

Class Schedule for Isaiah

<u>Date</u>	<u>Week</u>	<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Oct 4	1	Introduction	Introduction of Isaiah
Oct 11	2	Chapter 1	Judgment upon Judah
Oct 18	3	Chapters 2-4	The Day of the LORD
Oct 25	4	Chapters 5-6	The Vineyard & Call of Isaiah
Nov 1	5	Chapters 7-10:4	The Destruction of Israel
Nov 8	6	Chapters 10:5-12	Destruction of Assyria & Return of Remnant
Nov 15	7	Chapters 13-14	Judgment upon Babylon, Assyria, & Philistia
Nov 22	8	Chapters 15-17	Judgment upon Moab & Damascus
Nov 29	9	Chapters 18-20	Judgment upon Ethiopia & Egypt
Dec 6	10	Chapters 21-23	Upon Babylon, Edom, Arabia, Jerusalem, Tyre
Dec 13	11	Chapters 24-27	Coming Day of the LORD
Dec 20	12	Chapters 28-31	Woe to Ephraim & Jerusalem
Dec 27	13	Chapters 32-35	The Coming King & Woe to Nations
Jan 3	14	Chapters 36-39	Jerusalem & Hezekiah Saved for Now
Jan 10	15	Chapters 40-41	The LORD comforts His people
Jan 17	16	Chapters 42-45	The Restoration of Israel
Jan 24	17	Chapters 46-48	Destruction of Babylon
Jan 31	18	Chapters 49-50	The Coming Messiah
Feb 7	19	Chapters 51-53	The Messiah's Atonement
Feb 14	20	Chapters 54-56:8	The Restoration of Israel
Feb 21	21	Chapters 56:9-57	No Peace for the Wicked
Feb 28	22	Chapters 58-59	True Worship & Sins of Israel
Mar 7	23	Chapters 60-61	The Glory of Israel
Mar 14	24	Chapters 62-63:6	The Salvation of the LORD
Mar 21	25	Chapters 63:7-65:16	Prayer from Remnant, Answer from the LORD
Mar 28	26	Chapters 65:17-66	The New Kingdom of God

ISAIAH

Isaiah has often been called “the prince of prophets” because of the majestic sweep of his book and the powerful way he depicts the themes of justice and redemption, culminating in the great prophecies of the Messiah and the messianic age. In this sense, Isaiah is like a miniature Bible. The first thirty-nine chapters are filled with judgment upon immoral and idolatrous people—both Judah and the surrounding nations. But the final twenty-seven chapters declare a message of hope and consolation.

The name *Isaiah*, from the Hebrew *yeshaiiah* means “Yahweh is Salvation,” a term which aptly summarizes the contents of the book.

Author

Isaiah, the son of Amoz, is named as the author (1:1), and there is not even an allusion to any other writer. The unity of Isaiah has been challenged in the modern period by scholars who ascribe much of chapters 1–39 to the prophet Isaiah himself, but attribute chapters 40–55 (called “Deutero-Isaiah”) to an unknown prophet in Babylon, and chapters 56–66 (called “Trito-Isaiah”) to another unknown prophet in Palestine (c. 460–445 B.C.). Here it is argued that significant stylistic, historical, and theological differences distinguish chapters 1–39 from chapters 40–66, and that chapters 40–66 must further be divided into two sections reflecting a Babylonian exilic setting and a Palestinian postexilic setting, respectively.

Although the arguments against the unity of Isaiah have been impressive to some, strong arguments can also be marshalled in favor of the literary unity of the book. While some differences between sections do exist, the stylistic similarities throughout the book are greater than the alleged differences. These include similarities in thoughts, images, rhetorical ornaments, characteristic expressions, and local coloring. It is true that the first section is more terse and rational while the second is more flowing and emotional, but much of this is due to the different subject matter—the difference between condemnation and consolation.

