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city.

7. Which sign would the LORD give to Hezekiah regarding his promises? How is this possible? 38:7-8

The sun would go back ten steps on the stairway of Ahaz.

Isaiah 38:7 "This is the LORD's sign to you that the LORD will do what he has promised: ⁸ I will make the shadow cast by the sun go back the ten steps it has gone down on the stairway of Ahaz." So the sunlight went back the ten steps it had gone down.

8. What would be the symbolic significance of this event? 38:7-8
cf. Joshua 10:12-14

The LORD was fighting for Judah against the Assyrians as he did in the days of Joshua.

The reversal of the shadow probably also signified the reversal of Hezekiah's death sentence, symbolising renewal, life, and a reversal of the "shadow of death".

9. What does Hezekiah's psalm illustrate to us when we face severe trials in life? What was Hezekiah's plea? 38:9-10

Isaiah 38:9 A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah **after his illness and recovery**:
¹⁰ I said, "In the prime of my life must I go through the gates of **death** and be **robbed of the rest of my years**?"

10. Why is the LORD, the LORD, mentioned twice in 38:11?

A sense of reverence and awe. A deep conviction of his dependence on God.

Isaiah 38:11 I said, "I will not again see the LORD, the LORD, in the land of the living; no longer will I look on mankind, or be with those who now dwell in this world.

11. What kind of prayer is 38:12-15?

A lament, which starts with a complaint, followed by a song of praise, just as we find in the Psalms.

Isaiah 38:12 Like a shepherd's tent my house has been pulled down and taken from me. Like a weaver I have rolled up my life, and he has cut me off from the loom; day and night you made an end of me. ¹³ I waited patiently till dawn, but like a lion he broke all my bones; day and night you made an end of me. ¹⁴ I cried like a swift or thrush, I moaned like a mourning dove. My eyes grew weak as I looked to the heavens. I am troubled; O Lord, come to my aid!" ¹⁵ But what can I say? He has spoken to me, and he himself has done this. I will walk humbly all my years because of this anguish of my soul.

12. Did the LORD give Hezekiah relief? 38:16

Isaiah 38:16 Lord, by such things men live; and my spirit finds life in them too. You restored me to health and let me live.

13. What did Hezekiah realise was the purpose of his suffering and trial?
38:17

Isaiah 38:17 Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.

14. Did Hezekiah believe in life after death? Did Hezekiah not believe that the dead are unable to praise YAHWEH? 38:18-19

Isaiah 38:18 For the grave cannot praise you, death cannot sing your praise; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for your faithfulness. ¹⁹ The living, the living--they praise you, as I am doing today; fathers tell their children about your faithfulness.

15. What would Hezekiah do for the rest of his life, after he received healing? 38:20

Isaiah 38:20 The LORD will save me, and we will sing with stringed instruments all the days of our lives in the temple of the LORD.

16. What was this remedy, and what could it have been? 38:21-22

Isaiah 38:21 Isaiah had said, "Prepare a poultice of figs and apply it to the boil, and he will recover." ²² Hezekiah had asked, "What will be the sign that I will go up to the temple of the LORD?"

17. Does 38:21-22 fit here at the end, or should these verses perhaps have been placed between Isaiah 38:6 and 7?

It fits better between 38:6 and 38:7.

Reflection & Application _____

1. Does the going back of the sun's shadow ten steps perhaps show us anything regarding Christ? Joshua 10:12-14

Deliverance. The reversal of the sun's shadow is a physical manifestation of God's power and deliverance. That YAHWEH was on the side of his people, fighting for them, just as in the days of Joshua and the days of Hezekiah.
Resurrection. It also serves as a sign of resurrection and renewal, as Hezekiah's life is extended, symbolising new life. This event can be seen as a precursor to the ultimate miracle of resurrection found in Jesus Christ.

2. Does the LORD always deliver us from our troubles in the way that we hope?

No. Deliverance in the way we desire is not guaranteed.

3. Is there perhaps a pattern for immense suffering and grief that one can discern and follow?

Imminent Death	38:10
Saying goodbye	38:11
Realise one's mortality	38:12
Waiting on the LORD	38:13
Weeping and grief	38:14
Prayer & Lament	38:14
Anguish	38:15
Healing and restoration	38:16
Realisation of God's discipline	38:17
Thanksgiving	38:18
Praise	38:19
Salvation	38:20

Study 2 Isaiah 39:1-8

Hezekiah's Faith Falters

Study Questions

1. Did the LORD deliver on his promise of healing and deliverance? 37:5-7; 39:1

Isaiah 37:5 When King Hezekiah's officials came to Isaiah, ⁶ Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master, 'This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard--those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. ⁷ Listen! I am going to put a spirit in him so that when he hears a certain report, he will return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword.'"

Isaiah 39:1 At that time, Merodach-Baladan, son of Baladan, king of Babylon sent Hezekiah letters and a gift, because he had heard of his illness and recovery.

2. When are believers at their most vulnerable to spiritual folly? 39:1-2 cf. 2 Chronicles 32:31

When the greatest danger is averted, and they recover from disaster, or when things are going really well.

Isaiah 39:2 Hezekiah received the envoys gladly and showed them what was in his storehouses--the silver, the gold, the spices, the fine oil, his entire armoury and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them.

2 Chronicles 32:31 But when envoys were sent by the rulers of Babylon to ask him about the miraculous sign that had occurred in the land, God left him to test him and to know everything that was in his heart.

3. Why did Isaiah ask these questions: "What did those men say, and where did they come from?" 39:3-4

Isaiah knew that Hezekiah had made contact with the Babylonians for help against the Assyrian threat, and thereby displayed a lack of trust in the LORD, just as his father Ahaz.

Isaiah 39:3 Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked, "What did those men say, and where did they come from?" "From a distant land," Hezekiah replied. "They came to me from Babylon."

⁴ The prophet asked, "What did they see in your palace?" "They saw everything in my palace," Hezekiah said. "There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them."

4. Do our sins impact our descendants and our legacy? 39:5-7

Isaiah 39:5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD Almighty:

⁶ The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD.

5. Who could some of Hezekiah's descendants be who possibly became eunuchs in Babylon? 39:7 cf. Daniel 1:6-7

Isaiah 39:7 And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and **they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.**"

7. Why was Hezekiah's sin allying with the Babylonians especially heinous? Isaiah 7:3-4; 9-12; 2 Kings 16:7-8

Because his wicked father Ahaz did the same in trusting the Assyrians, despite the LORD promising him deliverance as well as a sign.

2 Kings 16:7 Ahaz sent messengers to say to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, "I am your servant and vassal. Come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Aram and of the king of Israel who are attacking me."

⁸ And Ahaz took the silver and gold found in the temple of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace and sent it as a gift to the king of Assyria.

Reflection & Application _____

1. Do our sins impact those who come after us, such as our family members? 39:6-7

Isaiah 39:6 The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. ⁷ And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

2. Consider the double danger of having a clear example of YAHWEH's dealings with your close ancestor, and then committing the same sin that your ancestor was guilty of. Daniel 5:18-23

The same happened to Belshazzar and his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar. See especially Daniel 5:22-23

Daniel 5:22 "But you his son, Belshazzar, **have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this.**"²³ Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven.

Study 3 Isaiah 40:1-11 Three Voices of Consolation

Study Questions

1. "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God." Why is comfort mentioned twice? 40:1 What preceded these commands of consolation? 39:6-7

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

The prediction of the Babylonian destruction, exile and loss was a severe shock. Mentioning comfort twice was stressing the absolute assurance of the comfort they would receive.

The LORD spoke tenderly and lovingly, as a young man speaks to his beloved. She has received double or exact payment for her sins. The prophecy of the Babylonian exile.

2. What does hard service sound like? What kind of hard service could this be? 40:2

Isaiah 40:2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

This is the language of enslavement, like their bondage in Egypt. Was it referring to their slavery and exile in a physical place called Babylon, or something more. Note: The physical exile in Babylon would commence in 605 BC and end in 539/538 BC, for a period of 67 years approximately, or roughly 70 years, as prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah.

The First Voice

3. What was the message of the first voice? For whom does preparation have to be made? 40:3-4

For the LORD, YAHWEH, who is coming. Although these events lie around 700 years into the future, it is absolutely certain. It will happen! That's why it is written in the present tense.

The First Voice calls: The Glory of the LORD will be Revealed.

Isaiah 40:3 **A voice of one calling:** "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. ⁵ And **the glory of the LORD will be revealed**, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

It is road-building language. The message of this first voice is clearly about preparing a way in the wilderness.

4. What is the significance of a road in the wilderness? What past event in Israel's history does this remind you of? 40:3-4

Isaiah 40:3 A **voice** of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

This is Exodus language! A new Exodus was coming. In the wilderness, the people of the LORD will be led from captivity. Just like in the Book of Exodus, the Glory of the LORD accompanied the people of Israel through the wilderness. A road in the wilderness. Just so the Glory of the LORD will once again be revealed. The Glory of the LORD will lead his people to the city of Zion.

5. How does Isaiah describe this arrival of a conquering king? What is the phrase he uses? 60:11

Isaiah later talks about this event as the triumphal procession.

Isaiah 60:11 Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that men may bring you the wealth of the nations--their kings led in triumphal procession.

6. Who does Isaiah tell us this road-building exercise is for? 40:5
The highway needs to be prepared for the coming of the Glory of the LORD!

The Glory of the LORD.

7. What does the presence of the glory of the LORD in the wilderness remind you of?

The Exodus from Egypt. Just as the Glory of the LORD was revealed to the Israelites during their time in the desert after the Exodus. The Glory of the LORD would move ahead of Israel through the wilderness. Whenever they set camp, the Glory of the LORD would descend on the tabernacle. This could also be seen as a triumphal procession, as it is intimately connected with the advance through the wilderness.

8. What will be different this time? 40:5

The Glory of the LORD will not only be revealed to the people of Israel. The Glory of the LORD will be revealed so that all mankind can see it.

9. What is the meaning of this road in the wilderness and the Glory of the LORD revealed?

A day would come, a day when their spiritual exile would come to an end. That day would be marked with the crying of a voice in the wilderness, announcing the coming of the Glory of the LORD.

The way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

10. Who is the One coming, the one called the Glory of the LORD? 40:5

The one who comes would be YAHWEH himself, the God of Israel. This would be the sign that their exile has ended.

The Second Voice

11. What does the second voice tell Isaiah to cry out? "What shall I cry?" 40:6

Isaiah 40:6 **A voice says, "Cry out."** And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. ⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall, but **the word of our God** stands for ever."

The **word of our God** stands for ever.

12. The second voice contrasts two things very clearly. What is it? What is the meaning of this passage? 40:6-8

Isaiah 40:6 A **voice** says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. ⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands for ever."

All men are like grass. They are finite and limited. Measured against eternity, the span of your life is simply like that of the grass. You come up and live full of the vigour of youth, and then you grow old or sick, and your glory passes away, and you pass from this life. All your achievements, your recognition, your status, your wealth, your strength, your beauty, your health, all come to nothing. But the Word of God stands forever. YAHWEH will certainly come and fulfil his promises.

13. What is the one thing you need to remember? The most important thing of all? 40:8

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands for ever."

You are worth much more than the grass. Your life is infinitely small and finite, but the Word of God stands forever.

The Promises of YAHWEH

The Word of God is for our benefit. Specifically, it refers to the promises of God. All the promises that God has spoken; none of these great promises shall fail.

14. Can you think of some of the promises of the LORD? 40:8; 2 Corinthians 1:20

All the promises of God!

- Promise of **a land, a vast** number of **people**, of **a great name**, and **great blessings**.
- Promise of a **Seed of Abraham** through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed.
- Promise of a **Lamb whom YAHWEH** will supply on the mountain of the LORD's house, where the Jerusalem temple stood.
- Further back, the promise of a **Seed of the Woman** who would crush the serpent's head

Many promises of life, and vigour, and blessing, and living
Promises of rest and Sabbath and land.

The Third Voice

15. What is the message of the third voice? What is the content of the good tidings? What is another term for good tidings? 40:9

Isaiah 40:9 You who bring **good tidings** to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring **good tidings** to Jerusalem, lift up your **voice** with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰ See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. ¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

Good tidings or gospel.

This third voice shouts good tidings from a mountaintop, so all can hear. Good tidings to a place called Zion, as well as Jerusalem and the towns of Judah.

16. There is a third voice. What does the third voice cry? 40:9d-10

The good tidings that the LORD is coming.
Jerusalem and Judah will hear: "Here is your God!"
The Arm of the LORD will rule for the LORD.

Isaiah 40:9 You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, **lift up your voice with a shout**, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "**Here is your God!**"

17. Who is the message directed at? Is Zion and Jerusalem equivalent? 40:9

Zion, the opposite of Babylon, the city of rebellion. Zion, the city of the LORD. Zion is the ideal that Jerusalem never was, i.e. what Jerusalem was intended to be.

18. What is the Good News? 40:10

Isaiah 40:10 See, **the Sovereign LORD** comes with power, and **his arm rules for him**. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.

Good things will come to Zion. The Good Tidings is this: The God of Israel will come with power! The shout of good news is this: "Here is your God!" It is written in the present tense, although the fulfilment lies far into the future. The reason why it is in the present tense is, once again, that the outcome is absolutely certain. There is more to add to the good news of God coming.

19. In what manner will the Sovereign LORD come? Who or what is the arm of the LORD? What will the Arm of the LORD do for him? 40:10

Sovereign LORD is **Adonai Yahweh**, my Lord YAHWEH. His **Arm** will come and rule for him.

The Arm of the LORD

20. What is the reward of the Arm of the LORD that is with him? 40:11

Isaiah 40:11 He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

His reward is those who accompany him.
Those who are with him, i.e. his people, his flock.

21. How does he feel towards his reward, his people? What is he like? 40:11

Isaiah 40:11 He tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart. He gently leads those who have young. I.e. he feels about them as a shepherd feels towards his flock.

Reflection & Application _____

1. Who fulfilled these words in history? Who is the first voice, and who is the glory of the LORD? Mark 1:3-4, 14

The first voice was John the Baptist. Jesus is the glory of the LORD.

2. This leads us to the fulfilment. How are the messages these three voices shout fulfilled? What is the good news Isaiah refers to? 40:9

The Arrival of the LORD. It is all fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is called *eaungellion* in Greek. This is the word we translate as gospel in the New Testament. Do you know that the New Testament writers connect all these promises?

3. Did this gospel fulfilment already happen in history, or are we looking at a future event? Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:2-3; Luke 3:4-5; John 1:23

All four gospel writers quote this very important passage in Isaiah 40:1-11, and connect these voices of Isaiah 40:1-11 altogether. Quoting **Isaiah 40:3-4**, but referring to the whole passage and affirming everything in it from verse 1 to 11.

4. How do the voices of the NT writers concur with the three voices of Isaiah 40:1-11? John 1:14, 2 Corinthians 1:20; John 12:38

- Jesus is the Glory of the LORD revealed!

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only.

- Jesus is the Word of God fulfilled

2 Corinthians 1:20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ.

- Jesus is the Arm of the LORD who delivers.

John 12:38 This was to fulfil the word of Isaiah the prophet: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" {Isaiah 53:1}

And his name is Jesus! And so Jesus came, and he says, the good news is this: "I have come to fulfil the good news of Isaiah!"

5. How does 1 Peter 1:23-25 fulfil the words of Isaiah 40:6-8?

1 Peter 1:23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord stands for ever." {Isaiah 40:6-8} And this is the word that was preached to you.

Study 4 Isaiah 40:12-31

YAHWEH, the Incomparable One

Study Questions

1. What is the most important thing when we face troubled times? 40:12-17

The first thing we need to be sure of when we face troubled times is a correct understanding of the LORD. We need to know **what God is like, i.e. a correct doctrine of God.**

Five Questions

Isaiah provides us with five questions. Five observations about the One True God.

2. What is the answer to the first two questions in 40:12?

God alone is the Creator

Two questions: "Who has..."

Isaiah 40:12 **Who** has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? **Who** has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?

God, i.e. the LORD, created without help alone and with ease. The totality – water and earth (Ge. 1)

Consider the vast expanse of the oceans, the power of the Tsunami. The movement of the tides. For God, all of this is merely like a drop of water on a man's hand. If you take the soil of the earth, the ground, the totality of it. It is like dust in a bucket to God.

This argument from creation is what is known as the teleological argument for the existence of God.

3. What is the answer to the next three questions in 40:13-14? Cf. Romans 11:34

They probe whether YAHWEH needs help, advice or counsel.

YAHWEH needed no help, advice or counsel.

Isaiah 40:13 **Who** has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor? ¹⁴ **Whom** did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? **Who** was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?

The Name of the LORD

God's Name is 'the LORD' or YAHWEH. Is there anyone who can **understand** God's mind? Paul quoted this passage when he considered the wisdom of God in his plan of salvation, as quoted in Romans (Romans 11:34). Does YAHWEH have to consult anyone? Does the mind or Spirit of the LORD need help? (Genesis 1:2)

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and {Or riches and the wisdom and the} knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴ **"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?"** {Isaiah 40:13} ³⁵ "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" {Job 41:11} ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory for ever! Amen.

