

DARKNESS TO LIGHT

GOD'S SALVATION IN ISAIAH 1-12



13 OCTOBER TO
24 NOVEMBER 2024

Bible Studies - Part 2



KIAMA ANGLICAN CHURCHES

Term 4, 2024

Darkness to Light

God's Salvation in Isaiah 1 - 12

Bible Studies accompanying the Sermon Series

PART 2: Studies 4-5

The Study and Preaching Plan			
Page	Study	Study Passage Isaiah	Parallel Sunday
	Introduction	1:1	-
	1	1:2 - 2:4	13 Oct
	2	2:5 - 4:6	20 Oct
	3	5:1 - 6:13	27 Oct
	<i>n.a.</i>	<i>Bush Church Aid</i>	<i>3 Nov</i>
1	4	7:1- 8:10	10 Nov
7	5	8:11 - 9:7	17 Nov
	6	9:8 - 12:6	24 Nov

The sections in each of the studies generally follow the divisions in “The Message of Isaiah - On Eagles’ Wings” by Barry Webb, IVP, 1996. It is part of the *Bible Speaks Today* series which expounds the Bible in a readable and relatable way.

“Isaiah - Surprising Salvation” by Kirk Patston, in the *Reading the Bible Today Series*, Aquila Press, 2010, was another helpful resource for the series.

Some of the comments and questions in the studies are from those books and from these two study books: (1) “Two Cities - Isaiah” in the *Matthias Media Interactive Bible Study* series and (2) “Isaiah - Trusting God in Troubled Times” in the *Scripture Union Lifebuilder* series.

Study 4 - Isaiah 7:1 - 8:10

Immanuel

Getting Started

How easy do you find it to trust God in times of trouble or uncertainty? What helps you in such times? Can you think of a particular time that you experienced God's grace in a time of personal difficulty?

The recurring pattern of transformation that we have seen in each of the first three studies is now spread over this study and the next one, taking us right through to 9:7.

1. The Threat of Invasion (7:1-9)

Chapter 7 opens in 735BC with Assyria on the move. The kings of Israel and Syria have formed an anti-Assyrian alliance and want Judah to join them.

Note that multiple names are used to refer to the same thing - the name(s) of the kingdom, the capital and the king are used almost as synonyms. **Israel** (referring to the Northern kingdom) is also called Ephraim or Samaria. The king is Peka. **Syria** is referred to as Aram or Damascus, with Resin as king. The Southern kingdom of **Judah** is also referred to as Jerusalem and Ahaz is the king. (Simple!)

Because King Ahaz of Judah has opted for a pro-Assyrian stance, Israel and Syria are preparing to depose Ahaz and install a puppet king who will then join with them against the Assyrians.

King Ahaz is caught between a rock and a hard place – he fears an invasion by Syria and Israel but is also fearful of joining them against Assyria. (See 2 Kings 16 for the details of Ahaz’s reign.)

Read Isaiah 7:1-9

1. When Isaiah meets Ahaz, he seems to be inspecting Jerusalem’s water supply in preparation for a siege. Isaiah’s son goes with him. Note his name and its meaning in your Bible’s footnotes. What is Isaiah’s message to Ahaz? (7:4)
2. What is the immediate reason for fear? (7:5-6)
3. What reasons are given for keeping calm and being unafraid? (7:7-9)
4. In what circumstances do you find your ‘heart shaken’? How can you follow the call of the first half of verse 4?

2. The Immanuel Sign (7:10-25)

Isaiah has offered a radical alternative to relying on Assyria - trust wholly in the LORD. And now the LORD even offers to give Ahaz a sign.

Read Isaiah 7:10-25

5. Ahaz's refusal to ask for a sign may sound pious (compare 7:12 with Deuteronomy 6:16) but what is going on with Ahaz's refusal? (7:13. See also Isaiah's commission, particularly 6:9-10.)

6. Verse 13-17 are the key to this chapter. We are used to the idea that verse 14 finds its ultimate fulfilment in Jesus but what is the significance of the sign in its immediate context?

Despite Ahaz's refusal, God still gives a sign to be clear that he is going to punish Ahaz and so those at that time and those who follow will be able to discern God's purposes and power.

Although Isaiah 7 does not tell us who the virgin is (the word can simply refer to a young woman) or who her son is, we can say that Ahaz is told that he will see the birth of a baby to a young woman. A boy born at this time (735BC) would then be a young child when Aram fell to the Assyrians (732BC), and a young adolescent (old enough to know right and wrong) when Israel fell (722BC), and around 30 years old when Judah almost completely fell to the Assyrians.

The boy's name, Immanuel, means 'God with us.' That can sound positive, but since Ahaz has rejected God's salvation, he will experience a God who is with him in judgment. (7:17-18. See also 8:8, 10)

7. Self-preservation was high in Ahab's priorities.
- What miscalculation does he make? (7:17, 20)
 - How do verses 18-25 detail the consequences of his choice to ignore God? (Note the repeated use of 'In that Day.')