Portions of the book are attributed to a period later than Isaiah, son of Amoz, because it is thought that the prophet could not have predicted the Babylonian exile and the return under Cyrus. This argument is based, however, on the dogmatic assumption that predictive prophecy is impossible. Such a theory cannot explain the presence of messianic prophecies that were fulfilled in the life of Christ. When all is said and done, the idea of a single author raises fewer difficulties than the theories of multiple authorship.

With good reason, then, it has been traditionally maintained that Isaiah, the son of Amoz, who prophesied in Jerusalem during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, is the author of the book that bears his name. The prophet was evidently from a distinguished Jewish family, and his education is evident in his impressive vocabulary and style. Isaiah apparently maintained close contact with the royal court, but his exhortations against alliances with foreign powers were not always well received. His wife was a prophetess and he fathered at least two sons (7:3; 8:3). Isaiah spent most of his time in Jerusalem, and Jewish tradition says that his persecutors sawed him in two during the reign of the evil king Manasseh (cf. Heb. 11:37).

His name and the names of his two sons are prophetic. Isaiah means “Yahweh is salvation”. Shear-Jashub (his eldest son) means “a remnant shall return”, and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz means “speed the spoil, hasten the booty” regarding the short time until the destruction of Israel and Syria, who were troubling Judah.

He was certainly a historiographer of the Judean kings (2Chronicles 26:22; Is 36-39) which would account for what appeared to be easy access (7:3; 38 & 39) to them. Many believe he was related to the royal family. He faced fear from his fellow Israelites and needed a “strong hand” to encourage him (8:11-14).

Date

Isaiah’s long ministry ranged from about 740 to 680 B.C. (1:1), and the book of Isaiah no doubt contains prophetic writings written throughout this period. He began his ministry near the end of Uzziah’s reign (790–739 B.C.) and continued through the reigns of Jotham (739–731 B.C.), Ahaz (731–715 B.C.), and Hezekiah (715–686 B.C.). Isaiah outlived Hezekiah by a few years because 37:38 records the death of Sennacherib in 681 B.C. Hezekiah was succeeded in 686 B.C. by his wicked son Manasseh, who overthrew the worship of Yahweh and no doubt opposed the work of Isaiah.

During the time of Isaiah, Assyria was growing in power under Tiglath-Pileser, who turned toward the west after his conquests to the east, plucking up many of the smaller nations along the Mediterranean including the Northern Kingdom of Israel (722–21 B.C.). As a contemporary of Hosea and Micah, Isaiah prophesied during the last years of the Northern Kingdom but ministered to the Southern Kingdom which was following in the sins of her neighbor to the north. After the fall of Samaria and the Northern Kingdom, he warned Judah of judgment not by Assyria, the most immediate threat, but by Babylon.

Themes and Literary Structure

The book of Isaiah has three major sections: prophecies of condemnation (chs. 1–35), an historical parenthesis or interlude (chs. 36–39), and prophecies of comfort and consolation (chs. 40–66).

Isaiah’s message is presented against the background of Israel’s greatest period of prosperity after the “Golden Age” under David and Solomon. Prosperity, agricultural and commercial success, and military success were accompanied by immorality, excessive drinking, idolatry, oppression of the poor, greed, and the presence of false prophets who pandered to the desires of the people. In response to this situation, Isaiah stressed (1) salvation by faith (7:9; 28:16; 30:15), (2) the holiness of God and the need for ethical living (6:1–8; 37:23), (3) the offense of human sin and the certainty of divine judgment (chs. 1–35), and (4) the assurance of redemption for a repentant remnant (1:9, 19; 10:19–22; 46:3, 4; 65:8–10).

The basic theme of this book is found in Isaiah’s name, which means “Salvation is of the Lord.” The word “salvation” appears twenty-six times in Isaiah but only seven times in all the other prophets combined.

Of all the books in the Old Testament, only the Psalms contain a larger number of messianic prophecies than Isaiah. Isaiah sets forth every aspect of the glory and ministry of Christ: His incarnation (7:14; 9:6); His youth (7:15; 11:1; 53:2); His mild manner (42:2); His obedience (50:5); His message (61:1, 2); His miracles (35:5, 6); His sufferings, rejection, and vicarious death (50:6; 53:1–12); and His exaltation (52:13).