We are all taught throughout life. Who has taught God? Considering all of this, do you think you know better than God? If all of this is true, what is the correct attitude and response to take with respect to YAHWEH?

4. What is Isaiah's conclusion? 40:15, 17

Is YAHWEH worthy of infinite worship?

Isaiah 40:15 Surely the nations are like **a drop** in a bucket; they are regarded as **dust** on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

¹⁷ Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.

Does not mean that man is counted as nothing by God.

But "before Him", i.e. compared to God, we are insignificant.

Without him, we are worthless – empty of meaning and purpose. Rom. 3

5. What can we offer YAHWEH? 40:16

The greatest acts of worship will fall short of God's glory. Nothing but infinite worship! Notice the example Isaiah gives us.

Isaiah 40:16 Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings.

6. What are idols like in comparison to YAHWEH? 40:18-20

To whom will you compare God? To an idol?

Isaiah 40:18 **To whom**, then, will you compare **God**? **What** image will you compare him to?

You might say: "Never! We are not like that!"

Aren't we often trusting in idols rather than God?

Anything that takes the number 1 position in your life before God is an idol.

7. Which examples of idols can you think of?

Our idols are many and varied.

- Your intellect? Your studies? Your degrees?
- Your body? See the temples in every suburb.
- Your business, career, the stock exchange?
- Your girlfriend/boyfriend? Your culture?
- Your car, house, leisure, free time, pleasure?
- Your religion!

Maybe remake Him in your mind to something you can handle!

"Come to Jesus and he will" (complete the sentence)

8. What is the difference between the idols of the rich and the poor? 40:19-20

Both rich and poor have idols. The idols of the rich are made of gold.

The idols of the poor are made of wood.

Isaiah 40:19 As for an idol, a craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it. ²⁰ A man too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot. He looks for a skilled craftsman to set up **an idol** that will not topple.

9. What is an idol-worshipper in essence, according to the four questions in 40:21?

An idol-worshipper is simply someone who does not really know God, cannot hear and cannot understand.

Isaiah 40:21 Do you **not know**? Have you **not heard**? Has it **not been told** you from the beginning? Have you **not understood** since the earth was founded?

The covenant member should know the answers to these questions. However, the believer should, though it does not come naturally. Knowing and hearing comes from being told and discernment. What can we learn from the created order?

10. What is YAHWEH's relation to the created order, idols included? 40:22

There is only **One Creator**!

Literally: There is One who sits... There is One who stretches.... There is one who brings...

Isaiah 40:22 **He sits enthroned** above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. **He stretches out** the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

On the other hand, people are like grasshoppers, but the universe is like a tent for God.

11. Who is sovereign over all political circumstances? 40:23-24

God sovereignly controls world affairs and world history.

Isaiah 40:23 **He brings** princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. ²⁴ No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

12. To whom will we compare YAHWEH? 40:25 cf. 40:18

Isaiah 40:25 "**To whom** will you compare me? Or **who** is my equal?" says **the Holy One**.

Considering all in 40:12-24, namely YAHWEH's power, wisdom, dignity, sovereignty, and authority. Literally *holy*, totally separate, totally other, transcendent, morally perfect. He is the incomparable One!

13. What is the greatest witness of the LORD's presence? 40:26

Look at creation:

Isaiah 40:26 Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: **Who** created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

Look at the stars. The pagan nations worship them, even today. But they are created objects. God summons them all, the millions of stars by name. There is not one more or less than He had determined.

14. Do you believe your circumstances and trials are hidden from the LORD? 40:27

Nothing is hidden from God! He knows everything, including His people's suffering. Do you think God does not know? As He knew Judah's suffering, ditto He knows the Christian's suffering and fears.

Isaiah 40:27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God"?

15. What will the LORD do for those who trust in him and not in idols? 40:29-31

Isaiah 40:29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. ³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; ³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

16. To whom is this offer? 40:31

The offer is to the covenant people of God. (Israel – i.e. Judah)
God has seen the Assyrian oppression. He will save those who trust, even if they die. The offer is to all God's covenant people. Not just the OT people of Judah, but also to the Christian, the NT believer. As God is the everlasting God.
40:28

Reflection & Application _____

1. What is the lesson here? 40:26

Creator knows even the stars by name; how can he forget His covenant people?

2. If this is so, is there a reason to fear? Mark 4:40

Then: "Why do you fear?" Fear is a sign of unbelief. **Mark 4:40** He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" Trust in Him. Even when things look bleak, he will save. He will even be able to save you in death.

3. What is the first solution to fear of circumstances? 40:28

Correct theology. In this case – the Doctrine of God.
Remember! God is the Creator, the incomparable One.
God never grows tired or weary. He does not nod off, and things take him by surprise.

Isaiah 40:28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? **The LORD** is the everlasting **God**, the **Creator** of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

4. What are some of the things that can possibly be or become idols in your own life?

Money, sex, power, comfort, status, pleasure, achievements.

Study 5 Isaiah 41:1-20 God, His People and the Nations

Study Questions _____

1. What was the universal offer? How do we know it is universal? 41:1

Isaiah 41:1 "Be silent before me, you islands! Let the nations renew their strength! Let them come forward and speak; let us meet together at the place of judgment.

Peoples (nations) and islands (coastlands), i.e. the whole Gentile world. All who are not Israel, i.e. all the idol-worshippers. The offer is extended to them all, to meet YAHWEH at the place of judgement.

2. Who is in sovereign control of world powers? 41:2-3

Isaiah 41:2 "Who has stirred up one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service? He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him. He turns them to dust with his sword, to wind-blown chaff with his bow. ³ He pursues them and moves on unscathed, by a path his feet have not travelled before.

The LORD is in sovereign control of world powers and conquerors.

3. What was the name of this conqueror from the east? Isaiah 44:28; 45:1

Believers do not have to speculate about any specific historical person as yet. It is the principle that is at stake here. **The Sovereign LORD controls every power and conqueror.** Whatever YAHWEH does, He does in righteousness.

The as-yet-unnamed conqueror from the east (40:2) will later be revealed as Cyrus the Medo-Persian.

4. Who is in total control of human history? 41:4a

Isaiah 41:4 Who has done this and carried it through, calling forth the generations from the beginning? I, the LORD--with the first of them and with the last--I am he."

Do the idols foreknow and control world circumstances? No, it is the LORD God or YAHWEH alone! YAHWEH is unlike the idols

5. What does 'I, **the LORD**, am the first, and with the last of them' mean? 41:4

He has no ancestry or genealogy. God was there before the beginning of time. When the world was made. And he will be there at the end of all things. He was with the first, and he will be there with the last.

Isaiah 41:4 'I, **the LORD**, am the first, and with the last. **I am He.**' NASB

6. What does the LORD mean by stating, 'I am He'? 41:4; Deuteronomy 32:39

He is the incomparable One; the Holy, The sovereign LORD, the Creator. He is the "I am HE." Only YAHWEH alone in all of the Scriptures calls himself 'I am He', without needing to provide an object or predicate. He is the only self-existing being.

7. How will the nations respond to the approach of the coming conqueror? 41:5-7

Isaiah 41:5 The islands have seen it and fear; the ends of the earth tremble. They approach and come forward; ⁶ each helps the other and says to his brother, "Be strong!"

8. Where will the nations turn for help? 41:7

They turn to their idols in fear.

Isaiah 41:7 The craftsman encourages the goldsmith, and he who smooths with the hammer spurs on him who strikes the anvil. He says of the welding, "It is good." He nails down the idol so that it will not topple.

9. What is the 'I am He', the self-existing one's words of comfort to Israel? 41:8-9

Isaiah 41:8 "But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom **I have chosen**, you descendants of **Abraham my friend**, ⁹ I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners **I called you**. I said, 'You are my servant'; **I have chosen you and have not rejected you**.

10. How should Israel respond to this declaration of YAHWEH? 41:10

Do not fear.

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

11. What will happen to the enemies of Judah? 41:11-12

They will not prevail.

Isaiah 41:11 "All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish. ¹² Though you search for your enemies, you will not find them. Those who wage war against you will be as nothing at all.

12. Why can they be certain of these comforting words? 40:13

Isaiah 41:13 For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.

13. Do they have any strength in and of themselves? 41:14

Isaiah 41:14 Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I myself will help you," declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

14. What will the LORD do for them and with them? 41:15-16

Isaiah 41:15 "See, I will make you into a threshing-sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush them, and reduce the hills to chaff. ¹⁶ You will winnow them, the wind will pick them up, and a gale will blow them away. But you will rejoice in the LORD and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

15. Who are the *poor* and *needy* and what is YAHWEH's promise to them? 41:17

The people of Israel.

Isaiah 41:17 "The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the LORD will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.

16. What will YAHWEH do in the desert? What message does this image convey? 41:18-19

YAHWEH will provide for them. This is an image from the Old Exodus. They are in the wilderness. YAHWEH will provide water for them in the wilderness in a New Exodus. At the end, it does not speak of H₂O, but of the Holy Spirit that YAHWEH would pour out on them.

Isaiah 41:18 I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs. ¹⁹ I will put in the desert the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive. I will set pines in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together,

17. When the LORD does this, what will the nations know? 41:20

Once again, it is an image from the Exodus. The nations knew that the LORD delivered Israel. When he does so again, the whole world will know that this is the LORD's doing.

Isaiah 41:20 so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the LORD has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it.

Reflection & Application _____

1. What do you think the significance is of the 'I am He' statements in the book of the Servant? (Isaiah 38-55)
2. What would Jesus mean by his statements in John 8:24 and 8:28?

NKJ John 8:24 "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."

NAS John 8:28 Jesus therefore said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*...

Study 6 Isaiah 41:21-29 The Plight of the Nations

Study Questions _____

1. Who is the LORD challenging to set forth their case through arguments? Who is the pronoun 'your' referring to? 41:21

The nations, the peoples of the world, the Gentiles.

Isaiah 41:21 "Present your case," says the LORD. "Set forth your arguments," says Jacob's King.

2. What does YAHWEH mean by "Present your case" and "set forth your arguments"? 41:21a

YAHWEH is challenging them. It is a court scene. The nations have to bring their arguments and their idols. Those who trust in their idol-gods are being exposed.

3. Why does YAHWEH present himself as Jacob's King? 41:21b

The one speaking identifies himself as Jacob's king. Jacob, i.e. Jacob, the deceiver. The name of the patriarch before it was changed to Israel. YAHWEH is on the side of Israel.

4. Which two things are the idols utterly unable to do? 41:22-23

They could not explain former things, such as why certain things are happening in the world, nor can they tell us what the future holds and what the outcome will be, i.e. prophecy in the sense of foretelling, telling exactly what was going to happen.

Isaiah 41:22 "Bring in *your idols* to tell us **what is going to happen**. Tell us what the **former things** were, so that we may consider them and know their **final outcome**. Or declare to us the **things to come**,

5. What is the challenge to the idols to show that they are alive? 41:23b cf. 44:16-20

To do anything, good or bad, so that the onlookers can be dismayed or filled with fear. Hiss, or shriek or grumble or shake. Anything that will astound.

6. How does the LORD expose the uselessness of idols? 41:24a

^{NAS} Isaiah 41:24 "Behold, you are of no account..."

Isaiah 41:24 (**See**) But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless; he who chooses you is detestable.

7. What is the verdict on the one who trusts in idols? 41:24b

He who chooses you is detestable.

8. What is the example YAHWEH gives to show their utter inability? 41:25

YAHWEH will stir up a great conqueror. He is unstoppable. Who has told you about him? No one but the LORD? No one has heard any word from the idols. Isaiah 41:25 "I have stirred up one from the north, and he comes--one from the rising sun who calls on my name. He treads on rulers as if they were mortar, as if he were a potter treading the clay.

9. How will the world find out about the conqueror from the east? 41:26

Isaiah 41:26 Who told of this from the beginning, so that we could know, or beforehand, so that we could say, 'He was right'? No one told of this, no one foretold it, no one heard any words from you.

10. Why did the LORD tell them so far ahead of time? 41:27

The LORD foretold about him, not the idols, ahead of time. Isaiah prophesied from 740 to 700 BC. He probably prophesied this after the Assyrian siege of

Jerusalem in 701 BC. Cyrus would set the people of Israel free in 539 BC. That is between 160 and 183 years into the future! I am telling you now, says the LORD, so that you will not come in time and say: "We knew all about it!"

Isaiah 41:27 I was the first to tell Zion, 'Look, here they are!' I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good tidings.

11. Will the coming of the conqueror be good news or bad news for God's people? 41:27

Isaiah 41:27 I was the first to tell Zion, 'Look, here they are!' I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good tidings.

12. Was there any prediction from the idols of his coming? Is there anyone who is able to give the LORD an answer? 41:28

41:28 I look but there is no-one -- no-one among them to give counsel, no-one to give answer when I ask them.

13. What is the verdict on the idols? Notice the word "behold" again to draw attention to their worthlessness and to close the argument. 41:29

Behold or see their utter inability.

^{NAS} Isaiah 41:24 **Behold**, you are of no account, And your work amounts to nothing; He who chooses you is an abomination.

Isaiah 41:29 **See**, they are all false! Their deeds amount to nothing; their images are but wind and confusion.

Reflection & Application _____

Can you think of personal examples of idols which have lost their influence over you?

Money, pleasures, achievements, experiences. It may also be the business gurus, the political leaders, the celebrities, and the billionaires at the WEF at Davos. They could be the philosophers of the age. They could be religious leaders and the teachings of various religions.

Study 7 Isaiah 42:1-9 The LORD's Servant

Study Questions _____

1. Who was called the servant of the LORD under the Old Covenant? Joshua 1:1, 2, 7, 13, 15; Jos. 22:2, 4, 5; Deuteronomy 34:5.

Moses was called the servant of the LORD nineteen times in the book of Joshua (Joshua 1:1, 2, 7, 13, 15; Joshua 22:2, 4, 5).

2. What does the LORD promise for the future? 42:1

Once again, there will be a righteous 'Servant of the LORD'.
He will be the One in whom God's soul delights. One whom the LORD himself will uphold.

3. How does YAHWEH describe his relationship to the new Servant of the LORD?

^{NAS} Isaiah 42:1 "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one *in whom* My soul delights.

I uphold him. He is my chosen one. He is my delight

4. How has the LORD endowed the Servant for his task of deliverance? 42:1b

The Spirit of God, i.e. the Holy Spirit, will be upon Him.

^{NAS} Isaiah 42:1 **I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.**

5. What is the good news regarding the justice of judgement of the Servant?
42:1c, 3-4

The Good News is that the nations do not need to fear.

Isaiah 42:1c I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.
3 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness **he will bring forth justice;**
4 he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth.

The Servant is chosen by God to bring justice to the nations. Justice is a dangerous thing when sinful human beings are concerned. It spells death for all, as no one is righteous. **Sinners can never demand justice as the basis of our salvation!**

Together with this is a note of hope. The Servant's justice will be of a different kind. A bruised reed he will not break (42:2). The downtrodden, the weary in heart, those overwhelmed by sorrow and circumstances, he will not destroy.

6. Will the Servant be a revolutionary? 42:2

Isaiah 42:2 He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets.

7. Apart from bringing justice, what will the Servant come to do? What will he be like? 42:3

He will be gentle.

Isaiah 42:3 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.

8. Will the Servant lose heart or sin like Moses before his task is accomplished? 42:4

42:4 he will not falter or be discouraged till **he establishes justice on earth.**

9. What will the Servant offer, in which the coastlands may place their hope? 42:4

Instruction or teaching. 42:4 In his law the islands will put their hope." He will bring something to the coastlands to place their hope in. In his teaching. תּוֹרָה (*torah*) meaning: *direction, instruction, law*
In his instruction. In his instruction (teaching), the coastlands will put their hope. 42:4b

10. How will we know that the Servant is the LORD's agent? 42:5, 8

Because the LORD himself will publicly endorse him that he indeed is the Servant of the LORD,

Isaiah 42:5 This is what God the LORD says--he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it:

11. Why is the LORD's endorsement of the Servant so important? 42:5

The LORD, the Creator, Holy One, the one who spreads out the earth and gives breath to all peoples, endorses the Servant, and we better believe it.

Isaiah 42:5 This is what **God the LORD** says--he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it:

12. What is the specific work of the Servant? What does the offer of sight, hearing and understanding convey? 42:6-7

Salvation, i.e. spiritual sight, hearing and understanding. They are invited to renew their strength just as the LORD's people. Through one called the servant of YAHWEH.

Isaiah 42:6 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be **a covenant for the people (Jews)** and **a light for the Gentiles**, ⁷ to **open eyes that are blind**, to **free captives from prison** and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

13. Who will accompany and keep the Servant throughout his mission? 42:6

Isaiah 42:6 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be **a covenant for the people** and **a light for the Gentiles**,

14. What is the Servant's double commission? 42:6

Isaiah 42:6 I will keep you and will make you to be **a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles**,

The Servant's work will be:

- A covenant to the people, i.e. the people of Israel. That is the Jew. At this time, especially the people of Judah.
- But, he will also be a light for the Gentiles. (Non-Israel)

He will open blind eyes. Free captives from prison. Release from dungeons those who sit in darkness.

