



# ISAIAH

**MAY 2017**

Read on your own or with others,  
which ever you prefer.

This leaflet is just a brief overview of the 'big picture' of this book. If you have been reading the Bible for some time you will be aware there is much more to it than you'll find here.

If you are new to reading the Bible don't worry too much if there are details you do not quite get at the moment - focus on the 'big picture'.

# **INTRODUCTION**

The book of Isaiah was written by the prophet Isaiah, a messenger of God who preached to the people of Judah between 740 – 681 BC. These dates span the reigns of several different kings in Judah (Isaiah 1:1). 2 Kings chapters 15-20 and 2 Chronicles chapters 26-32 cover the same period (note that in 2 Kings chapter 15 Uzziah is called Azariah).

Isaiah is a big book that contains a lot of details. Yet, there are four main themes that keep coming up throughout the book. These themes are sin, judgment, savior and salvation. As you read Isaiah you might find it helpful to ask which is the main theme in the part you are reading.

## **FOUR THEMES**

### **SIN**

Like a doctor giving a diagnosis, in the book of Isaiah God diagnoses the problem with Judah, the surrounding nations and the whole world. All are sinners and they do not follow God as they should (Isaiah 1:4)

Sin is not only the problem of communities. It is the reality for individuals, even the 'best' of them. In chapter 6 Isaiah, a respectable, religious man is exposed to the perfect holiness of God. He doesn't only see the glory God, he also sees his own uncleanness (Isaiah 6:5).

### **JUDGMENT**

Isaiah is not just a book that points out sin, it is also a book that tells us about God's judgment for sin. There are two main sections which are wall to wall declarations of judgment – chapters 13-23 & 28-34.

In these passages we see how far reaching the judgment will be. God will punish Jerusalem, Judah, the surrounding nations and the whole world. He will bring judgment to bear in time and in eternity (see Isaiah 13:9-13 and Isaiah 66:15-16 & 66:22-24).

We are reminded throughout the book that God means what he says. These prophecies are a statement of intention from God who reigns over the whole universe for all of time.

### **SAVIOUR**

In the middle of God's messages about sin and judgment we find hope in the promise that God will send somebody who will change things. He will be

a rescuer for everyone who will turn to God. This person is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah is a book full of promises that speak about the coming of Jesus almost 750 years later. Here are just a few of the ways he is described:

- He is the temple in chapter 2
- He is the pillar of fire, cloud and canopy in chapter 4
- He is the Immanuel (God with us) in chapter 7
- He is the son in chapter 9
- He is the shoot of Jesse in chapter 11
- He is the king in chapter 32
- He is the God beyond understanding who cares and helps his people in chapter 40
- He is the servant in chapter 42
- He is the suffering servant in chapter 53
- He is the answer of the prayer of chapter 63

In Isaiah God speaks plainly to us. We cannot save ourselves from the tragedy of sin so God will do it by sending Jesus (Isaiah 59:16).

## **SALVATION**

As the book of Isaiah is full of Jesus and his rescue mission it is not surprising that it is also a book that is full of the truths of what it means to be rescued by God.

This rescue involves complete forgiveness for everyone who will turn to God (Isaiah 1:18). More than that, those who come to him are invited to live in his blessing (Isaiah 55). Who can be rescued? Isaiah gives us the answer; all the people of Jesus and every other nation on the earth (Isaiah 49:6).

There are two rescues in the book of Isaiah. There is the rescue of Jerusalem seen in the deliverance from the armies of Sennacherib, King of Assyria and the return from Babylonian exile. This, though, is not the main rescue plan that God wants us to see. The final chapters make that clear.

The book ends with two eternal destinies. One is hell, the other is the New Heavens and the New Earth. All through the book we are being urged to take stock of our sin and look to the rescuer God has sent, the Lord Jesus Christ. The promise that fills the pages is the same promise that fills the whole Bible: if you repent and turn to him you will be saved.

## **ASKING THE QUESTIONS THE BIBLE WANTS YOU TO ASK**

What does this book teach you about Jesus? (Luke 24:45-47)

What does this book teach you about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you encouraged? (2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you corrected? (Romans 15:4)

What difference do the truths of this book make in your life? (Matthew 7:24-27)