OUTLINE OF ISAIAH

Part One: Prophecies of Condemnation (1:1–35:10)

- I. Prophecies Against Judah 1:1–12:6**
 - A. The Judgment of Judah 1:1–31
 - B. The Day of the Lord 2:1–4:6
 - C. The Parable of the Vineyard 5:1–30
 - D. The Commission of Isaiah 6:1–13
 - E. The Destruction of Israel by Assyria 7:1–10:4
 - F. The Destruction of Assyria by God 10:5–12:6
- II. The Prophecies Against Other Nations 13:1–23:18**
 - A. Prophecies Against Babylon 13:1–14:23
 - B. Prophecies Against Assyria 14:24–27
 - C. Prophecies Against Philistia 14:28–32
 - D. Prophecies Against Moab 15:1–16:14
 - E. Prophecies Against Damascus and Samaria 17:1–14
 - F. Prophecies Against Ethiopia 18:1–7
 - G. Prophecies Against Egypt 19:1–20:6
 - H. Prophecies Against Babylon 21:1–10
 - I. Prophecies Against Dumah (Edom) 21:11, 12
 - J. Prophecies Against Arabia 21:13–17
 - K. Prophecies Against Jerusalem 22:1–25
 - L. Prophecies Against Tyre 23:1–18
- III. The Prophecies of the Day of the Lord 24:1–27:13**
 - A. Judgments of the Tribulation 24:1–23
 - B. Triumphs of the Kingdom 25:1–27:13
- IV. The Prophecies of Judgment and Blessing 28:1–35:10**
 - A. Woe to Ephraim 28:1–29
 - B. Woe to Ariel (Jerusalem) 29:1–24
 - C. Woe to Egyptian Alliance 30:1–31:9
 - D. Behold the Coming King 32:1–20
 - E. Woe to the Spoiler of Jerusalem (Assyria) 33:1–24
 - F. Woe to the Nations 34:1–17
 - G. Behold the Coming Kingdom 35:1–10

Part Two: The Historical Parenthesis (36:1–39:8)

- I. Hezekiah's Salvation from Assyria 36:1–37:38**
 - A. Assyria Challenges God 36:1–22
 - B. God Destroys Assyria 37:1–38
- II. Hezekiah's Salvation from Sickness 38:1–22**
- III. Hezekiah's Foolishness 39:1–8**

Part Three: The Prophecies of Comfort (40:1–66:24)

- I. The Prophecies of Israel's Deliverance 40:1–48:22**
 - A. Comfort Because of Israel's Deliverance 40:1–11
 - B. Comfort Because of God's Character 40:12–31

- C. Comfort Because of God's Greatness 41:1–29
 - D. Comfort Because of God's Servant 42:1–25
 - E. Comfort Because of Israel's Restoration 43:1–44:28
 - F. Comfort Because of God's Use of Cyrus 45:1–25
 - G. Comfort Because of Babylon's Destruction 46:1–48:22
 - II. The Prophecy of Israel's Deliverer 49:1–57:21**
 - A. The Messiah's Mission 49:1–26
 - B. The Messiah's Obedience 50:1–11
 - C. The Messiah's Encouragement to Israel 51:1–52:12
 - D. The Messiah's Atonement 52:13–53:12
 - E. The Messiah's Promise of Israel's Restoration 54:1–17
 - F. The Messiah's Invitation to the World 55:1–56:8
 - G. The Messiah's Rebuke of the Wicked 56:9–57:21
 - III. The Prophecies of Israel's Glorious Future 58:1–66:24**
 - A. Blessings of True Worship 58:1–14
 - B. Sins of Israel 59:1–21
 - C. Glory of Israel in the Kingdom 60:1–22
 - D. Advents of the Messiah 61:1–11
 - E. Future of Jerusalem 62:1–12
 - F. Vengeance of God 63:1–6
 - G. Prayer of the Remnant 63:7–64:12
 - H. The Lord's Answer to the Remnant 65:1–16
 - I. Glorious Consummation of History 65:17–66:24
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The Coming Messiah