15. Can the promise of healing, freedom and deliverance be understood as liberation theology or faith healing? 42:7

Isaiah 42:7 **to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.**

Is this the physically blind / the prisoner? Those in the world's penitentiaries? No it is spiritual captivity and blindness.

And how will the Servant do it? (Exodus)

16. What will the LORD not share with anyone else? 42:8

Isaiah 42:8 "I am **the LORD**; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.

17. The LORD ends his statement with the word 'see' or 'behold'. How would we know this is from the LORD? 42:9

Because of former prophecies coming to pass, the foretelling of new things will also come to pass.

Isaiah 42:9 **See**, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you."

^{NAS} Isaiah 42:9 "**Behold**, the former things have come to pass, Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I proclaim *them* to you."

Reflection & Application _____

Who is the Servant of the LORD? How will we recognise him when the time comes? Matthew 12:18-21

Matthew 12:17 This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:
¹⁸ "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. ¹⁹ He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰ A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. ²¹ In his name the nations will put their hope."

Study 8 Isaiah 42:10-17

The Song of Praise

Study Questions

1. Which parts of the earth will sing? 42:10; Psalm 100

All the peoples of the world will sing.

Isaiah 42:10 Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who live in them.

2. What kind of song do they sing? 42:11

It is a song of joy and deliverance

Isaiah 42:11 Let the desert and its towns **raise their voices**; let the settlements where Kedar lives **rejoice**. Let the people of Sela **sing for joy**; let them **shout from the mountaintops**.

3. What should the nations render to the LORD? How is the praise of the nations and the glory of God connected? 42:12 cf. Psalm 37:4

Isaiah 42:12 Let them give **glory** to the LORD and proclaim his **praise** in the islands.

4. What will be the ground or basis of their song? Is there a time when the ones delivered must sing? 42:13 cf. Revelation 15:2-4 cf. Exodus 15:1-18

The ground of the song: the acts of the LORD

The acts of the LORD as a warrior in deliverance
His victory over his enemies.

Isaiah 42:13 The LORD will march out like a mighty man, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies.

5. How does the LORD feel about his victory? Who is speaking here? What does the image of giving birth convey? 42:14

YAHWEH says it has been a long time coming. However, like a woman in childbirth, the time has come to deliver, both wrath as well as salvation.

Isaiah 42:14 "For a long time I have kept silent, I have been quiet and held myself back. But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant.

6. What will YAHWEH do to the wicked when the time is ripe? 42:15

The LORD will bring judgement. **The LORD speaks.**

Isaiah 42:15 I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools.

7. Is there bad news for the righteous? 42:16

No, YAHWEH will deliver the captives

Isaiah 42:16 I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.

8. What will happen to the wicked? 42:17

Isaiah 42:17 But those who trust in idols, who say to images, 'You are our gods,' will be turned back in utter shame.

Reflection & Application _____

1. Can a believer experience deliverance and not sing? Can a believer experience deliverance and be quiet? Is there such a thing as a secret Christian?
2. How does the text of Isaiah 42:14 compare with Romans 8:22?

The pangs of childbirth.

Study 9 Isaiah 42:18-25 Redemption from Earthly Captivity

Study Questions _____

1. Is the deaf and blind servant of the LORD the same Servant of the LORD as in 42:1-4? Or is it someone else? 42:18-20

Isaiah 42:18 "**Hear, you deaf; look, you blind, and see!** ¹⁹ Who is **blind** but my servant, and **deaf** like the messenger I send? Who is **blind** like the one committed to me, **blind** like the servant of the LORD?

It cannot be the Servant of Isaiah 42:1-4, but another servant or messenger of the LORD.

2. Does this servant not listen to the God of the covenant? 42:20.

Isaiah 42:20 You have **seen** many things, but have paid no attention; your **ears** are **open**, but you **hear nothing**."

Israel is deaf and blind! Not righteous at all. Not physical deafness and blindness. No spiritual sight or understanding! They have seen, but have paid no attention. Their ears are open, but they hear nothing.

3. What glorious thing did the LORD give to his servant for his own sake? 42:21

God had to punish them because of her stubborn rebellion.

Isaiah 42:21 It pleased the LORD **for the sake of his righteousness to make his law great and glorious**

God wanted to make His instruction known and great to all the nations. But they were not interested. They are (and will be) in bondage. They are a plundered and looted people. They are in pits or prisons. There is no one who will rescue them.

4. What was happening to this blind and deaf servant instead? 42:22

They were plundered and looted and sent away. Read all about it in the book of Kings.

Isaiah 42:22 But this is a people plundered and looted, all of them trapped in pits or hidden away in prisons. They have become plunder, with no one to rescue them; they have been made loot, with no one to say, "Send them back."

5. Who was this blind and deaf servant? 42:24

The one sent by the LORD and the one who receive the Law. The LORD was the One who chose them and cared for them. The One who brought them out of Egypt because of His covenant love.

6. What was the physical as well as spiritual condition of the people of Israel? 42:22

They were in exile. Although this sounds physical, the LORD is referring to the spiritual condition of Israel.

7. How alone will they be rescued from this condition and predicament? 42:23 cf. 42:7

If they listen and pay close attention, they will be rescued when the time comes.

Isaiah 42:23 Which of you will listen to this or pay close attention in time to come?

8. Who was it that handed them over in the first place? 42:24a

It was God Himself who had handed them over.

Isaiah 42:24 **Who handed Jacob over** to become loot, and Israel to the plunderers? **Was it not the LORD, against whom we have sinned?** For they would not follow his ways; they did not obey his law.

9. Why did they end up in this predicament? 42:24b

Looking to the future, they will physically be in Babylon. After 701BC the Assyrian threat was averted. But to Babylon they would go as God told Hezekiah. In two waves: 597 BC and 587 BC. They rebelled against God and the only place for rebels is Babylon.

(Remember the curses of Deuteronomy 32:19-27)

10. Did the people of Israel understand their predicament and their punishment and change their behaviour? 42:25

Isaiah 42:25 So he poured out on them his burning anger, the violence of war. It enveloped them in flames, *yet they did not understand*; it consumed them, but *they did not take it to heart*.

11. What did their physical circumstances indicate? 42:24-25 cf. 6:9-12

The physical location will only be an indication of their spiritual condition.

The lack of senses (sight and hearing) and bondage is spiritual.

In fact, spiritual Babylon is the place where all rebels go and are kept. (cf. **Rev.**)

Even the Gentiles **v. 6, 7**

Reflection & Application _____

1. Do rebellious and wicked people often understand why they are in the predicament in the first place? Revelation 9:5, 10

Revelation 9:5 They were not given power to kill them, but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man.

¹⁰ They had tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails they had power to torment people for five months.

2. When circumstances are terrible because of rebellion and God's judgment, do sinners repent? Revelation 9:20-21

Revelation 9:20 The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshipping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood--idols that cannot see or hear or walk.

²¹ Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Study 10 Isaiah 43:1-13

The Certainty of Redemption

Study Questions _____

1. In this context, who alone is able to redeem Israel from spiritual bondage? Why is it written in the past tense? 43:1; 42:6-7

The LORD alone. The LORD is the one who created Israel, and the LORD will not forget them. It is past tense, for it remembers the deliverance and exodus from Egypt. It is also absolutely sure that redemption will happen again. For Israel as well as the Gentiles (cf. 42:6-7 as well as the offer in Isa. 41)

Isaiah 43:1 **But now**, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "**Fear not, for I have redeemed you**; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

2. Will the LORD forget the people of Israel? 43:2

Isaiah 43:2 **When you** pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. **When you** walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

Redemption is the work of the Servant of the LORD (42:6-7).

3. How had God saved Israel in the past? How did the LORD give Egypt as a ransom for his people Israel? 43:3

From slavery in Egypt. He will save her again from Babylon.

Isaiah 43:3 **For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior**; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. ⁴ Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life.

4. What will the LORD do for Israel again? 43:4

Isaiah 43:4 Since you are precious and honoured in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life.

5. When the LORD delivers Israel again, what will happen? 43:5-6

There will be a New Exodus. Despite the fact that most of Judah would go physically go to Babylon. Some of the Jews would physically return to Israel under the Medo-Persian King Cyrus.

Isaiah 43:5 Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. ⁶ I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth--

6. Is it all of the people of Israel that will be redeemed? 43:7-8

NB: Only a remnant, i.e. no blanket redemption! Everyone who is called by the LORD's Name will be saved. Jew and Gentile included.

Isaiah 43:7 ... everyone *who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.*" ⁸ Lead out those who have eyes but are blind, who have ears but are deaf.

Everyone called by the LORD's Name will be led out from spiritual darkness. Those who will glorify God by their allegiance to Him. Rebels are not living to glorify God.

7. Does the NT agree with this understanding? Romans 9:6-8; Romans 11:26

Romans 9:6 It is not as though God's word had failed. For **not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.** ⁷ Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." ⁸ In other words, it is **not the natural children who are God's children**, but it is **the children of the promise** who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.

Romans 11:26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ²⁷ And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

Ditto for the visible Christian church!

8. Could anyone foretell this redemption from slavery? 43:9

No-one can foretell this, only God alone. When these things come true, then Israel should know that He is the I am He.

Isaiah 43:9 All the nations gather together and the peoples assemble. *Which of them foretold this* and proclaimed to us the former things? Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say, "It is true."

9. Who are the witnesses of the LORD? 43:10

Isaiah 43:10 "**You are my witnesses,**" declares the LORD, "and my servant (Israel) whom I have chosen, **so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he.**"

10. What is the meaning of the LORD's non-predicated 'I am He' statement? 43:10

It is YAHWEH's self-declaration. He does not need to compare himself to anything. He is the only one who uses this non-predicated form of self-identification.

11. Are there any other gods? 43:10-12

Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. ¹¹ **I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.** ¹² I have revealed and saved and proclaimed-- I, and not some foreign god among you. **You are my witnesses,**" declares the LORD, "that I am God."

12. Since when has this reality been true? 43:13

From the beginning, i.e. from ancient times, the LORD was the only God.

Isaiah 43:13 Yes, and **from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand.** When I act, who can reverse it?"

Reflection & Application _____

1. When did the Babylonian exile really end? 61:1-2; Luke 4:17-21

The Babylonian exile ended only when Jesus came!

Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1-2, the end of the Babylonian exile, in Luke 4:17-21.

Luke 4:17 The **scroll of the prophet Isaiah** was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ¹⁸ **"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."** ²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, ²¹ and he began by saying to them, **"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."**

2. Who is the LORD? 43:10, 13

God is the only Saviour. Apart from Him there is no other. 2 x He is called the I AM HE, the only saviour! From ancient days. No one can deliver from His hand, when He acts no-one can reverse it.

3. What was the task of Israel? 43:10, 12

2x You are my Witnesses: "You must witness!", He says to Israel.

Witnesses that HE is the I AM HE, the only saviour! Israel, the servant whom the LORD had chosen to reveal this plan to the nations. If you truly belong to God, you are the Israel of God too!

4. When did these predictions of the salvation of the remnant happen?

When salvation takes place. You are my witnesses.

Remnant: Isaiah 10:20-25; 11:10-11, 16; 28:5; 37:31-32

Survivors: Isaiah 1:9; 4:2-6; 10:20; 37:31-32

Study 11 Isaiah 43:14-21 I Am the LORD

Study Questions _____

1. What will the LORD do to Babylon? 43:14
He will turn the Babylonians into fugitives.

Isaiah 43:14 This is what the LORD says--your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "For your sake I will send to Babylon and bring down as fugitives all the Babylonians, {Or Chaldeans} in the ships in which they took pride.

2. When did this happen? Daniel 5:30-31

When Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BC

3. Who does the LORD identify with? 43:15

Isaiah 43:15 I am the LORD, *your* Holy One, *Israel's* Creator, *your* King."

4. How did the LORD deliver them in the past? 43:16-17

They knew about the 1st Exodus. The destruction of Pharaoh's armies. What God did to redeem his covenant people.

Isaiah 43:16 This is what the LORD says--he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, ¹⁷ who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick:

5. What new thing will the LORD do again in future? 43:18-19

However, they must not dwell in the past.

A New thing I am going to do. It will spring up, you won't miss it.

Isaiah 43:18 "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.

¹⁹ See, I am doing a **new thing**! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a **way** in the desert and **streams** in the wasteland

6. What kind of language is this? 43:19-20

'The LORD' will make a way in the desert. cf. Exodus 13:20, 21

'The LORD' will supply streams in the wasteland. cf. Exodus 17:6

This is Exodus language. Exodus: Ex = out; hodos = the way.

I am making a **way** in the desert and **streams** in the wasteland ²⁰ The wild animals honour me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen,

7. Why will the LORD do this? 43:21

Isaiah 43:21 ... the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.

8. How does the LORD feel about the people of Judah? 43:20-21

The LORD will provide water in the wilderness again!

Isaiah 43:20 I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, **to give drink to my people, my chosen** ²¹ the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.

Reflection & Application _____

1. How was this prophecy fulfilled in history? Isaiah 43:19-21; John 7:37-38

Isaiah 43:19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. ²⁰ The wild animals honour me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen, ²¹ the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.

John 7:37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." ³⁹ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive

2. Did this offer of drink to the LORD's people, so that they may proclaim his praise, apply only to the Jews? John 4:10; 13-14

No. Although they were the only ones who heard it at first in the Temple.

Study 12 **Isaiah 43:22-28** **Redemption from Spiritual Captivity**

Study Questions _____

1. What was the reason Israel ended up in Babylon in the first place? 43:24b

Isaiah 43:24b But you have burdened **me** with your sins and wearied **me** with your offences.

2. What did they not do? Note YAHWEH's six accusations. 3:22-24

Outwardly they did all the right things. Cultically, they thought that they were sound. They kept lots of religious observances. But their prayer, ritual and sacrifice did not reach the LORD. But it was as if they never did.

Isaiah 43:22 "Yet you have not called upon **me**, O Jacob, you have not wearied yourselves for **me**, O Israel. ²³ You have not brought **me** sheep for burnt offerings, nor honored **me** with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with grain offerings nor wearied you with demands for incense. ²⁴ You have not bought any fragrant calamus for **me**, or lavished on **me** the fat of your sacrifices.

3. Why was their worship deficient? 43:22-24

The 'me' in worship is not yours truly, but God. 43:22-24

Worship is not about me, but about God.

Notice '**me**' (8x)

Note: True religion should not satisfy people.

It should satisfy God and God alone! v. 24

Q: Is he satisfied with what you offer Him?

4. How did they view sacrifices? 43:23

The sacrificial system was about grace, but they saw it as a burden.

It pointed to freedom and liberty.

It demonstrated that they could never obey God as demanded.

God did not intend to burden or weary them. V. 23

But that God would provide a way! Yet, they missed it.

Human beings naturally opt for outward religious fervour and ritual.

To the human mind, it is much more appealing and less demanding.

But it will never please God!

"Burnt offerings you brought, but not to me!"

5. What did their sacrifices reflect about their hearts? 43:24

They gave him no proper sacrifice.

Sacrifices were mechanical, magical, and burdensome.

We cannot manipulate God with our religion.

They burdened God. v. 24

(same as in Malachi), also Mar 7: 6, 7

6. So why did the One called 'I am He', blot out their sin? Was it because Israel repented, was godly or chose God? 43:25

I am He!

Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions

Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake,

אֲנֹכִי אֶנְכִּי הוּא (Isa 43:25)

7. What is the meaning of 'remember your sins no more'? 43:25

Once the LRD has dealt with sin, he would never again bring it to mind.

Isaiah 43:25 ... and remembers your sins no more.

8. What is the significance of the non-predicated 'I am He' statement? 43:25

The LORD alone is the One who could deal with sin, and he would do it for his own sake.

9. What does the LORD mean by "Review the past for me?" 43:26

Isaiah 43:26 Review the past for me, let us argue the matter together; state the case for your innocence. ²⁷ Your first father sinned; your spokesmen rebelled against me.

This is a court case. Review the past, i.e. bring your witnesses.
State the case of your innocence. V. 26
The past nor the future justifies forgiveness.

10. Who was their first father who sinned? And their spokesmen? 43:27

The past nor the future justifies forgiveness. Neither the sins of their father, be it Adam, Abraham, Jacob. Spokesmen were the prophets and the kings and the priests.

Isaiah 43:26 Review the past for me, let us argue the matter together; state the case for your innocence. ²⁷ Your first father sinned; your spokesmen rebelled against me.

11. What would be the right verdict for their rebellion? 43:28

The right verdict is that they deserve destruction. v. 28

Isaiah 43:28 So I will disgrace the dignitaries of your temple, and I will consign Jacob to destruction and Israel to scorn.

