



# MONDAY 8 JANUARY 2018

SERIES: ISAIAH – THE MESSAGE OF THE MESSIAH

## Read: Isaiah 40

### Plug In...

Initially, Isaiah was stunned by the holiness of the Holy One of Israel ([Isaiah 6](#)). Throughout chapters 1-39, God prosecutes the case that Judah – and the rest of the world – are unholy sinners. Isaiah's message to Judah and Israel is that they are God's servant, but have failed. Israel doesn't even respond to this indictment ([Isaiah 6:9-13](#)). The end result? Exile to Babylon (chap. 39).

At chapter 40, Isaiah again declares God's message. This time they are heard. There is response. There is faith.

### Chew It Over...

This passage asks its audience to consider. Have you considered whom God is? Have you considered what humanity is like?

What do those who are called "My people" need? What does the Holy One give?

The pending question is *How can God be Holy and yet give what sinners need?* To be continued...

### Prayer Suggestion

Reflect on what you know, what you've heard, what you've seen from God. Pray in recognition that your ears have been unstopped and your eyes descaled.



## TUESDAY 9 JANUARY 2018

SERIES: ISAIAH – THE MESSAGE OF THE MESSIAH

### Read: Isaiah 41

#### **Plug In...**

The Holy One revealed brings a woe to Judah and Israel because of their sin ([Isaiah 6](#)).

Two things are revealed here. First, regarding the servant of Israel who failed (chapters 1-39), God has not finished with them! They will still fulfil the role of servant in God's plan because of His promise to Abraham (40:8-9). Second, the Holy One of Israel, who necessarily has to stand righteously in judgement against sinful Israel, is their Redeemer (40:14).

#### **Chew It Over...**

How can these things be? How will this work? At this point in Isaiah, the answer is not provided...yet. However, the people hear this promise while enduring pressure (40:11). In the grip of grief, suffering, oppression, they must believe this. The alternative is fear that drives them to rely on other 'saviours' (40:7).

God reiterates here, over and over, do not fear. So, think now about what you fear, what you worry over. Next, where do you go? Essentially, whose hand do you hold? (40:10). Helpful in this is noting when we evaluate our language. What do you call 'good' or 'bad', 'like' or 'dislike'? (40:7).

#### **Prayer Suggestion**

Talk to God as your Redeemer. Ask for what He offers: to be with us, to strengthen us, to help us, to hold us.



## WEDNESDAY 10 JANUARY 2018

SERIES: ISAIAH – THE MESSAGE OF THE MESSIAH

### Read: Isaiah 42-43

#### **Plug In...**

This passage raises many questions. Remember, the name of the Servant is identified as "Israel" (41:8). Then the Servant Israel is placed on display and characterised (42:1-4). The Servant Israel is called for the purpose of being a "covenant for the nations" and "a light to the nations" and to lead people out of prisons (42:1-7).

There is a pause. The LORD states that He will not give His glory to another (v.8). Then a moment to sing a song about God doing a 'new' thing.

From verse 18 Israel, the Servant, is slammed as being deaf and blind. Then from verse 21, the LORD is pleased that the Servant is righteous and so chooses to magnify the Servant's words and make them glorious.

#### **Chew It Over...**

Tension is all through this chapter deliberately raising questions.

The Servant is named as "Israel". The Servant is righteous and brings justice. No sooner stated, then it is made clear that Israel as Servant is deaf and blind. Questions: Does this mean Israel will be called to be Servant but will fail again because they are deaf and blind? Maybe. Or, are there two different Servants? Maybe.

Next tension. The LORD is pleased with the Servant and will magnify in glory either the Servant or the work of the Servant. God had said He will not give His glory to another.

Many questions... To be continued...

In the meantime, the passage flags that this is unexpected and a 'new' turn in the workings of God.

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Thank the Lord that we are the result of God's work through the Servant. For we are from the nations, we were in darkness, in dungeons, and He came and collected us.

[NB: The song is sung by people outside of Israel for whom God has done the work of creating belief within. That's us!]



## THURSDAY 11 JANUARY 2018

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### Read: Isaiah 44-45

#### **Plug In...**

This observation on the idolater reads comically. He chops a tree. Burns half of the wood to make a fire, with some of the leftover he keeps the fire going for warmth, and then carves an idol out of it.

This person is called out as stupid. Isaiah 44:19 states they have no perception, that they just bowed down to a “block of wood”, and a block of wood that they just used most of for fuelling a fire. The point? The wood is now ashes!

#### **Chew It Over...**

G.K. Beale says, “We become what we worship”. So, the idol maker makes an idol that has eyes, ears, and a mouth, but it cannot see, hear, or speak. Isaiah in chapters 44-45 shows that Israel has eyes, ears, and a mouth, but they cannot see, hear, or speak (*cf.* Isaiah 6). They have become what they worshipped. And what was the end result of that so-called idol?

Reflect on [Philippians 3:18-21](#), again with the notion that we become like what we worship. Take note of the end result.

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Lord Jesus, unhook us from trusting in the fallen earth. You've told us and shown us through your death that it is destined for destruction. Forgive us for our excessive self-focus. Transform our hearts, minds, and bodies to be like Jesus. May we worship Him.



## FRIDAY 12 JANUARY 2018

SERIES: ISAIAH – THE MESSAGE OF THE MESSIAH

### Read: Isaiah 46

#### **Plug In...**

Bel and Nebo are Babylonian gods. The LORD tells Israel that these gods get carried by cattle and beasts.

#### **Chew It Over...**

So, just say there is a festival in town, and the idols get carried through on a procession...who are the beasts and cattle?

Now, pick up on the contrast with Israel's God. What does He do? And for how long?

#### **Prayer Suggestion**

Thank you God for carrying us. Lord we know you do this, but we still compare you to other things and run after them thinking they're better. Oh how we need even more grace to turn this heart of ours around.



## WEEKEND 13-14 JANUARY 2018

SERIES: ISAIAH – THE MESSAGE OF THE MESSIAH

### Read: Isaiah 47-48 & Revelation 18:1-8

#### Plug In...

The words of Babylon are staggeringly arrogant (47:8). However, Israel is just as stubborn before God (48:8). The destiny of Babylon before God? Devastation and destruction (47:11). The destiny of Israel? The mercy of God (48:9).

The passage concludes with: "There is no peace for the wicked".

#### Chew It Over...

Earlier chapters have shown that God will bring all who are wicked and rebellious to nothing (chaps. 13-23). Even Judah, even Israel, if they do not repent.

Israel are told to "flee Babylon".

Like Isaiah said, the fall of Babylon is announced ahead of time so that God's people are spared. Jesus' work on the cross sealed the fallen world's fate. So, as Revelation urges (using the image of Babylon for the world):

*"Come out of her, my people,' so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues... Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her."* ([Revelation 18:1-8](#))

#### Prayer Suggestion

Help us to flee the world. Knowing ahead of time what we know, cause us to urge others.