A striking example of the many messianic prophecies in Isaiah, 11:1–12 provides an accurate description of the coming Messiah and His kingdom. He was to be a descendant of King David (Matt. 1:1); He was to be filled with the Holy Spirit (cf. Matt. 3:16); He would be a merciful and righteous judge of mankind (Rev. 19:11). The Messiah's reign is described in terms of its universal significance. It is characterized by peace and reconciliation (Is. 11:6–9), the coming of the Gentiles to the Messiah (11:10), and the gathering of the faithful remnant of Israel (11:11–12). Isaiah described the qualifications of the ideal King whose rule would contrast with the dark reign of King Ahaz. The role remained unfulfilled until the coming of Jesus the Messiah. "The kingdom of God is with you" was His message.

Judgment on the Nations

Like certain other Old Testament prophetic books, Isaiah contains a series of oracles against the foreign enemies of Israel and upon unfaithful elements within Israel itself (chs. 13–23). Beginning with Babylon, the future enemy that would destroy Judah (13:1–14:23), Isaiah goes on to prophesy judgment on Assyria (14:24–27), Philistia (14:28–32), Moab (15:1–16:14), Syria and Israel (17:1–11), all nations (17:12–18:7), Egypt (19:1–20:6), Babylon and her allies (21:1–16), Jerusalem and her unfaithful leaders (22:1–25), and the city of Tyre (23:1–18).

The Suffering Servant in Isaiah

The book of Isaiah presents four Servant Songs (42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–9), which reach their conclusion in the final song of the Suffering Servant (52:13–53:12). This description of the Suffering Servant occupies a central place in the consolation section (chs. 40–66) and is presented in five stanzas, each of which provides a picture of the saving work of the Servant: His humiliation and exaltation (52:13–15); His experience of rejection (53:1–3); His vicarious suffering (53:4–6); His sacrificial death (53:7–9); His reconciling atonement and resurrection (53:10–12).

It is sometimes argued that the Suffering Servant song presents an ideal portrait of the people of Israel as a whole. The subject of the song cannot be reduced to such an ideal depiction, however, because it presents a concrete person who mediates between God and sinful human beings. Furthermore, the many correspondences between the Suffering Servant and the Person and work of Christ cannot be ignored.¹

Fulfilled Prophecies from Isaiah

The Prophecy	The Fulfillment
The Messiah...	Jesus Christ...
will be born of a virgin (Is. 7:14).	was born of a virgin named Mary (Luke 1:26–31).
will have a Galilean ministry (Is. 9:1, 2).	Ministered in Galilee of the Gentiles (Matt. 4:13–16).
will be an heir to the throne of David (Is. 9:7).	was given the throne of His father David (Luke 1:32, 33).
will have His way prepared (Is. 40:3–5).	was announced by John the Baptist (John 1:19–28).
will be spat on and struck (Is. 50:6).	was spat on and beaten (Matt. 26:67).
will be exalted (Is. 52:13).	was highly exalted by God and the people (Phil. 2:9, 10).
will be disfigured by suffering (Is. 52:14; 53:2).	was scourged by the soldiers who gave Him a crown of thorns (Mark 15:15–19).
will make a blood atonement (Is. 53:5).	shed His blood to atone for our sins (1 Pet. 1:2).
will be widely rejected (Is. 53:1, 3).	was not accepted by many (John 12:37, 38).
will bear our sins and sorrows (Is. 53:4, 5).	died because of our sins (Rom. 4:25; 1 Pet. 2:24, 25).
will be our substitute (Is. 53:6, 8).	died in our place (Rom. 5:6, 8; 2 Cor. 5:21).
will voluntarily accept our guilt and punishment (Is. 53:7, 8).	was silent about our sin (Mark 15:4, 5; John 10:11; 19:30).
will be buried in a rich man's tomb (Is. 53:9).	was buried in the tomb of Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea (Matt. 27:57–60; John 19:38–42).
will save us who believe in Him (Is. 53:10, 11).	provided salvation for all who believe (John 3:16; Acts 16:31).
will die with transgressors (Is. 53:12).	was numbered with the transgressors (Mark 15:27, 28; Luke 22:37).
will heal the brokenhearted (Is. 61:1, 2).	healed the brokenhearted (Luke 4:18, 19).