12. Despite rebellion, sin and corrupt worship, what would the LORD do? 43:25; 44:3

Despite God's holiness and justice. Despite the fact that they were guilty. Every single one a child of Adam.
Wrath (44:28) is replaced by God's blessing. (44:3)

Reflection & Application _____

1. How can God be just and justify the wicked? Isaiah 52:13-53:12

How can God's justice and holiness be reconciled with grace for sinners? There is no human argument to satisfy this question. The answer is not given now, but later in the work of the servant. Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.

"For my own sake" – explanation only found in the divine nature of God.

2. What must sinners realise regarding their hopeless situation? 43:26

Sinners must realise their hopelessness.
Court case: Review the past for me, even look to the future
The only reasonable result is judgment, a divine curse.

3. How does the message to Israel regarding sin and salvation have bearing on us as well? 43:25, 27

Christian, do you hear that? Everything that is said here of Israel is true for you too! It is not because you were more worthy. It is not because you chose God. In fact, you have wearied Him with your sins.

4. What is the comforting word from the LORD, despite total destruction they will face? 43:28, 44:3

Yet despite total destruction

There is a word from the LORD. He will pour out blessings.

I am He - I blot out your transgressions for My own sake.

It is for my glory alone. For no other reason. You, as a Christian, are here today because God has done it. He has done it for his own name's sake.

Study 13

Isaiah 44:1-8

The Spirit of the LORD

Study Questions

1. What did the LORD urge his servant Israel not to do? 44:1-2

Isaiah 44:1 "But now listen, O Jacob, **my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen.** ² This is what the LORD says-- he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and **who will help you:** *Do not be afraid,* O Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, **whom I have chosen.**

2. Why are they called upon not to fear? What would the LORD do to help them? 44:1-2; Deuteronomy 32:15

Jacob, the deceiver, will become Jeshurun, the upright one.

The exact opposite as used mockingly in Deuteronomy 32:15.

The LORD not only blots out sin (-)

The LORD actively blesses (+)

3. In which manner would YAHWEH go about doing this? 44:3

He would deliver them.

Isaiah 44:3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.

4. Is this a universal promise to all people? 44:1-2 cf. 43:19-20

This water will be drunk only by the LORD's chosen ones.

Isaiah 43:20 The wild animals honour me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, **to give drink to my people, my chosen,**

5. What will the blessing include? 44:4

Isaiah 44:4 They will spring up like grass in a meadow, like poplar trees by flowing streams.

The blessing will be:

> Legal verdict – not destruction but blessing.

> Flourishing as God's people.

Springing up like grass, polar trees by flowing streams.

6. What will be the reaction of the LORD's chosen ones? 44:4-5

Isaiah 44:5 One will say, '**I belong to the LORD**'; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, '**The LORD's**,' and will take the name Israel.

They will claim belonging to the LORD

They will take the name Israel.

> Belonging to the LORD or the LORD' **cf. Psa. 87: 5,6**

> Belonging to God's covenant people. (Jacob, Israel)

7. What is the LORD like? 44:6

Isaiah 44:6 "This is what the LORD says-- Israel's King and Redeemer, **the LORD of Hosts: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.**

The Only God. King and Redeemer, the First and the Last.

8. What is the nature of God? What proof for YAHWEH as the only God is given by YAHWEH himself? 44:7

No one can explain the past or foretell the future, but the LORD alone.

Isaiah 44:7 Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come-- yes, let him foretell what will come.

9. How many gods are there apart from YAHWEH? Is there any God besides YAHWEH? 44:6, 8

Isaiah 44:8 Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. **Is there any God besides me?** No, there is **no other Rock**; I know not one."

10. How can we be sure of God's promises? 44:3-4, 7-8

Because of his character and his attributes and his promises.

Reflection & Application _____

1. What did Jesus claim he could do for the Samaritan woman? John 4:10, 13-14;
2. What did Jesus claim at the Feast of Tabernacles, and why did this claim have such significance at this particular feast? John 7:37-38

Study 14 Isaiah 44:9-23 Idols and Their Power

Study Questions _____

1. What is the spiritual condition of idol makers? 44:9

Isaiah 44:9 All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame.

They are nothing, blind and ignorant. The idols they treasure are **תְּהוּ** (*tohu*), meaning: *formlessness, confusion, unreality, emptiness*.

Formlessness (of primeval earth) **תְּהוֹ וְכָהוּ** (Genesis 1:2)

2. Who makes an idol and what will it profit him? 44:10

Isaiah 44:10 Who shapes a god and casts an idol, which can profit him nothing?

Only a fool.

3. What will happen to every idol maker? 44:11

Isaiah 44:11 He and his kind will be put to shame; craftsmen are nothing but men. Let them all come together and take their stand; they will be brought down to terror and infamy.

They will be put to shame. Brought down to error and infamy.

4. What is the origin of idol making? 44:12-13

Isaiah 44:12 The blacksmith takes a tool and works with it in the coals; he shapes an idol with hammers, he forges it with the might of his arm. He gets hungry and loses his strength; he drinks no water and grows faint. ¹³ The carpenter measures with a line and makes an outline with a marker; he roughs it out with chisels and marks it with compasses. He shapes it in the form of man, of man in all his glory, that it may dwell in a shrine.

A mere human being, finite and limited, making an idol in the form of a human being.

5. What is the irony here? 44:14-15

Isaiah 44:14 He cut down cedars, or perhaps took a cypress or oak. He let it grow among the trees of the forest, or planted a pine, and the rain made it grow.
¹⁵ It is man's fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it.

Part of the wood he uses to make a fire, another part an idol. A god whom he worships. **ֵלֹהִים** (el) meaning: god, god-like one

6. What is the futility of it all? 44:16-17

Isaiah 44:16 Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire." ¹⁷ From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, "Save me; you are my god."

From the same substance he uses for fuel, he also fashions a god.
He prays to it and asks for salvation.

7. What is extremely sad about all this? 44:18

Isaiah 44:18 They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so that they cannot see, and their minds closed so that they cannot understand.

8. What does an idol-worshipper fail to understand? 44:19

Isaiah 44:19 No-one stops to think, no-one has the knowledge or understanding to say, "Half of it I used for fuel; I even baked bread over its coals, I roasted meat and I ate. Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left? Shall I bow down to a block of wood?"

9. What is the essence of idol worship? 44:20

Isaiah 44:20 He feeds on ashes, a deluded heart misleads him; he cannot save himself, or say, "Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?"

Self-salvation and a lie.

10. What must Israel learn from this? 44:21

Instead of making idols to serve them, YAHWEH made Israel to serve him.

Isaiah 44:21 "Remember these things, O Jacob, for you are my servant, O Israel. I have made you, you are my servant; O Israel, I will not forget you.

11. Compared to the idols, what can YAHWEH do? Why is this written in the past tense? 44:22

Isaiah 44:22 I have swept away your offences like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you."

Unlike the idols, the LORD is able to save. His salvation is absolutely certain.

12. What bears witness to the works of the LORD and brings glory to his name? 44:23

Creation. The heavens and the earth.

Isaiah 44:23 Sing for joy, O heavens, for the LORD has done this; shout aloud, O earth beneath. Burst into song, you mountains, you forests and all your trees, for the LORD has redeemed Jacob, he displays his glory in Israel.

Reflection & Application _____

1. Are you an idol-maker?

Yes. Tempted in many ways.

2. What is the futility of it all?

The idols we make cannot save us.
YAHWEH who made us can save us.

3. God makes you; you make the idols. Who can help you in the end?

God.

Study 15 Isaiah 44:24-45:13 Cyrus: Builder and Conqueror

Study Questions _____

1. What was the LORD's relationship to the people of Judah? 44:24a

The LORD formed them in the womb.

Isaiah 44:24 "This is what the LORD says--your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb:

2. What is the LORD's relationship to the heavens and the earth? 44:24b

The LORD is the creator of all things.

Isaiah 44:24b I am the LORD, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself,

3. What does the LORD continuously do throughout history? Name five things.
44:25-28

Isaiah 44:25 who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners, **who overthrows** the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense,

Isaiah 44:26 who carries out the words of his servants **and fulfils** the predictions of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be inhabited,' of the towns of Judah, 'They shall be built,' and of their ruins, 'I will restore them,'

Isaiah 44:27 who says to the watery deep, 'Be dry, and I will dry up your streams,'

Isaiah 44:28 who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."'

Who foils the signs of false prophets. 44:25

Who overthrows the learning of the wise. 44:26

Who fulfils prophecy. 44:26

Who redeems as in the Exodus. 44:27

Who raises up a deliverer. 44:28

4. What does the LORD call Cyrus and why? Would Cyrus not be a pagan king?
44:28; Ezra 1:1-3

Cyrus, who will acknowledge YAHWEH as the God of heaven, very likely under the influence of Daniel. Daniel 1:21; 6:28, 10:1; Daniel 8:2 and Daniel 2:37, 44

Ezra 1:1 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfil the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, **the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia** to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing:

² "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: '**The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah.**'

³ Anyone of his people among you--may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of **the LORD, the God of Israel**, the God who is in Jerusalem.'

5. Why would the LORD call Cyrus his anointed? 45:1

Isaiah 45:1 "This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armour, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:

Anointed and commissioned for a certain task. Did he have the Holy Spirit?

6. What will the LORD help Cyrus to accomplish? 45:2-3

Isaiah 45:2 I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. ³ I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name.

7. What will Cyrus realise? 45:3b

Isaiah 45:3b so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name.

8. For whose sake alone does the LORD enable Cyrus? 45:4

Isaiah 45:4 For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honour, though you do not acknowledge me.

Initially, Cyrus did not know or honour the LORD. However, just as the LORD used Nebuchadnezzar to humble and purify his people, just so he would use Cyrus to set them free.

9. What would Cyrus have to acknowledge in the end? 45:5-7

Isaiah 45:5 I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, ⁶ so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. ⁷ I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.

10. Who does the LORD summons as his witnesses? 45:8

The heavens above and the earth below.

Isaiah 45:8 "You heavens above, rain down righteousness; let the clouds shower it down. Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness grow with it; I, the LORD, have created it.

11. Is there any wisdom in quarrelling with your Maker? Can the LORD do as he pleases? 44:9-10

Isaiah 45:9 "Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'He has no hands'? ¹⁰ Woe to him who says to his father, 'What have you begotten?' or to his mother, 'What have you brought to birth?'

12. Will Cyrus question the works of the LORD and things to come? 45:11

Isaiah 45:11 "This is what the LORD says--the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands?"

13. Who is the LORD? 45:12

Isaiah 45:12 It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshalled their starry hosts.

14. Will Cyrus do the LORD will out of his own accord and will he look for a reward? 45:13

Isaiah 45:13 I will raise up Cyrus {Hebrew him} in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free, but not for a price or reward, says the LORD Almighty."

Reflection & Application _____

1. What do you think was the influence of Daniel on Cyrus? Daniel 1:21; 6:28; 8:2; 10:1; cf. Daniel 4:17, 34-35.
2. How does Ezra cast light on the understanding of King Cyrus regarding YAHWEH? Ezra 1:1-3

Study 16 Isaiah 45:14-25 No Other Saviour

Study Questions _____

1. Who is the 'you' the LORD is speaking to in 45:14?

God speaks to the "city" Jerusalem, the you in v. 14
But the "city" is the people of God. See Isa. 40:1-2
In the NT Jerusalem = People of God. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

Isaiah 45:14 This is what the LORD says: "The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and those tall Sabeans-- they will come over to you and will be yours; they will trudge behind you, coming over to **you** in chains.

2. What is the significance of Egypt, Cush and the Sabeans? 45:14

The Egyptians – the powerful, the intellectual and wealthy
The Sabeans – the exotic, the far away.

Isaiah 45:14 This is what the LORD says: "The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and those tall Sabeans--they will come over to you and will be yours; they will trudge behind you, coming over to you in chains.

3. What will all the nations acknowledge? 45:14b Philippians 2:11

Isaiah 45:14b They will bow down before you and plead with you, saying, 'Surely God is with you, and there is no other; there is no other god.'

Other nations will acknowledge: "Surely God is with you."

4. What the people of God, i.e. Jerusalem, realise? 45:15

Isaiah 45:15 Truly you are a God who hides himself, O God and Saviour of Israel.

5. What does the LORD want us to understand? Name three things? 45:14-16

For Jerusalem, the people of God, there is only one God.

His Name is the LORD or YAHWEH (45:14).

The nations will say: "God is with you."

Other gods are no gods at all. The idols, the gods of Babylon seem to reign supreme. Yet, the makers of idols will be put to shame (45:16).

They will be disgraced, for they are idols!

One day all will acknowledge this God – The LORD or YAHWEH.

6. What will they all have in common? 45:6; 45:14b

They will all come to Israel and say: Surely God is with you, there is no other!

Note: They will come without being conquered! They will come in chains to be set free.

7. What will happen to the idol makers? And to those who trusted in idols? 45:16

Isaiah 45:16 All the makers of idols will be put to shame and disgraced; they will go off into disgrace together. ¹⁷ But Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting.

8. What does it mean that all of Israel will be saved? 45:17, Romans 9:6; 11:26 Galatians 6:15-16

All of "Israel" will be saved by an everlasting salvation. Thus something more than just the physical return from exile in Babylon is in view. This salvation will be plain for all the world to see.

9. Isaiah says: "Truly you are a God who hides himself" Must people look for Him by occult means, spirit guides, astrology? 45:15

No, not at all.

10. Give a reason by which we can know God? 45:18; Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:19-20

Isaiah 45:18 For this is what the LORD says-- **he who created the heavens**, he is God; **he who fashioned and made the earth**, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited-- he says: "I am the LORD, and **there is no other**.¹⁹ **I have not spoken in secret**, from **somewhere in a land of darkness**; I have not said to Jacob's descendants, '**Seek me in vain**.' I, the LORD, speak the truth; I declare what is right.

Who God is, is clear for all to see. The LORD is the **Creator**. The one who **created** the heavens and the earth – he is God. He alone is God the LORD. Every person on planet earth can see His handiwork.

Psalms 19:1 For the director of music. A psalm of David. **The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.**² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.³ There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.⁴ **Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.**

Romans 1:19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.²⁰ For **since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made**, so that men are without excuse.

11. What is the second reason given whereby we can know God? 45:19-21

Not only creation, but also **fulfilled prophecy**. When we look at **world history**, we see the prophecies of God's servants fulfilled.

Isaiah 45:19 I have not spoken in secret, from somewhere in a land of darkness; I have not said to Jacob's descendants, 'Seek me in vain.' I, the LORD, speak the truth; I declare what is right.

²⁰ "Gather together and come; assemble, you fugitives from the nations. Ignorant are those who carry about idols of wood, who pray to gods that cannot save.²¹ Declare what is to be, present it-- let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the LORD?

God describes world events, such as the rise of Cyrus. What does it mean? None of us can give the explanation; neither can our gods (45:21). In time we will know whether our guesses are right or wrong.

12. What does both creation and world history make very clear? 45:21b

Isaiah 45:21 And **there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none but me.**

Both creation as well as world history by itself offer no explanation. But both carry propositional revelation with them. An explanation with it. Both are in the Bible. YAHWEH has created and spoken publicly for all to see and test his proclamation.

13. What should the nations be doing? 45:22

Isaiah 45:22 "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.

The gods of the nations are not gods at all, as it will be proven in time. The LORD YAHWEH does not only offer Israel salvation. He offers salvation to the nations. He calls on all nations – the ends of the earth. It is a universal offer. Whether they accept this or not.

14. Will this come true in world history? 45:23

Isaiah 45:23 By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: **Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear.**

Before the Name YAHWEH every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that He is God and there is no other.

15. What will happen to those who raged against YAHWEH? 45:24

They will be put to shame. In YAHWEH alone is righteousness to be found. Those who confess YAHWEH as LORD.

Isaiah 45:24 They will say of me, **'In the LORD alone are righteousness and strength.'** All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame.

But how? Through the work of Christ! Those who confess Christ as LORD. They will know that in Him alone righteousness is to be found.

16. In whom will the descendants of Israel exult and why? Is this ethnic Israel? 45:22-23, 25

Isaiah 45:25 But **in the LORD all the descendants of Israel will be found righteous and will exult.**

Reflection & Application _____

1. YAHWEH did not speak in secret. He spoke through creation and fulfilled prophecy in world history. What is the last way that YAHWEH spoke? John 18:19-20

John 18:19 Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. ²⁰ "I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. **I said (spoke) nothing in secret.**

YAHWEH spoke clearly and publicly first to Israel and then to the Gentiles through the LORD Jesus Christ.

The NT translation is just like Isaiah: I spoke nothing in secret. NASB say in the NIV misses the OT connection.

Legw – λέγω meaning: to say, to speak

Lalew – λαλέω meaning: to talk, spoke.

2. How is Isaiah 45:22-23, '*Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear*', fulfilled? Philippians 2:9-11

This Name that is above every other, given to Jesus Christ! He is YAHWEH the Son.