3. Isaiah and His Children as Signs and Symbols (8:1-10, 18)

Read Isaiah 8:1-10, 18

8. How do these verses connect to chapter 7?

Compare 7:14 with 8:3

Compare 7:16 with 8:4

The most striking difference between 7:14-17 and 8:1-4 is the names of the two sons. How do we hold the two names together?

In verses 5-8 the people of Judah have put their trust in Assyrian help and are rejoicing over Rezin (king of Syria) but their rejoicing is misguided. Once the Assyrians are on the march they will not stop at the border of Judah, and they will almost wipe out Judah.

9. In what tone of voice is 'Immanuel' uttered at the end of verse 8?

10. In verse 9, things take a turn. The surprising defeat of the Assyrians before they can take Jerusalem appears to be in view. (See Isaiah 37.) In what tone of voice is 'Immanuel' uttered at the end of verse 10?

Why do you think the translators (see the NIV or ESV including the footnotes) take a different approach with what they do with 'Immanuel' in verses 8 and 10?

Reflection

As an Assyrian vassal Ahaz called for Assyrian help against Israel and Aram (2 Kings 16:7) not realising that having attacked Israel and Aram the Assyrians would be well placed to attack Judah as well (8:7-8). Ahaz's mistake, however, was not a military one but a theological one.

11. Ahaz did not hear the calls of 2:5 and 2:22. When are you in danger of staying in the dark or trusting in mere humans?

Reflect on Isaiah 30:15, turning it into prayer.

Ultimate Fulfilment

Old Testament prophecies often have an initial fulfilment and also point to something more. Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus makes it clear that the 'more' took place when a literal virgin (not just a young woman) conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and Jesus was born.

Read Matthew 1:18-25

12. How is Jesus, like the Immanuel of Isaiah 7:14, both a bringer of salvation and judgment? (See 1 Corinthians 1:18.)

The name Immanuel in Isaiah can be either a prayer that God *will be* with them, or a declaration that God *is* with them. In the birth of Jesus Immanuel, God himself really is with us and Jesus promised that his presence would always be with his disciples (Matthew 28:20). And he is with us by his Holy Spirit even as we look forward to the fullness of the kingdom at the end of the age.

Give thanks to God for the good news of great joy – He is with us!

Study 5 - Isaiah 8:11 - 9:7

Unto Us...

Getting Started

Have you ever been in an extremely dark place (e.g. at night when there a blackout or in a cave)? How does the darkness feel? What is it like when the lights come on?

In study 4 we had glimpses of hope. This study takes it up a notch to complete the recurring pattern of transformation that we see in Isaiah 1-12. In this study we move from ‘darkness to light.’ Take a sneak peek at 9:2.

1. The Gathering Darkness (8:11-22)

Read Isaiah 8:11-22

Following chapter 6, we are expecting Isaiah’s words to fall on deaf ears. In chapter 7 Ahaz illustrated the point and now it broadens.

1. In verses 12-15 the LORD speaks to reassure Isaiah and his disciples. What is the reassurance he gives?
2. The Lord is a sanctuary for those who fear him, but what about for those who don’t?

3. What are Isaiah and his disciples to do and why? (8:16-17)

4. How are Isaiah and his sons, signs and symbols? (8:18)
For part of the answer, look at the meanings of their names in the footnotes.

5. Where are the people of Judah looking for answers?
Where should they be looking? (8:19-20)

6. What is the result? (8:21-22)

Chapter 8 ends in utter darkness. There is a sense that God has given his people over to the consequences of their choices. See also Romans 8:18-32 with its repeated, ‘God gave them over.’ But even in the utter darkness comes the hope of 9:1 – Nevertheless! The *before* and *after* repeated pattern is here again.

2. Nevertheless... (9:1)

Read Isaiah 9:1-7

7. The chapter opens with a profound change in direction.
Note the reversals of 8:22 in 9:1.

3. The Shining Light (9:2-7)

8. The dramatic imagery continues in verse 2-5. What reversals or changes is Isaiah describing?

9. What is the 'day of Midian's defeat' referred to in verse 4? See Judges 7:22.

We are used to hearing verse 6 at Christmas when we remember Jesus as the child who was born and the son who was given. In the immediate context some have suggested that it may refer to King Hezekiah or perhaps metaphorically to the faithful remnant.

Whatever partial fulfilment they may have had, the grand titles must point the coming of The Messiah, The Greater Son of David and the one who is The True Light of the World.

Read Matthew 4:12-17 which points to the beginning of Jesus' ministry as the fulfilment of this passage.

10. For each of the titles...
 - a) Read the Isaiah verse to see how the title or attribute is applied to The LORD God in Isaiah.
 - b) Think of New Testament passages which show Jesus fulfilling each of these titles.
 - Wonderful Counsellor (Isaiah 28:29)

- Mighty God (Isaiah 10:21)

- Everlasting Father (Isaiah 1:2)

- Prince of Peace (Isaiah 2:4)

12. If verse 6 refers to the coming of Jesus, when will we see the promises of 9:7 fulfilled?

Reflection

As you wait for the final Day of the Lord, which of the titles of Isaiah 9:6 gives you the most comfort and why?

In what ways have you experienced Jesus as Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace?