¹Thomas Nelson, Inc., *Nelson's complete book of Bible maps and charts: Old and New Testament [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1996.

Lesson 1 – Oct 4th: Introduction

OVERVIEW

Read the Introductory material and answer the questions below.

EXPLORE IT

1. Why is Isaiah sometimes referred to as “the prince of prophets”?
2. How and when is it thought that Isaiah died?
3. During Isaiah’s life what nation was growing and conquering many nations?
4. What other biblical prophets were contemporary with Isaiah?
5. What other books of the bible contain more prophecies about Jesus than Isaiah?
6. Name the three main sections of the book of Isaiah with the corresponding chapters?
 - I.
 - II.
 - III.

GET IT

7. Name three other nations God would judge besides Judah.
8. Why would God judge other nations if they did not know or have His commandments?

APPLY IT

9. Name one of the prophecies from Isaiah and its fulfillment in the New Testament by Jesus that is most convincing to you that Jesus is the savior of the world.

Lesson 2 – Oct 11th: Isaiah 1:1-31

OVERVIEW

Isaiah describes the iniquities of Judah and the subsequent response of God.

- I. THE WICKEDNESS OF JUDAH (1:1–23)
- II. THE RESPONSE OF GOD (1:24–31)

EXPLORE IT

1. During the reigns of which kings did Isaiah see visions from God concerning Judah and Jerusalem? (1:1)
2. How had God attempted to correct Israel? (1:5-8)
3. How did God feel about the many religious celebrations going on in Judah? (1:10-14)
4. How did God promise to react to the prayers of the people of Judah? (1:15)
5. What did God expect of His people? (1:15-17)
6. What did God promise to do for Israel for their good? (1:24-26)
7. How did God intend to treat the repentant and the unrepentant differently? (1:27-28)

GET IT

8. What prevented Israel from becoming just like Sodom and Gomorrah? (1:9)
9. How would God's people receive God's blessings and why would they lose them? (1:18-20)

APPLY IT

10. What does God want us to do about the sins we commit?

Lesson 3 – Oct 18th: Isaiah 2:1-4:6

OVERVIEW

Chapter two opens with an image of the glory of Zion and then promises the coming of the day of the LORD. Chapters 3 and 4 show us that the day of the LORD means judgment for Judah and Jerusalem and a renewing of Zion.

- I. GOD DEALS WITH ALL NATIONS (2:1-22)
- II. JUDGMENT UPON JUDAH & JERUSALEM (3:1-4:1)
- III. THE RENEWAL OF ZION (4:2-6)

EXPLORE IT

1. In Isaiah's vision, what is the status of Jerusalem and the mountain of the Lord in later times? (2:1-3)
2. In this vision of later times how do nations relate to one another? (2:4)
3. During Isaiah's day, why had the Lord abandoned His people? (2:6-9)
4. What did Isaiah say would happen to arrogant men in the day of the LORD? (2:10-21)
5. What caution did Isaiah preach to God's people before it was too late? (2:22)
6. When God judged Israel what was taken away from them? (3:1-5)
7. When God sits in judgment in Isaiah's vision, what does He hold against the elders and leaders? (3:13-15)
8. What did God determine to do about pride and vanity in His people? (3:16-24)
9. What images of renewal did Isaiah use to characterize the Branch of the Lord? (4:2-6)

GET IT

10. How and when is this vision fulfilled? (2:2-4)

APPLY IT

11. How can we remember that we as Christians have become citizens of this renewed Zion? (See Heb 12:22-24)

Lesson 4 – Oct 25th: Isaiah 5:1-6:13

OVERVIEW

Chapter five describes God's judgment upon His vineyard. Chapter six records the call of Isaiah to be the LORD's prophet.