Philippians 2:9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

3. How do believing Gentiles relate to believing Israel? Galatians 3:26-29; 4:22-31; 6:15-16

Study 17 Isaiah 46:1-13 I will Carry You

1. What are some of the names of the gods of the Babylonians? 46:1-2

Isaiah 46:1 Bel bows down, Nebo stoops low; their idols (images) are borne by beasts of burden. The images that are carried about are burdensome, a burden for the weary. ² They stoop and bow down together; unable to rescue the burden, they themselves go off into captivity.

Bel and Nebo are the gods of Babylon.

Bel Babylonian equivalent of the Canaanite Baal, meaning Lord.

Also called Marduk. Bel's son was called Nebo. (Nabu) – speaker, god of wisdom.

The idols are representations of Bel and Nebo.

2. What are the images or idols of the gods? 46:1

Their representations.

3. How do these gods move? What describes their ability? 46:1

They cannot move by themselves.

They were carried in the New Year's procession once a year to a temple.

Isaiah 46:1b....their idols (images) are borne by beasts of burden.

4. What do they do for those who are finding life difficult? What will happen to these gods themselves? 46:2

The images that are carried about are burdensome, a burden for the weary. These gods cannot help those who are burdened. They are burdens, and they will go into captivity too! V. 2

Isaiah 46:2... they themselves go off into captivity.

5. In contrast to the Babylonians carrying their gods, who carries Israel? 46:3

Isaiah 46:3 "Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all you who remain of the house of Israel, you whom I have upheld since you were conceived, and have carried since your birth.

6. How long will the LORD carry them and sustain them? 46:4

Isaiah 46:4 Even to your old age and grey hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

7. What is YAHWEH claiming regarding himself? 46:4

Even to their old age, he is the *I am He*, the self-existing one. He is the one who made them and he will carry them. He will sustain them and rescue them.

8. Can the people of Israel compare the LORD to the gods of Babylon? 46:5

Isaiah 46:5 "To whom will you compare me or count me equal? To whom will you liken me that we may be compared?

It is a rhetorical question. The answer is no one. There is no comparison.

9. What can be concluded about the gods of Babylon and their representative images? 46:6-7

What follows is a summary of the teaching in this passage thus far.

Isaiah 46:6 Some pour out gold from their bags and weigh out silver on the scales; **they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god**, and they bow down and worship it. ⁷ **They lift it to their shoulders and carry it; they set it up in its place, and there it stands.** From that spot **it cannot move**. Though one cries out to it, it does not answer; it cannot save him from his troubles.

They are costly – gold or silver

You have to hire a craftsman to make them by human hand.

So are all man-made gods.

You have to work for your salvation.

You have to carry them.

They cannot move. You have to nail them down so that they do not topple over.

You bow down to them and pray to them, yet they cannot answer.

They cannot save anyone from their troubles.

10. What lesson must the people of Israel learn about all this? 46:8

Isaiah 46:8 "Remember this, fix it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels.

They have to recognise the futility of idol-worship
They have to take it to heart and realise that they are rebels.

11. What do the people of Israel have to call to mind? What will this tell them? 46:9

Isaiah 46:9 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.

12. What does the LORD tell about the past and the future? 46:10

Isaiah 46:10 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.

The LORD explains what is to come. He makes known the end from the beginning. He states that his purposes will stand and that he does what he pleases.

13. What did the LORD tell them is going to happen? Who is he speaking of? 46:11

He is speaking of Cyrus (Isaiah 44, 45). Cyrus would fulfil the LORD's purpose. What the LORD had promised he will do. The Babylonian exile would end, and the perceived powerful gods of the Babylonians would be carried off in exile themselves,

Isaiah 46:11 From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfil my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.

14. What was the indictment against the people of Israel? 46:12

Isaiah 46:12 Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are far from righteousness.

15. Where will righteousness and salvation come from? 46:13

Isaiah 46:13 I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away; and my salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendour to Israel.

Righteousness is from the LORD.
Salvation is from the LORD.

Reflection & Application _____

1. We may look upon these ancient nations and their idols and think of them as primitive. However, we too have idols in whom we trust. Which do we have?

Money, pleasure, status, power, comfort.

2. What can lack of trust in God be described as? Matthew 6:25-34

Faithlessness.

Study 18 Isaiah 47:1-15 The Fall of Babylon

Study Questions _____

1. What would happen to Babylon when the time is fulfilled? 47:1

They will be brought down to the dust and the kingdom will be taken from them.

Isaiah 47:1 "Go down, sit in the dust, Virgin Daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, Daughter of the Babylonians. No more will you be called tender or delicate.

2. Where will the Babylonians go? 47:2

They will be going into exile. Experiencing hard labour.

Isaiah 47:2 Take millstones and grind flour; take off your veil. Lift up your skirts, bare your legs, and wade through the streams.

3. What will be the outcome for the Babylonians? 47:3

Isaiah 47:3 Your nakedness will be exposed and your shame uncovered. I will take vengeance; I will spare no one."

Shame and nakedness and the sword.

4. What will the people of Judah recognise? 47:4

Isaiah 47:4 Our Redeemer--the LORD Almighty is his name--is the Holy One of Israel.

5. What will be the outcome for the Babylonian Empire? 47:5

Isaiah 47:5 "Sit in silence, go into darkness, Daughter of the Babylonians; no more will you be called queen of kingdoms.

6. What will be the LORD's charge against the Babylonians? 47:6

They were cruel and without mercy.

Isaiah 47:6 I was angry with my people and desecrated my inheritance; I gave them into your hand, and you showed them no mercy. Even on the aged you laid a very heavy yoke.

7. What was the main problem of the Babylonians? 47:7-8

Pride. 'I will continue for ever.' 'I am, there is none besides me.'

Isaiah 47:7 You said, 'I will continue for ever--the eternal queen!' But you did not consider these things or reflect on what might happen. ⁸ "Now then, listen, you wanton creature, lounging in your security and saying to yourself, 'I am, and there is none besides me.

Pride. 'I am, and there is none besides me.'

8. What will overtake them in a single day? 47:8b-9

Widowhood and loss of children.

Isaiah 47:8b I will never be a widow or suffer the loss of children.' ⁹ Both of these will overtake you in a moment, on a single day: loss of children and widowhood. They will come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries and all your potent spells.

9. In what did the Babylonians trust? 47:10 cf. Habakkuk 1:6-11

Isaiah 47:10 You have trusted in your wickedness and have said, 'No-one sees me.' Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you when you say to yourself, 'I am, and there is none besides me.'

In their wickedness and cruelty and in their pride.

Habakkuk 1:6 I am raising up the Babylonians, {Or Chaldeans} that **ruthless and impetuous** people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling-places not their own. ⁷ They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honour. ⁸ Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar. They fly like a vulture swooping to devour; ⁹ they all come **bent on violence**. Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand. ¹⁰ They deride kings and scoff at rulers. They laugh at all fortified cities; they build earthen ramps and capture them. ¹¹ Then they sweep past like the wind and go on--**guilty men, whose own strength is their god.**"

10. What did the claim 'I am, and there is none besides me'? 47:8, 10 cf. Habakkuk 1:11

They claim to be God. This was blasphemous.

11. What was going to happen to the Babylonians? 47:11

Isaiah 47:11 Disaster will come upon you, and you will not know how to conjure it away. A calamity will fall upon you that you cannot ward off with a ransom; a catastrophe you cannot foresee will suddenly come upon you.

12. What did the LORD sarcastically command the Babylonians to keep on doing? 47:12

To trust in their magic and sorcery. Perhaps they will succeed.

Isaiah 47:12 "Keep on, then, with your magic spells and with your many sorceries, which you have laboured at since childhood. Perhaps you will succeed, perhaps you will cause terror.

13. What was the LORD's challenge to the Babylonians? 47:13

Let the astrologers and the stargazers save them.

Isaiah 47:13 All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you.

14. What was the reality of their gods, their idols and their wise men? 47:14-15

Isaiah 47:14 Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame. Here are no coals to warm anyone; here is no fire to sit by. ¹⁵ That is all they can do for you--these you have laboured with and trafficked with since childhood. Each of them goes on in his error; there is not one that can save you.

Reflection & Application _____

1. What is the sobering warning from Isaiah 47:1-15?
The danger of pride. Trusting in idols.
2. Why does the book of Revelation devote a whole chapter to the Fall of Babylon? How is it the same as Babylon in Isaiah 47? Revelation 18:1-24
3. What is the danger to you when things go very well, such as gaining a high position, wealth or great power?

Study 19 **Isaiah 48:1-11** **Free at Last!**

Study Questions _____

1. Who was the LORD addressing? Did the right nationality and knowledge of the right God guarantee spiritual success? 48:1-2
No.
2. What did the LORD foretell long ago? 48:3a
The Babylonian exile

Isaiah 48:3 I foretold the former things long ago, **my** mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.

3. What happened to them suddenly? 48:3b

Isaiah 48:3 ... then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.

4. What was the state of the nation at large? 48:4

They were extremely stubborn and rebellious.

Isaiah 48:4 For I knew how **stubborn** you were; **the sinews of your neck were iron, your forehead was bronze.**

5. Why did the LORD foretell these things long ago? 48:5

So that they could not claim that it was the prediction or doing of the idols.

Isaiah 48:5 Therefore I told you these things long ago; before they happened I announced them to you so that you could not say, 'My idols did them; my wooden image and metal god ordained them.'

5. In whom were the people from the line of Judah placing their trust? 48:5

Idols, wooden images, metal gods.

6. What did the LORD want them to recognise? 48:6

That they would admit that the LORD announced it long before and brought it to pass.

Isaiah 48:6 You have heard these things; look at them all. Will you not admit them? "From now on I will tell you of new things, of hidden things unknown to you.

7. What would the LORD do anew in their day? 48:6b-7

Isaiah 48:6b "From now on I will tell you of new things, of hidden things unknown to you. ⁷ They are created now, and not long ago; you have not heard of them before today.

8. What could they no longer claim? 48:7b-8

Isaiah 48:7b So you cannot say, 'Yes, I knew of them.'

⁸ You have neither heard nor understood; from of old your ear has not been open.

9. What did the LORD know regarding the people of Judah? 48:8b

"Well do I know how treacherous you are; you were called a rebel from birth."

10. What did the LORD determine not to do and for whose sake? Why was it for his sake? 48:9, 11

Isaiah 48:9 For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you, so as not to cut you off.

Isaiah 48:11 For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.

11. What was the purpose of the judgement of the LORD against Judah? 48:10

Isaiah 48:10 See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

¹¹ For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another.

Reflection & Application _____

1. Why does the LORD not destroy rebels who invoke the name of the LORD and claim to be part of the covenant community immediately and totally? For example, if a church or denomination loses its way and starts proclaiming ideas and teaching not in truth and righteousness.

The LORD is patient and gracious, slow to anger. He warns through his prophets.

For the sake of the honour of his name.

2. Will the LORD refine his church, often by affliction, when they go astray? Cf. Revelation 2:5, 16; 23; 3:3, 18-19

Yes, he will.

Study 20 Isaiah 48:12-22 The LORD who Speaks!

Study Questions _____

The LORD speaks through Creation

1. What does 'I am the first and the last' mean? 48:12

YAHWEH says, 'I was there when nothing existed, before anything existed. I will still be there at the end of all things.

Beyond the end of all things

I am like the caps in a mathematical equation.

I surround everything in creation and history

2. What does the LORD's self-declaration 'I am He!' mean? 48:12

It is a strange way of speaking. Imagine you go to a tea party or a social, and they ask you, "Who are you?" And you answer: "I am He!" They would certainly think there is something wrong with you.

We identify or describe ourselves in terms of an object.

We say: "I am a father, I am a teacher, I am a mechanic, I am a soccer player. The only one in the Bible that does not have to describe himself in terms of an object is YAHWEH.

He simply says, "I am He!"

The self-existing and incomparable one.

3. Notice the Word 'Listen!' What was the voice Israel had to hear? Which voice did YAHWEH use to speak? 48:12-13

Listen to the voice of Creation!

Isaiah 48:12 "Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called:

I am he; I am the first and I am the last.

¹³ My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they all stand up together.

4. What was the essence of the message? 48:12-13

YAHWEH is the Creator of all things.

In heaven and on earth, seen and unseen,

He is the one that calls them all together

5. How can you hear the LORD's voice? What do the heavens declare regarding God? Psalm 19:1-4

Psalm 19:1 *For the director of music. A psalm of David.* The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. ² Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. ³ There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

The LORD who speaks through History and Prophecy.

6. Can the idols and the gods of this world predict or foretell anything?

None of the idols, the false gods of the world, can predict or foretell these things.

7. Note the repeated word? Listen! "Come together, all of you, and *listen*... To what must they listen? 48:14

Prophecy!

8. How did the LORD speak through history and whom in this case specifically? 48:14-15

Isaiah 48:14 "Come together, all of you, and **listen**: Which of *the idols* has foretold these things? The LORD's chosen ally will carry out his purpose against Babylon; his arm will be against the Babylonians.

¹⁵ **I, even I, have spoken; yes, I have called him. I will bring him**, and he will succeed in his mission.

9. What is prophecy? 41:22b-23a

Prophecy is looking forward, foretelling things that are yet to happen.

Things that no one except the LORD knows about.

Things that are found only in the Bible

A clear description of events yet to come with real names, places and lands and situations.

That cannot be interpreted any other way.

Those are fulfilled in time, and the fulfilment ticks all the boxes.

10. In which other books apart from the OT and NT do we find prophecy?

In none of the books of the world, religious and secular, do we find prophecy; only the OT and NT contain prophecy. People may come up with good and even very close guesses, insights, estimates or extrapolations. However, none of them contains prophecy.

11. What was the prophecy here specifically? 48:15

The prediction in view here is that the LORD will raise up a man that would be his ally.

He would fulfil the work of the LORD.

He would end the Babylonian exile

He would do so after 70 years.

He would send the Jews back to the land

He would permit the rebuilding of the temple

12. What was this person's name? 44:28, 45:1, 13

His name would be Cyrus.

Isaiah 44:28 who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."'

Isaiah 45:1 "This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armour, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:

Isaiah 45:13 I will raise up Cyrus {Hebrew him} in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free, but not for a price or reward, says the LORD Almighty."

The LORD speaks in Person.

13. Who is this person saying "Come near to me and listen?" 48:16

Isaiah 48:16 "Come near me and **listen** to this:

"From the first announcement **I have not spoken in secret; at the time it happens, I am there.**" And now the **Sovereign LORD has sent me, with his Spirit.**

NKJ **Isaiah 48:16** "Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit Have¹ sent Me." (Isa 48:16 NKJ)

Who says, "Come near to me?" YAHWEH.

Why? "Because I want to tell you something."

What? "I have not spoken in secret!"

14. Does YAHWEH speak in secret? 48:16

YAHWEH says: The LORD do not only speak through creation and history.

The LORD speaks in Person.

He literally comes to earth and speaks to human beings openly so that the world may hear and take notice.

15. How did that happen? Who is the person speaking throughout this section? 48:12-16

'I have not spoken in secret.' Notice the pronoun 'I'.

- Throughout the section, the person who speaks is the LORD.

My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they all stand up together.

- I have prophesied the future with Cyrus.

I, even I, have spoken; yes, I have called him. I will bring him, and he will succeed in his mission.

16. How was YAHWEH speaking in person fulfilled in history? John 18:20

John 18:20 "I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. ²¹ Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said."

17. By whom was the person called YAHWEH, who created and who prophesied, sent? 48:16

I have been sent by אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה (Isa 48:16 WTT)

The being who did these things, he has been sent by the LORD God. YAHWEH has been sent by Adonay YAHWEH!

The LORD who speaks is Jesus!

18. How many divine persons are mentioned in this text? 48:16

And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit have sent Me."

Three persons. Trinity!

Reflection & Application _____

1. Can anyone truly say, 'Where is God? I cannot see him, hear him or understand him'?

The LORD has spoken

- through creation
- through prophecy
- in person
-

2. How did the LORD speak in person? John 18:5

John 18:5 "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) ⁶ When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

Note: The One who speaks throughout this paragraph of Scripture is named YAHWEH.

- He is the I am He
- He is the First and the Last
- He is the Creator
- He is the God of prophecy and history
- He is the one who does not speak in secret
- He is the One who has been sent by the LORD God.

3. What will happen if you listen? Revelation 2:7,11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22

You will receive salvation and a place in the new Jerusalem.

4. God spoke through creation and prophecy. How did he speak in these last days? Hebrews 1:1-2

Through his son.

Study 21 Isaiah 49:1-13

The Servant's Double Task

Study Questions _____

1. What are the implications of the command that the islands (or coastlands) as well as the nations must listen? 49:1a

Isaiah 49:1 Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations:

The LORD who speaks, speaks not only to Israel and Judah; he is speaking to the coastlands and the nations, i.e. the whole world.

2. Who will be the LORD's voice to the islands and the nations? 49:1b

The same person indicated by the first person pronoun throughout 48:12-16. The one who spoke through creation, through history and prophecy; he will speak in person.

Isaiah 49:1b Before I was born the LORD called **me**; from **my** birth he has made mention of **my** name.