- I. GOD JUDGES HIS VINEYARD (5:1–30)
- II. THE CALL OF ISAIAH (6:1-13)

EXPLORE IT

1. How did Isaiah use a parable about a vineyard to illustrate the sin and ingratitude of Israel? (5:1-7)
2. What kinds of suffering did Isaiah predict as a result of Israel's sin? (5:8-15)
3. What would become apparent about the character of God through His judgments? (5:16)
4. To what sorts of people did Isaiah preach woe? (5:18-25)
5. How did Isaiah describe the power of the Nations God would use to execute His judgments? (5:26-30)
6. What was Isaiah's reaction once he saw the vision of God and His angels? (6:5)
7. What provision was made for Isaiah's guilt in the presence of a holy God? (6:6-7)
8. How did Isaiah respond to God's call for a messenger? (6:8)
9. What message did God want Isaiah to take to the people? (6:9-10)

GET IT

10. What was sorrowful about God's response to Isaiah's question? (6:11-13)
11. What was hopeful about God's response to Isaiah's question? (6:11-13)

APPLY IT

12. How can we apply Isaiah's attitude within ourselves?

Lesson 5 – Nov 1st: Isaiah 7:1-10:4

OVERVIEW

Isaiah is sent to reassure King Ahaz. The LORD promises a sign, Immanuel will be born of a virgin. God also promises a swift destruction to Israel.

- I. THE PROMISE OF THE CHRIST (7:1-25)
- II. THE CHILDREN OF THE PROPHET (8:1-22)
- III. THE RULE OF THE CHRIST (9:1-7)
- IV. THE JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL (9:8-10:4)

EXPLORE IT

1. What word of encouragement did God send via Isaiah and his son? (7:3-9)
2. What sign was promised by God, even though Ahaz had not asked? (7:14-15)
3. What country would be used by God to punish Judah? (7:17-20)
4. What was the variety of ways people would respond to God? (8:14-15)
5. What did Isaiah predict God would do for Israel, causing her to rejoice? (9:4-5)
6. How does Isaiah describe the Ruler who will be provided by God for His people? (9:6-7)
7. Who did God use to ensure that Israel would not quickly be rebuilt? (9:11-12)
8. How did Isaiah portray Israel's behavior after God will strike them? (9:18-21)
9. What sins of the powerful did God single out in His list of judgments? (10:1-2)

GET IT

10. What child is being referenced in 7:16?

APPLY IT

11. What comfort can we receive from the promises given to Ahaz?

Lesson 6 – Nov 8th: Isaiah 10:5-12:6

OVERVIEW

When Assyria was the dominant world power, God foretold their destruction due to their arrogance. He then tells of the coming King and His kingdom. Chapter 12 is a song about the salvation of Israel.

- I. JUDGMENT OF ASSYRIA (10:5–19)
- II. THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL (10:20-34)
- III. THE REIGN OF JESSE’S OFFSPRING (11:1-16)
- IV. HYMN OF ISRAEL’S SALVATION (12:1-6)

EXPLORE IT

1. For what purpose did God use Assyria? (10:5-6)

2. How did the king of Assyria see himself in relation to all other nations and their gods? (10:8-11)

3. What did God promise to do with the king of Assyria after He had used him to His own ends? (10:12)

4. How did the king of Assyria flatter himself about his accomplishments? (10:13-14)

5. What would characterize the few people God would spare from His judgment? (10:20)

6. Why did God instruct the people of Judah not to be afraid of the Assyrians? (10:24-25)

7. What unlikely scenarios from nature were used by Isaiah to illustrate God's peace on His Holy Mountain? (11:6-8)

8. What did God promise to do for His people a second time? (11:11) When was the first time?

9. What did Isaiah joyfully command as a means of praise to God? (12:4-6)

GET IT

10. What qualities did Isaiah ascribe to the Branch of Jesse? (11:2-5)

APPLY IT

11. Why is peace on the Holy Mountain important to us?

Lesson 7 – Nov 15th: Isaiah 13:1-14:32

OVERVIEW

Isaiah foretells judgment against Babylon, Assyria, and Philistia.