3. How will the LORD speak to the islands and the nations? 49:2 cf. Revelation 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15

Through the mouth of his Servant. The Servant's mouth is like a sword (Revelation 1:16; Revelation 2:12, 16). His mouth is like a sharpened sword. He will use his mouth to bring a message to Israel and the nations. He will be a polished arrow, hidden in the shadow of the LORD's hand for release.

Revelation 19:15 Out of his mouth comes a **sharp sword with which to strike down the nations**.

Isaiah 49:2 He made **my** mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid **me**; he made **me** into a polished arrow and concealed **me** in his quiver.

4. Why is the Servant of the LORD called Israel? 49:3 cf. 42:18-19; 48:1b-2

The Servant is called "Israel." But this is not the nation of Israel, as he has to bring Jacob back to the LORD. He is the true Israel. Not the false and rebellious Israel of 48:1-2

Isaiah 49:3 He said to **me**, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendour."

Isaiah 48:1b ...you who are called by the name of Israel and come from the line of Judah, you who take oaths in the name of the LORD and invoke the God of Israel-- but not in truth or righteousness--

² you who call yourselves citizens of the holy city and rely on the God of Israel-

5. What will be the Servant of the LORD's response regarding his work of speaking? 49:4a

The Servant will seem to have laboured in vain. It seemed as if the Servant received no reward for his work in Israel.

Isaiah 49:4 But I said, "I have laboured to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing.

Discouraged but not defeated.

6. To whom will the Servant look for reward? 49:4b

Isaiah 49:4 Yet what is due to me is in the LORD's hand, and my reward is with my God."

7. How did the Servant appear on earth? 49:5

Isaiah 49:5 And now the LORD says -- he who formed **me** in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for **I** am honoured in the eyes of the LORD and **my** God has been **my** strength—

8. How does Israel differ in 49:3 and 49:5?

One is the Servant of the LORD (49:3). The other is the nation of Israel (49:5).

9. Instead of failing in his mission, what will the Servant accomplish? What will be the Servant's reward? 49:6

Isaiah 49:6 he 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**.

The Servant would bring back those of Israel whom the LORD has kept.

10. Will this be the only work of the Servant, to bring back those in Israel the LORD has kept? How far will the Servant's message of salvation reach? 49:6b

Isaiah 49:6b I will also make *you* a light for the Gentiles, that *you* may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

You, i.e. the Servant of the LORD.

The servant will not only bring back those of **Israel** God has kept!

But He will also be a light for the **Gentiles**.

He will bring God's salvation to the ends of the earth.

11. What did the LORD say regarding the people of Israel's reaction at large to the Servant's message? 49:7a

Isaiah 49:7 This is what the LORD says--the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel--to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation,...

Despised and abhorred by Israel

12. However, what did the LORD promise regarding the reaction of the nations to the Servant's message and voice? 49:7b

Isaiah 49:7b ...to the servant of rulers: "Kings will see you and rise up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

Kings and princes, i.e. leaders of nations, will bow down to the Servant. This will be because the LORD is faithful and has chosen the Servant.

13. What did the LORD promise the Servant? 49:8

Isaiah 49:8 This is what the LORD says: "In the time of my favour I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances,...

"In the time of my favour I will answer you..."

"In the day of salvation I will help you..."

"I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances,..."

14. Who are *the people*? 49:8

The people of Israel.

15. What is the servant's message and what kind of message is it? 49:6, 9 cf. 42:18-19

Isaiah 49:9 to say to the captives, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Be free!'

How the blind will see! And the deaf will hear!

The servant will open blind eyes! Unstop deaf ears!

A message of salvation 49:6

A message of freedom and redemption 49:9

The command is: "Captives, come out!" "Those in darkness, be free!"

16. What will be the reward for those who hear? What kind of language is this? 49:9b-11

It is Exodus language. Freedom offered by the Servant of the LORD?

Isaiah 49:9b "They will feed beside the roads and find pasture on every barren hill. ¹⁰ They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water. ¹¹ I will turn all my mountains into roads, and my highways will be raised up.

17. Who will be those who will respond when they hear the message of salvation? 49:12

The nations. They will come from all over.

Isaiah 49:12 See, they will come from afar--some from the north, some from the west, some from the region of Aswan."

18. What will the LORD do for his people and how will creation react? 49:13

Isaiah 49:13 Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.

Reflection & Application _____

1. The Servant's mouth and message are like a sharp sword. Who fulfilled Isaiah 49:2 in history? Revelation 1:16; 2:12, 16; Revelation 19:11-16

Isaiah 49:2 He made **my** mouth like a sharpened sword ...

Revelation 19:11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is **the Word of God**. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ Out of his mouth comes **a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations**. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**.

2. What was the Servant's success? Revelation 12:5; 15:4; 21:24, 26; 22:2

The response of the nations.

Study 22 Isaiah 49:14-26 Divine Confirmation: Worldwide Success

Study Questions _____

1. What was the response of Zion to the LORD's promise of redemption? 49:10-13

Her perception was that the LORD had forsaken her? 49:14

Isaiah 49:14 But Zion said, "The LORD (YAHWEH) has forsaken me, the Lord ('Adonay) has forgotten me."

2. How did the LORD respond to this misunderstanding? 49:15

Isaiah 49:15 "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!

Zion may forget the LORD, but just as a mother cannot forget her baby, just so the LORD can never forget Zion.

3. Where is Zion always kept as a memorial before the LORD? 49:16

Isaiah 49:16 See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.

4. What will happen to Zion in the future? 49:17-18a

Isaiah 49:17 Your sons hasten back, and those who laid you waste depart from you. ¹⁸ Lift up your eyes and look around; all your sons gather and come to you.

Her sons will return to her. Note: Zion does not include unbelieving Israel!

5. How will the LORD love and honour Zion? 49:18b

Isaiah 49:18b As surely as I live," declares the LORD, "you will wear them all as ornaments; you will put them on, like a bride.

6. What will happen to the city of Zion? 49:19

Zion will be too small for all the people. Her enemies would be far away.

Isaiah 49:19 "Though you were ruined and made desolate and your land laid waste, now you will be too small for your people, and those who devoured you will be far away.

7. How many people will be in Zion? 49:20; Zechariah 2:4b; 8:20-23

Isaiah 49:20 The children born during your bereavement will yet say in your hearing, 'This place is too small for us; give us more space to live in.'

8. How many will be the sons of the barren woman and will she be surprised? Cf. Isaiah 54:1; Galatians 4:27

Isaiah 49:21 Then you will say in your heart, 'Who bore me these? I was bereaved and barren; I was exiled and rejected. Who brought these up? I was left all alone, but these--where have they come from?'"

9. Where will all these children of Zion come from? 49:22 Zechariah 8:20-23 cf. Galatians 3:28-29

Isaiah 49:22 This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders.

They will bring Zion's sons

10. What do the kings and queens of the nations refer to? 49:23

Isaiah 49:23 Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in me will not be disappointed."

The best of the nations will come to Zion.

11. Can plunder be taken from warriors, or captives rescued from the fierce? 49:24

Isaiah 49:24 Can plunder be taken from warriors, or captives rescued from the fierce? {Dead Sea Scrolls, Vulgate and Syriac (see also Septuagint and verse 25); Masoretic Text righteous}

This is a rhetorical question, and the answer is no.
It is humanly impossible.

12. However, is it possible for the LORD to free captives and plunder the fierce? 49:25 cf. Mark 3:27; Matthew 12:29

Isaiah 49:25 But this is what the LORD says: "Yes, captives will be taken from warriors, and plunder retrieved from the fierce; I will contend with those who contend with you, and your children I will save.

13. What will the LORD do to the oppressors of Zion? 49:26

He will destroy the oppressors of the children of Zion. He will rescue Zion's children.

Isaiah 49:26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh; they will be drunk on their own blood, as with wine.

14. When the LORD redeems Zion, what will all of mankind know? 49:26b

Isaiah 49:26b Then all mankind will know that I, the LORD, am your Saviour, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

Reflection & Application _____

1. The barren woman and her offspring are a promise from Genesis 15:5-6. Who are these children from the barren woman? Isaiah 54:1; Galatians 3:28-29; Galatians 4:27

Those who believe the message of the LORD's Servant.

2. What will happen to the enemies of God? Revelation 19:17-21

They will be conquered.

Study 23 Isaiah 50:1-11 Nation and Servant, a Contrast

Study Questions _____

1. Why were the people of Judah sent away? Did the LORD divorce their mother? Why did the Jews end up in Babylon? 50:1

Isaiah 50:1 This is what the LORD says: "Where is your mother's certificate of divorce with which I sent her away? Or to which of my creditors did I sell you? Because of your sins you were sold; because of your transgressions your mother was sent away.

Because of their sins they were sold.

Because of their transgressions their mother was sent away.

2. What did the LORD repeatedly do for Israel? And how did they respond? 50:2

Isaiah 50:2 When I came, why was there no-one? When I called, why was there no-one to answer?

3. Was the LORD unable to rescue the people of Judah from Babylon? 50:2-3

Isaiah 50:2 Was my arm too short to ransom you? Do I lack the strength to rescue you? By a mere rebuke I dry up the sea, I turn rivers into a desert; their fish rot for lack of water and die of thirst. ³ I clothe the sky with darkness and make sackcloth its covering."

No, the LORD was able and he provides examples from Israel's history and creation.

4. How would the LORD eventually rescue the Jews from Babylon, from captivity? 50:4a

Isaiah 50:4 The Sovereign LORD has given **me** an **instructed tongue**, to know the word that **sustains the weary**. He wakens **me** morning by morning, wakens **my** ear to listen like one being taught.

Through the work of the Servant.

The LORD would send his Servant with an instructed tongue.

An instructed tongue, being taught by the LORD.

Instructed tongue – he speaks only what the Father has given him.

He has the words of God that sustain the weary.

Come to me, you who are weary, and I will give you rest.

Where shall we go, for you have the words of eternal life.

He is also the one who listens to the Father, as one being taught by the LORD.

5. How does the Servant of the LORD differ from the rebellious servant Israel? 50:4b cf. 42:19-20

Isaiah 50:4b He wakens **me** morning by morning, wakens **my** ear to listen like one being taught.

Unlike the rebellious servant of the LORD – Israel. The Servant has ears to hear. The Servant listens like one being taught. His ears are open, and he is not rebellious. But will Israel accept his teaching?

Isaiah 42:19 Who is blind but my servant, and deaf like the messenger I send? Who is blind like the one committed to me, blind like the servant of the LORD?
²⁰ You have seen many things, but have paid no attention; your ears are open, but you hear nothing."

6. Who is speaking here in the first person? 50:4-5

Isaiah 50:4 The Sovereign LORD has given **me** an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens **me** morning by morning, wakens **my** ear to listen like one being taught. ⁵ The Sovereign LORD has opened **my** ears, and **I** have not been rebellious; **I** have not drawn back.

The servant of the LORD.

7. Who was called the servant of the LORD in the Old Exodus?
Joshua 1:2, 7, 13, 15

Moses was the one called the Servant of the LORD.
He was the normative prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18).

8. How would God rescue his people again? Deuteronomy 18:15, 18

God would send one like Moses in future to speak to His people.
Deuteronomy 18: 15, 18

Deuteronomy 18:15 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.

¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.

9. Where would the LORD place His words? 50:4; Deuteronomy 18:18

The LORD would place His words in the Prophet's mouth.
The Servant as the New Moses would teach and lead his people in a new Exodus.

10. How would the people of Israel treat the Servant of the LORD? 50:6; Mark 10:33-34; Luke 18:32

Isaiah 50:6 I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.

They will beat him, humiliate him and pull out his beard.
We can see from this that not all would accept the Servant.
Notice Jesus' predictions in **Mark's** gospel. Esp. **Mar. 10: 33, 34**

Luke 18:32 He will be turned over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him.

11. How would the Servant react to his treatment? 50:6b-7

Isaiah 50:6b I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. ⁷ Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.

Nevertheless, the Servant will continue with his mission.
Because the Sovereign Lord is his helper, he would not be put to shame.
He will set his face like flint.

12. Would the accusations and persecution he will face deter him in his mission?
50:8-9

Isaiah 50:8 He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! ⁹ It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who is he that will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up.

There is no accusation anyone can bring against Him.
The LORD is the One who vindicates.
The LORD is the One who will reward Him.

13. If they reject the Servant, can they be the true people of God? 50:10a

Isaiah 50:10 Who among you **fears the LORD** and **obeys the word of his servant**?

What must one do to truly fear the LORD?
You must not only fear the LORD, but also obey the Word of his Servant.

14. What is the Servant's call of redemption still today? What must those in darkness do? 50:10b

Isaiah 50:10b Let him who **walks in the dark**, who **has no light**, **trust in the name of the LORD** and rely on his God.

Realise that you were walking in the dark
Realise that you have no light of your own.
Trust in the name of the LORD and rely on God.

15. What will happen to those who reject the Servant's message and walk by their own light? 50:11

Isaiah 50:11 But now, all you who light fires and provide yourselves with flaming torches, go, walk in the light of your fires and of the torches you have set ablaze. This is what you shall receive from my hand: You will lie down in torment.

They provide light for themselves.
They walk in the light of their own torches.
They will receive judgement from the LORD.
They will lie down in torment.

Reflection & Application _____

1. How do you enter Zion to become a citizen? 49:9, 25; 50:10

Those who have entered Zion are those who trust in the LORD.
Fearing the LORD means obeying the word of His Servant. The two are not mutually exclusive. They are the two sides of the same coin. If you fear the LORD, believe the words of Jesus.

2. What is the work of God? John 6:29; 1 John 5:5

John 6:29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to **believe in the one he has sent.**"

Study 24 Isaiah 51:1-16 The LORD who Comforts Zion

Study Questions _____

1. What is the characteristic of the true people of God? 51:1-2

Isaiah 51:1 "Listen to me, you who **pursue righteousness** and who **seek the LORD**: **Look** to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; ² **look** to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many.

They listen, and they seek and they look.
They pursue righteousness and they seek the LORD.
They look to the rock from which you were cut.
They look to Abraham as their father.

2. Who are the children of Abraham? 51:2 Genesis 12:3; 15:6-7; Galatians 3:28-29; Galatians 4:26-28

Genesis 15:5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars--if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ *If you belong to Christ*, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 4:26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.²⁷ For it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labour pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband." {Isaiah 54:1} ²⁸ Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are *children of promise*.

Galatians tells us that Abraham's offspring are those who are in Christ. The children of the promise are the true children of Abraham. That is: those who live by faith in Christ; they are the true seed of Abraham.

3. Who or what is Zion? 51:3; Psalm 87; Hebrews 11:10, 16; 12:22-24:13:14

Isaiah 51:3 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.

Zion is the holy city, the city of God. The city Abraham was looking for but never found on earth. The promise to Abraham was that through his seed all nations would be blessed. The citizens of Zion are the seed of Abraham; the true children of Abraham.

Zion as a people will be comforted – her sin will be dealt with.
She will be like Eden – there will be no more curse. – Rev. 22:3

4. Who are the LORD's people and the LORD's nation? 51:4

Those who listen to, hear and obey the law of the LORD and accept his justice.

Isaiah 51:4 "Listen to me, **my people**; hear me, **my nation**: The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to **the nations**.

5. What was inevitably going to happen? What was the LORD's righteousness, salvation and arm? 51:5

The arm of the LORD is his instrument of salvation, righteousness and justice. The islands would look to YAHWEH and wait in hope for his arm. The teaching or instruction of salvation will go out from the LORD. The LORD's arm – his saving power, his divine action will bring about salvation. The nations and the coastlands will look to the LORD for salvation.

Isaiah 51:5 My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to **the nations**. The **islands** will look to me and wait in hope for my arm.

6. What will happen to this present creation and its inhabitants in future? 51:6

Isaiah 51:6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last for ever, my righteousness will never fail.

The heavens and the earth would disappear and its inhabitants die like flies. But the LORD's salvation will last forever, and his righteousness will never fail.

7. Who are God's people? 51:7a

They know what is right and they have the law of God on their hearts.

Isaiah 51:7 "Hear me, **you who know what is right**, you **people who have my law in your hearts**:

8. What must God's people refrain from doing? 51:7b

Isaiah 51:7b Do not fear the reproach of men or be terrified by their insults.

As the Servant did not fear (50:4-9), as no one could bring any accusation against Him. So likewise we do not have to fear men. God's righteousness and salvation will last forever.

9. What will God do to those who insult and shame his people? 51:8 cf. 50:9

They will face destruction the same as the enemies of the Servant (50:9).

Isaiah 51:8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment; the worm will devour them like wool. But my righteousness will last forever, my salvation through all generations."

10. What was the call to the arm of the LORD? What did the arm of the LORD have to do? 51:9a

Isaiah 51:9 Awake, awake! Clothe yourself with strength, O **arm of the LORD**;

A prayer is offered to the LORD:

The arm of the LORD must awake. The arm of the LORD must be clothed with strength. It is an urgent prayer for salvation.

> The arm of the LORD is His saving power.

> It is personal divine action.

> It is God Himself in all His might.

> In 4th Servant song, the Servant is revealed as the arm of the LORD. Isa. 53:1

11. What did the arm of the LORD accomplish in the past? Who was Rahab? 51:9b-10 cf. Exodus 6:6; Isaiah 30:9

Isaiah 51:9 awake, as in days gone by, as in generations of old. Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces, who pierced that monster through? ¹⁰ Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made a road in the depths of the sea so that the redeemed might cross over?

The Old Exodus is remembered. Rahab is another name for Egypt. The LORD delivered his people from Egypt, through the Red Sea and drowned the Egyptian army.

All of this was done through the arm of the LORD.

Exodus 6:6 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and **I will redeem you with an outstretched arm** and with mighty acts of judgment.

12. What was the result of the arm of the LORD's deliverance? 51:10

Isaiah 51:10 Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made a road in the depths of the sea so that the redeemed might cross over?

13. What would be the result of the new deliverance and Exodus when the arm of the LORD was revealed again? 50:11

Isaiah 51:11 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.

14. What was the ransom price in Egypt and to whom was it paid? Numbers 3:11-13

A life for a life. The ransom was paid to YAHWEH.

Numbers 3:11 The LORD also said to Moses, ¹² "I have taken the Levites from among the Israelites in place of the first male offspring of every Israelite woman. The Levites are mine, ¹³ for all the firstborn are mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel, whether man or animal. They are to be mine. I am the LORD."

15. Considering this section, what was coming soon and what would happen to the LORD's people? 51:11

A New Exodus is coming. See also Isaiah 35:10.

The ransomed of the LORD will return to Zion.

There will enter Zion, the people of God with singing. v. 16b

Everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

16. Who will be the one that comforts Zion? 51:12a, 15

Isaiah 51:12a "I, even I, **am he who comforts you**.

The LORD – YAHWEH. I am He – the self-declaration of God.

The LORD of Hosts (warfare) is His Name. v.15 He is the One who comforts you (?) Who is He comforting and what does He mean by it?

17. Should the LORD's people, the ransomed of the LORD fear mortal men? What are mortal and finite men compared to the LORD? 51:12b-13

Isaiah 51:12b Who are you that you fear mortal men, the sons of men, who are but grass,¹³ that you forget the LORD your Maker, who stretched out the

heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, that you live in constant terror every day because of the wrath of the oppressor, who is bent on destruction? For where is the wrath of the oppressor?

18. Who were the cowering prisoners? Could they be all of Israel? 51:14 cf. 42:7

YAHWEH speaks of cowering prisoners.

People in dungeons who will be set free. **Isaiah 42: 7**

They are the ransomed of the LORD.

They could not be all the exiles in Babylon, as many of the exiles would be quite comfortable in Babylon. Most did not want to come back when Cyrus issued his decree.

19. What was the good news for the prisoner? 51:14

Isaiah 51:14 The **cowering prisoners will soon be set free; they will not die in their dungeon**, nor will they lack bread.

20. Why could they be sure of this? What is the meaning of the Name the LORD of Hosts? 51:15

Isaiah 51:15 For I am the LORD your God, who churns up the sea so that its waves roar-- **the LORD Almighty (of HOSTS)** is his name.

The LORD of Hosts will set Zion free.

YAHWEH Tsabaoth, **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** meaning LORD or the armies or warfare.

21. Who was the LORD speaking to? 51:16

Isaiah 51:16 I have put my words in your mouth and covered you with the **shadow of my hand**-- I who set the heavens in place, who laid the foundations of the earth, and who say to **Zion, 'You are my people.'**"

22. If the cowering prisoners were not Israel then who were they? 51:16b

They are those who fear the LORD. The true citizens of Zion.

Zion is not a physical city in this context.

Zion - the people of God, A comforted people.

NB: And we will see that it is not all Israel. 50: 4-9 and 51:1-8

It is the people who worship YAHWEH.

Reflection & Application _____

1. Have you entered Zion? Revelation 20:15

You must be sure of this.

2. How will this liberation be accomplished? 51:16

Again the Servant of the LORD is mentioned. 51:16a

> The One who has the Words of God in his mouth.

> Hidden in the shadow of God's hand.

Isaiah 51:16 I have put my words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of my hand...

This is a repetition of the 2nd Servant song:

Isaiah 49:2 He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver.

Study 25 Isaiah 51:17-52:12 The LORD's Love for Zion

Study Questions

1. Who was the LORD speaking to, whom he addressed as *Zion* and *Jerusalem*? 51:16-17

Isaiah 51:16 I have put my words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of my hand -- I who set the heavens in place, who laid the foundations of the earth, and who say to **Zion**, **'You are my people.'**"

¹⁷ **Awake, awake!** Rise up, O **Jerusalem**, you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath, you who have drained to its dregs the goblet that makes men stagger.

He was speaking to his people. However, not all the people of Jerusalem would be able to hear, but those who would be able to would *awake* and *rise up*.

2. What was the urgent command to Jerusalem, who had experienced the LORD's wrath? What does this remind you of? 51:17

Isaiah 51:17 Awake, awake! Rise up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath, you who have drained to its dregs the goblet that makes men stagger.

They have to wake up. It reminds us of the night of the Exodus, when the children were woken up, as the LORD was ready to deliver them from Jerusalem.

3. What was the problem with Jerusalem's sons in the past? What had happened to them because of their condition? 51:18-19

Isaiah 51:18 Of all the sons she bore there was none to guide her; of all the sons she brought up there was none to take her by the hand. ¹⁹ These double calamities have come upon you--who can comfort you? --ruin and destruction, famine and sword--who can console you?

None of her sons could guide her. The result was that calamity came upon her, namely ruin, destruction, famine and sword.

4. What was the result of the condition of Jerusalem's sons' inability to guide her? 51:20

Isaiah 51:20 Your sons have fainted; they lie at the head of every street, like antelope caught in a net. They are filled with the wrath of the LORD and the rebuke of your God.

They had fainted, lay at the head of every street, and they were under the wrath of God.

5. What did the afflicted have to hear? What would the LORD do for her? 51:21-22

Isaiah 51:21 Therefore hear this, you afflicted one, made drunk, but not with wine. ²² This is what your Sovereign LORD says, your God, who defends his people: "See, I have taken out of your hand the cup that made you stagger; from that cup, the goblet of my wrath, you will never drink again.

6. In whose hand would the LORD place the cup of wrath? 51:23

Into the hands of the Babylonians.

Isaiah 51:23 I will put it into the hands of your tormentors, who said to you, 'Fall prostrate that we may walk over you.' And you made your back like the ground, like a street to be walked over."

7. How did Zion have to respond when this happened? 52:1 cf. Exodus 12:31-32

They must wake up and leave Babylon, just as the Israelites woke up and left Egypt in the old Exodus.

Isaiah 52:1 Awake, awake, O Zion, clothe yourself with strength. Put on your garments of splendour, O Jerusalem, the holy city. The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again.

² Shake off your dust; rise up, sit enthroned, O Jerusalem. Free yourself from the chains on your neck, O captive Daughter of Zion.

8. How would they be redeemed? What would be the ransom paid for their freedom? 52:3

Isaiah 52:3 For this is what the LORD says: "You were sold for nothing, and without money you will be redeemed."

9. What had happened to Israel in the past? 52:4

They were oppressed in Egypt, and then lately by the Assyrians.

Isaiah 52:4 For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "At first my people went down to Egypt to live; lately, Assyria has oppressed them.

10. What were the enemies of God's people doing again in their time? 52:5

They were taken into exile; they have been mocked, and the Name of the LORD was being blasphemed constantly.

Isaiah 52:5 "And now what do I have here?" declares the LORD. "For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock," declares the LORD. "And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed.

11. What would the LORD do to restore the honour of his name? 52:6

The LORD's people would know his name. They would know that the LORD had foretold these events: the exile and their deliverance from Babylon.

Isaiah 52:6 Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I."

12. What was the good news or good tidings for Zion? What was the metaphor Isaiah was using? Isaiah 40:1; 52:7

Isaiah 52:7 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!**"

They were a city under siege. The battle was being fought for her deliverance. When the news came by means of the gospel messenger from the battlefield, they had to spot him running over the mountains and note the manner of his running. It would be a recognition of *'how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring this news'*.

The good tidings of peace and salvation. The message that says our God reigns! The good news was a message of salvation, of peace, comfort, and God's reign.

13. What was the work of the watchmen on Zion's walls? What did the watchmen have to do when the time came? 52:8

They had to be on the lookout for the LORD's deliverance. When the LORD returned to Zion, the watchmen had to lift up their voices and shout for joy.

Isaiah 52:8 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.

The Arm of the LORD.

14. What did the people of Jerusalem have to do when the good news of deliverance was shouted from the city walls? 52:9

Isaiah 52:9 Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.

The had to burst out in songs of joy, because the LORD had comforted his people. He had redeemed Jerusalem.

15. How would they be able to recognise it? What was the content of the good news? 52:10

The Lord would lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations.

The people of Zion would see it with their own eyes.

The ends of the earth would see the salvation of God.

Isaiah 52:10 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**.

16. What was this *arm of the LORD* the prophet was speaking about? Exodus 6:6-7

We have to go back to the Exodus to understand this phrase: **arm of the LORD**.

Exodus 6:6 "Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and **I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.**' ⁷ I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.

The Arm of the LORD is his saving power. It is the means by which the LORD brings about salvation. The LORD, or YAHWEH, rescued his people with an outstretched arm, with mighty acts of judgement.

17. What were these mighty acts of judgement? Exodus 3:20; 6:6; 7:4

The LORD visited 10 great plagues on the Egyptians and then he brought his people out. The LORD took them as his own people.

Then they knew that their redemption, their salvation, came from the LORD.

The greatest of these plagues was that the 1st born son of all those households who did not have the blood of the Passover lamb painted on the doorposts and lintels of their houses was slain.

And here, Isaiah is promising that the LORD will once more lay bare **his holy arm** in the sight of all nations.

18. What did '*in the sight of all the nations*' mean? 52:10

At the Exodus, the people of Israel and the Egyptians were the nations that saw his holy Arm. When the Arm of the LORD will be revealed to Zion, all the nations will see. It will be a universal event.

Isaiah 52:10 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.

19. What must true citizens of Zion immediately do when they receive the good news? 52:11

They must depart from Babylon.

Isaiah 52:11 Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the vessels of the LORD.

20. What kind of language was this? 52:11-12

Exodus language

Isaiah 52:11 Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the vessels of the LORD.

Isaiah 52:12 But you will not leave in haste or go in flight; for the LORD will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

There will be a new and greater Exodus

Reflection & Application _____

1. What was the good news about how God would save his people? Mark 1:1, 15

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

2. How would the LORD lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations? Isaiah 52:13-15; John 19:19-20

John 19:19 Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁰ Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek.

3. How will the LORD restore the honour of his name?

He would reveal it through his servant.

Study 26 Isaiah 52:13-53:6 Redeeming Zion by Substitution

Study Questions _____

1. What is the Arm of the LORD? 52:10; 53:1, Exodus 6:6

Isaiah 52:10 The LORD will lay bare His holy arm...

> The arm of the LORD is His saving power.

> It is personal divine action.

> It is God Himself in all His might.

2. By what manner was God's saving power displayed in the Old Exodus?

Exodus 6:6

Curses on Egypt: plagues, affliction, darkness, death of the firstborn.

For Israel: a sacrificial lamb as a substitute.

Just as the Arm of the LORD was revealed in the Exodus.

The Old Exodus. The Arm of the LORD was Himself.

It was not Moses, the Servant of the LORD.

3. What or who is the 'Arm of the LORD' referring to in 52:10-53:1?

Note 52:10, 13, 15; 53:1 especially.

Isaiah 52:10 The LORD will lay bare His holy arm...

Isaiah 52:13 See, **my servant** will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. ...

Isaiah 52:15 so will **he sprinkle many nations**, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, **they will see**, and what they have not heard, **they will understand**.

Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the **arm of the LORD** been revealed?

The Servant of YAHWEH is the Arm of the LORD!

The Servant of the LORD is the saving power of God.

4. What kind of work was involved in the exaltation or lifting up of the Servant?

52:14-15; Exodus 24:6-8

There is a priestly work involved in His exaltation.

There is mention of a sprinkling of many.

Sprinkling – the work of the priest.

5. How will the Servant of the LORD be identified? How will the people of God be able to recognise this servant? 52:13

The Servant will be raised up and highly exalted for all to see.

He is called "My Servant", by the LORD.

However, is this exaltation something which the people of the world will all be able to observe and to understand? Would this exaltation be something the people of the world will recognise as great honour?

6. Why is this lifting up necessary? What does it signify?

In his lifting up is the saving power of YAHWEH displayed and revealed.

7. In what manner will the Servant of the LORD be exalted? 52:15

Would he be enthroned?

Sacrifice.

The Servant is involved in a New Exodus.

The Servant will be doing the priestly ratification of a New Covenant.

Like Moses of old **Isaiah 52:15**, so will he sprinkle many nations

But wait! There is no glory here.

8. What does this sprinkling with blood signify? Exodus 24:7-8

Consecration, sanctification, and cleansing the people of God.

Many will be cleansed so that they may appear in God's presence.

The problem of blindness and deafness will be solved.

Many will see, and many will understand.

9. Will the unbelieving world accept his exaltation? Why not? 52:14

The unbelievers (many) were appalled at him.

Isaiah 52:14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him--**his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness--**

10. What does '**he will sprinkle many nations**' mean? **52:15; Exodus 24:7-8**

Isaiah 52:15 so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him.

The meaning is found in the book of Exodus.

Exodus 24:7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey." ⁸ Moses then **took the blood, sprinkled it on the people** and said, "This is **the blood of the covenant** that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

11. How will those sprinkled understand? Will it be because of their insight? 52:15

Those who would be sprinkled, note it is not their insight, their understanding.

52:15 For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.

It is what the Servant would do for them!

For what they were not told, they will see.

And what they have not heard, they will understand. **v. 15b**

12. What does this mean? 53:1

This is the good news of Isaiah's message, of what is called his servant song.

The Message of the LORD

Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed our **message** and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

13. What is the LORD's message for his people and for the nations? 53:1

This was the LORD's message for the nations. What is the message to be believed? The good news, the glad tidings for Zion?

To understand that the arm of the LORD is revealed in his Servant

Those who believe are those to whom **the Arm of the LORD has been revealed.**

Those who can understand that this disfigured and mangled servant is God's salvation?

And this message is good news, glad tidings, and there is peace.

14. Is it a difficult message for people to understand? 53:2

This is certainly not the message the world seeks

There was nothing attractive, majestic or desirable about him.

In fact, there would be no beauty, no majesty!

Isaiah 53:2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had **no beauty or majesty** to **attract** us to him, **nothing in his appearance** that we should **desire** him.

³ He was **despised** and rejected by men, a **man of sorrows**, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men **hide their faces** he was **despised**, and we **esteemed him not.**

15. What was significant about the message of Isaiah when we compare it with the events surrounding the first Passover and Exodus?

The message is that this is the LORD's way of salvation.

Exactly parallel to the events during the Passover and the Old Exodus.

- The plagues are unleashed.
- The firstborn dies.
- The LORD's powerful Arm is revealed.

16. What do the words: 'Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him **stricken** by God, **smitten** by him, and **afflicted**', mean? 53:4

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him **stricken** by God, **smitten** by him, and **afflicted.**

This is the language of the plagues in the Exodus!

This is what God did with his mighty arm against Egypt.

However, here the plagues are not unleashed against the enemies of God.

The plagues are unleashed against his Servant!

The plagues are showered upon the one identified as the Arm of the LORD.

17. Who are the 'Egyptians', the enemies of God, in the new story? 53:5

In the message of the LORD? We are 'the Egyptians' in this story.
However, here is the message, the good news!
The plagues of God due to us fall on His Servant, not on us!
It is our infirmities, our sorrows, our sins!

Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our **transgressions**, he was crushed for our **iniquities**; the **punishment** that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

18. What is the Arm of the LORD? How is the Arm of the LORD revealed?

The **arm of the LORD** is God's saving power.
The **Arm of the LORD** is revealed in **the Servant of the LORD**.
The servant is exalted, lifted up, marred, disfigured, and despised.

- This is appalling to some.
- Others will be sprinkled, declared clean by his blood.

And the result is our peace.

19. Who will believe that this marred servant is the arm of the LORD? 53:1

Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the **arm of the LORD** been revealed?

- those who would witness to God's saving power
- those who are sprinkled, sanctified
- those who would eventually see and understand.

20. What will even the redeemed have to say, looking at the servant? 53:2-3

Isaiah 53:2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. **He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.** ³ **He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.** Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Notice it is the Redeemed are speaking here.
Initially they also did not recognise God's saving power.
Like one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised.
We esteemed him not

21. What would they understand regarding God's action against the servant? 53:4, 10

But also God Himself would reject his own Servant!

Isaiah 53:4 ... , yet we considered him **stricken by God**, smitten by him, and afflicted.

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, ...

22. What do the redeemed realise was God's will? 53:4, 10

Note: The Redeemed speaking here in v. 4, 10 realising:
It was God's will to crush him and cause Him to suffer.
He was despised and rejected by all men.
He was even rejected by God!

23. What is the incredible and unthinkable conclusion? 53:4-6

His life is a guilt offering.
The one doing the sprinkling is the sacrifice!
The priest is also the sacrifice!
ESV, NKJ – **his soul** as an offering for sin - **nephesh**
He is both priest and sacrificial lamb.

Redemption & Substitution

24. What astonishing conclusion do the redeemed come to? Isaiah 53:1-6

But then the redeemed realise the astonishing fact.
It was a substitution on our behalf!
Notice the 1st person plural: our, us, we.

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he took up our infirmities (suffering) and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.
⁵ **But** he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the **punishment that brought us peace** was upon him, and by his wounds **we are healed**. ⁶ **We all**, like sheep, have gone astray, **each of us** has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of **us all**.

25. What was their initial misunderstanding? 53:5

'Our ills *he* bore, and our pains he carried; **yet** we thought him stricken by God...'
But... v. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the **punishment that brought us peace** was upon him, and by his wounds **we are healed**.

Yet, it was for our sins!
God's wrath against sinners is dealt with by His Servant!

26. What is the servant's work?

He is the bearer of God's curses. Stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted, i.e. the language of the plagues of Egypt. The covenant curses for disobedience have to be dealt with.
Deuteronomy 28:15-68 describes the curses of the covenant.
Deuteronomy 32 warns that they will fall on disobedient Israel.
Isaiah 51:22 We saw that the LORD would take the cup of wrath from her hand.
The Servant would take it upon Himself.

27. What does the servant do in our place? 53:6-7

Our substitute: A lamb as for wayward sheep.
But he is the Passover Lamb in our place!

Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, **each of us** has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of **us all**.

Reflection & Application _____

See and Understand!

1. Why was the Servant of the LORD afflicted in this way? What was the reason?

This despite the fact that we had all gone astray! He is our sin-bearing substitute. This is the gospel!

Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

2. Is this true for you? Which two options are there?.

You are appalled, together with the many...

This is total foolishness to you, or a stumbling block. Because of his disfigurement, because of this, his form being mangled. No beauty or majesty, and you cannot see that this is God's salvation.

Isaiah 52:14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him-- his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness--

Or... **You are sprinkled by his blood.**

His blood is poured out for you. What you haven't seen, you understand. What you haven't heard, you believe.

Isaiah 52:15 So will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.

Study 27 Isaiah 53:7-13 The Hope of Justification & Resurrection

Study Questions _____

1. What happened to the servant? 53:7

For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke *was due*? NASB

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like **a lamb to the slaughter**, and as **a sheep** before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away.

2. Did the Servant die? 53:8-9

Isaiah 53:8b And who can speak of his descendants? For he was **cut off** from the land of the living; **for the transgression of my people he was stricken**.
⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though **he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth**.

3. What was the sad and terrible end? Was there any guilt of the servant for which he had to die? 53:8-9

Isaiah 53:8 By oppression (arrest) and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants (for his generation) ? For he was cut off from the land of the living; **for the transgression of my people he was stricken**.

Isaiah 53:9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich (lit. **a rich man**) in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

4. For what reason did the Servant die? 53:8

It is clear that Jesus **died for the sins of God's people. 53:8**
And that he himself was innocent of any wrongdoing. **53:9**

5. Is there any other prophet that bears the same message of substitutionary atonement as Isaiah? Daniel 9:24-26

Isaiah is not the only prophet who spoke of the substitutionary death of the Messiah. The prophet Daniel also prophesies of the penal substitution for Zion by the Anointed One or Messiah. In fact, **Daniel 9:24-26** sounds much like the 4th servant song.

6. What did the Servant of the LORD achieve? 53:10

Although it was the LORD's will, his penal substitution.
And no, it is not divine child sacrifice! It was necessary!
Jesus kept on teaching that it was necessary, yet his own disciples could not wrap their minds around the idea of resurrection.
This is the love of God the Trinity in saving a people – the Plan of Redemption.

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer...
...and though the LORD makes his life **a guilt offering**, ...

The Servant's Glorious Resurrection

7. How do we know it is true? That this is indeed God's will and plan? Is there any proof that the penal substitution of the Servant accomplished what he had set out to do? 53:10-11

If there is no resurrection, we have no guarantee of our own resurrection.

If Jesus did not rise again, there would be no proof of his penal substitution. There would be no indication whether his life was accepted as a guilt offering. **Isaiah 53:10** ... he will **see his offspring** and **prolong his days**, and **the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand**. ¹¹ After the suffering of his soul, he will **see the light of life and be satisfied**

8. What did Jesus say about his time in the grave?

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

9. What will the Servant see? What is the Servant's reward? 53:10

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see **his offspring** and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. Though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see **his offspring** and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

He will rise again and be satisfied. Part of His reward is His satisfaction with the Redeemed. But His greatest reward is that God is satisfied with Him! I, the LORD, will give him his inheritance.

His offspring, i.e., his spiritual offspring.
Those who believe in him.

10. Is this God's plan gone wrong? Or did the Servant misread the will of the LORD? 53:10

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering

No, this is God's plan!
God has ordained this to deal with the sin of the Redeemed.
Man cannot deal with his own sin.
God Himself will take away our sin!

11. Did the followers of Jesus understand the resurrection? Luke 24:20-21

His own disciples could not wrap their minds around the idea of resurrection. Remember, on that very 1st day of the week, the day of Jesus' resurrection, two travellers were on their way to Emmaus, probably Cleopas and his wife Mary. But Jesus joined them on the road, and they did not recognise him.

Probably they were weeping.

Luke 24:20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but **we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel**. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.

They thought their hope had died. Then Jesus spoke to them and said...

The Servant's Particular Justification

Apart from fulfilling the prophecy of the identity, substitution and resurrection of the Servant, there is one more thing to say.

12. Is it only because Jesus rose from the dead that we know that we are justified? 53:11b

Isaiah 53:11b ... by his knowledge my righteous servant will **justify many**, and he will **bear their iniquities**. ¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For **he bore the sin of many**, and made intercession for the transgressors.

13. How do the redeemed realise that the rejection is temporary? 53:11

The Servant is mentioned again.

The LORD calls him "My righteous Servant."

Isaiah 53:11 After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light *of life* and be satisfied; by his knowledge **my righteous servant** will **justify many**, and he will bear their iniquities.

14. Why are we justified? What does justification mean? 53:11b-12

By the knowledge of him / or by his knowledge.

Twice, Isaiah emphasises that the sacrifice of the servant will justify many.

53:11

Because he bore the sin of many. **53:12**

By the knowledge of the Servant's work, many will be justified.

What does justify mean?

It means that he bore their iniquities.

He will be their sin-bearing substitute.

It means that many are declared righteous through a legal declaration

15. Why is this necessary? 2 Corinthians 5:21

How can a just God declare a sinner such as I legally justified?

That is: "Just as if I have never sinned."

Because Jesus, the Servant, bore the sins of many!

Not only that. We do not remain neutral with all our sin removed...

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Because the Servant of the LORD is my penal substitute.

He is my guilt offering; his life paid for my sin and guilt and turned away God's wrath; He bore my iniquities

And he deposited his righteousness to my account!

16. What language is this: "**he bore the sin of many**, and made intercession for the transgressors"? 53:12c

Isaiah 53:12c For **he bore the sin of many**, and made intercession for the transgressors.

This is high priestly language, the image taken from the Day of Atonement. When the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies with the blood, bearing the sin of many

He made intercession as our high priest, with his own blood.

Now **justify many** or **give my life as a ransom for many** **Mark 10:45**

This cannot be ignored.

17. What will the Servant see after his work of penal substitution?
What will be his fame and final exaltation? 53:12

Isaiah 53:12 Therefore **I will give** him a portion among the great (many), and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors.

He will see his reward!

These are the words of victory in battle!

Dividing the spoils as the victor!

18. Does many mean all? If not, why not? Why is this important? 53:12c

For he bore **the sin of many**, and made intercession for the transgressors.

NB: Many does not mean all! Many means a particular group, the legal citizens of Zion!

Remember: Some will be appalled at his work on the cross; some will say this cannot be!

Some will be sprinkled by the blood of Jesus, i.e. there will be those for whom the knowledge of Jesus will justify them.

They will be sprinkled. They will see what they have not been told.

They will understand what they have not heard. Through the knowledge of the servant, many will be justified.

Reflection & Application _____

1. Did the prophets foresee the Messiah's death? Luke 24:25-27; Luke 24:44-47

Luke 24:25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart **to believe all that the prophets have spoken!**" ²⁶ **Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"** ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Luke 24:44 He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: **The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,** ⁴⁷ **and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**

2. What did Jesus achieve? 2 Corinthians 5:21

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us...

This is also an allusion to the 4th Servant Song. This was the only way to deal with our sin. There was no other way!

3. What happened at the cross? Colossians 2:13-14

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

4. Do you share this hope as spoken through the prophets and the New Testament? What are the essential elements of this good news?

Jesus is the Suffering Servant of the LORD. Jesus died as a penal substitutionary sacrifice, our sacrificial lamb, for the sins of Zion, those whom he has ransomed. The proof and hope of his work is the resurrection. The trust in his death and resurrection is our justification. Hope that we have been ransomed. Hope that we are part of Zion and that we have peace.

Study 28 Isaiah 54:1-17 The Glory of Zion

Study Questions _____

1. Who is the LORD speaking to? 54:1

Zion.

2. Who was the barren woman? Genesis 11:30; 54:1

Isaiah 54:1 "Sing, O **barren woman**, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labour; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband," says the LORD.

3. What does this promise speak of? Genesis 15:5

Many children

4. How was this fulfilled? Who are Zion's children? Psalm 87; Galatians 3:28-29

All those who belong to the LORD. Those whose names are written in the register of the peoples.

5. Why does the tent have to be enlarged? 54:2-3

Because of all the children.

Isaiah 54:2 "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. ³ For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities.

6. What was the shame and humiliation of Zion for? 54:4

Not having a husband. Not having children.

Isaiah 54:4 "Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.

7. Who will be Zion's husband? 54:5

Isaiah 54:5 For your Maker is your husband--the LORD Almighty is his name--the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.

8. What will the LORD do for Zion? 54:6

Isaiah 54:6 The LORD will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit--a wife who married young, only to be rejected," says your God.

9. What happened for a while and why? 54:7-8

Our sins separated us from the LORD, as with Israel in Hosea.

Isaiah 54:7 "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. 8 In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the LORD your Redeemer.

10. What will the LORD do for his people? 54:8

Isaiah 54:8 In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the LORD your Redeemer.

11. What will happen to the LORD's anger in those days? 54:9

Isaiah 54:9 "To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again.

12. What is the LORD's everlasting promise? 54:10

Isaiah 54:10 Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

13. How will Zion be rebuilt? 54:11-12

Isaiah 54:11 "O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires. {Or lapis lazuli}
¹² I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones.

14. Are these literal stones? 54:11-12; Exodus 28; 15-21; 39:8-14

No. They represent the different tribes.

15. How will the sons or children of Zion be taught? 53:13

Isaiah 54:13 All your sons will be taught by the LORD, and great will be your children's peace.

16. What will Zion permanently know? 54:14

Isaiah 54:14 In righteousness you will be established: Tyranny will be far from you; you will have nothing to fear. Terror will be far removed; it will not come near you.

17. What will Zion never know? 54:15-17a

Isaiah 54:15 If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing; whoever attacks you will surrender to you. ¹⁶ "See, it is I who created the blacksmith who fans the coals into flame and forges a weapon fit for its work. And it is I who have created the destroyer to work havoc; ¹⁷ no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you.

18. To whom does Zion belong? 54:17b

To the children of the LORD.

This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me," declares the LORD.

Reflection & Application _____

1. Where is Zion now? Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22-24

Where God is in heaven.

2. When will Zion be revealed? Revelation 21:1-4
At the last day.
3. How will Zion be built? Revelation 21:19-20
Precious stones.
4. What will Zion be like after that? Revelation 22:1-5
God will be within her.

Study 29 Isaiah 55:1-13 The Great Banquet

Study Questions

1. What is the invitation to this banquet for? 55:1-2a cf. 25:6-9

Isaiah 55:1 "Come, all you who are thirsty, **come** to the waters; and you who have no money, **come**, buy and eat! **Come**, buy wine and milk without money and without cost:

Come to (great Banquet)

There is also an invitation to the Great Banquet. You need nothing to come. Come those who are thirsty – Come. Come you who have no money – i.e. it is free! Departing from your wretched way of living – but coming to a glorious inheritance.

2. Why would one waste your money on what is not bread? What does this mean? 55:2

Isaiah 55:2 Why spend **money** on what is not bread, and your **labour** on what does not satisfy?

You need bread to live. But is what you are busy with really bread?
Leave the old way of life. Are you labouring for what does not satisfy? Pardon is available, but the wicked must forsake his ways.
The wicked must seek the LORD while he may be found.

3. The Old Exodus led to the Sinai Covenant. What will the New Exodus lead you to?

Just like the Old Exodus led you to a new form of life based on the Sinai covenant, just so the New Exodus also leads you into glorious New Life.

4. What are some of the benefits of the New Exodus?

The New Exodus not only leads you:

- Out of the Egypt of slavery to sin, iniquity, rebellion, transgression.
- The ransom price for your sin is paid for – namely death
- God's wrath is turned away from you – by the atoning sacrifice of the Servant.

5. What do 'listen' and 'hear' mean in biblical terms? 55:2b-3

Isaiah 55:2b Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your **soul** will delight in the richest of fare. ³ Give **ear** and come to me; **hear** me, that **your soul may live**. I will make an **everlasting covenant** with you, my faithful love promised to David.

Listen! Hear! To the Bible, listening and hearing does not mean picking up an audio signal. It means to hear and to react in obedience to what you have heard!

6. What was the faithful love the LORD had promised to David? 55:3b; 2 Samuel 7:12-13

2 Samuel 7:12 When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

7. What did the LORD make David a witness of? 55:4

A witness to the nations.

Isaiah 55:4 See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples.

8. What will the people of Zion do for the nations and why? 55:5

Isaiah 55:5 Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will hasten to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendour."

9. What will happen to those who are able to hear? 55:6

Isaiah 55:6 **Seek the LORD** while he may be found; **call on him** while he is near.

10. What will it mean for your behaviour? 55:6-7

It means to turn from your old ways.

Isaiah 55:6 Seek the LORD while he may be found; **call on him** while he is near. ⁷ Let the **wicked forsake his way** and the **evil man his thoughts**. Let him **turn to the LORD**, and he will have **mercy on him**, and to our God, for **he will freely pardon**.

11. What will the LORD do for such a person? 55:7

Isaiah 55:7b...he (the LORD) will have **mercy on him**, and to our God, for **he will freely pardon**.

12. What is the problem with the deafness and blindness of unbelief? Isaiah 6:9-10

A message of judgement! God condemns a wicked people by saying they would be for ever hearing:

Isaiah 6:9 He said, "Go and tell this people: "Be **ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.**'

¹⁰ Make the heart of this people calloused; make their **ears dull** and **close their eyes**. Otherwise they **might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.**"

13. What is the difference between 6:9-10 and the message in 55:6-7?

Now the call is the opposite. Listen, hear and be saved! Hear, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Hear, and your soul may live!

14. Who alone is able to devise such a plan of salvation and such a future? Can any human devise such a salvation as a solution to mankind's problems? 55:8-9

Isaiah 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.

⁹ "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

15. Will this certainly come to pass? 55:10-11

Isaiah 55:10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,

¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

16. An everlasting covenant needs an everlasting sign. What will be the sign? What is the sign of the Everlasting Covenant? 55:12

A new creation. No more curse. Creation is singing. There is peace and joy! New Creation will sing and shout the praise of God. The curse on Creation will be destroyed!

Isaiah 55:12 You will **go out in joy** and **be led forth in peace**; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. ¹³ Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow.

17. For whose glory will this place be? 55:13b

This will be **for the LORD's renown**, for an **everlasting sign**, which **will not be destroyed.**"

It will be for God's glory. It will be an everlasting sign! What is this sign?
A New World – a renewed universe - recreated and perfect!

18. Will it ever end? 55:13c

It will be an everlasting sign! What is this sign?
A New World – a renewed universe - recreated and perfect!

Isaiah 55:13c... an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed."

Reflection & Application _____

1. Have you joined the New Exodus?

John 14:6

2. Have you experienced New Life?

Titus 3:4-7

3. Will you see the New World?

Romans 8:23

4. What is the sign of proof that God provides for each covenant?

The Covenant of Noah	Rainbow
The Covenant with Abraham	Circumcision
The Covenant at Sinai	Sprinkled blood.
The New Covenant	Holy Spirit
The Everlasting Covenant	New Creation