- I. CONDEMNATION OF BABYLON (13:1–22)
- II. MERCY ON ISRAEL (14:1–2)
- III. FALL OF KING OF BABYLON (14:3–21)
- IV. DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON, ASSYRIA & PHILISTIA (14:22–32)

EXPLORE IT

1. What image is used of the power of God that is going to defeat Babylon? (13:1-5)
2. How does the prophecy express the terror that will be felt by the Babylonians? (13:6-8)
3. What would be the primary reason for God's judgment of Babylon? (13:11)
4. How did Isaiah describe the helplessness and terror that would pervade Babylon? (13:14-16)
5. What nation would be God's instrument against Babylon? (13:17)
6. What prophecy of desolation contrasts with the glory and pride that Babylon experienced at its height? (13:19-22)
7. What pleasant reversals did Isaiah prophesy for the people of Israel? (14:1-2)
8. How did Isaiah describe Babylon's opinion of itself before its fall? (14:12-15)
9. Where did God promise to break the power of Assyria, Israel's oppressors? (14:24-27)
10. In the year of King Ahaz's death, what message did Isaiah have for Israel's perpetual enemies, the Philistines? (14:28-32)

GET IT

11. What strange events would signal the day of the Lord? (13:9-13)

APPLY IT

12. Who is Lucifer in chapter 13?

Lesson 8 – Nov 22nd: Isaiah 15:1-17:14

OVERVIEW

Isaiah prophesies judgment for Moab, Damascus, and Ethiopia.

- I. PROPHECIES AGAINST MOAB (15:1–16:14)
- II. PROPHECIES AGAINST SYRIA & ISRAEL (17:1–14)

EXPLORE IT

1. How does Isaiah describe the fate of Moab in the wake of God's judgment? (15:1-9)
2. Why does his heart cry out for Moab? (15:5)
3. How are the Moabites related to Israel?
4. What would the Moabites seek from Sela to the mount of the daughter of Zion? (16:1-4)
5. What sin of the Moabites brought upon their destruction and mourning? (16:6-11)
6. What does the “years of a hired man” mean in relation to the three years? (16:13-14)
7. Why is Ephraim and Jacob linked with Damascus in this judgment? (17:1-8)
8. What had Israel forgotten, which would put an end to their fruitfulness? (17:10-11)
9. How did Isaiah compare the "raging" of peoples and nations to the wrath of God? (17:12-14)

GET IT

10. Why would the throne of mercy be established? (16:5)

APPLY IT

11. How can God destroy all of these nations and still be merciful?

Lesson 9 – Nov 29th: Isaiah 18:1-20:6

OVERVIEW

Isaiah prophesies against Egypt and Ethiopia.

- I. PROPHECIES AGAINST ETHIOPIA (18:1–7)
- II. PROPHECIES AGAINST EGYPT (19:1–17)
- III. A DAY FOR EGYPT, ASSYRIA & ISRAEL TO BE BLESSED (19:18-25)
- IV. A SIGN AGAINST EGYPT & ETHIOPIA (20:1-6)

EXPLORE IT

1. What kingdom sends ambassadors? (18:2)

2. To who are the ambassadors sent? (18:2)

3. What land is described by “whose land the rivers divide”? (18:2,7)

4. In this difficult passage, name one thing you are certain of? (18:1-7)

5. What does the LORD riding on a swift cloud mean? (19:1)

6. What would God do to the Egyptians? (19:1-10)

7. What is that day when Israel, Egypt, and Assyria would be blessings in the land? (19:23-25)

8. What unusual command did God give to Isaiah as a sign to the people? (20:1-5)

9. What did God want His people to know ahead of time about the reliability of Egypt as an ally against Assyria? (20:6)

GET IT

10. Why would Egypt be so afraid of the land of Judah? (19:16-17)

APPLY IT

11. How can Egypt and Assyria be blessed after they are destroyed?

Lesson 10 – Dec 6th: Isaiah 21:1-23:18

OVERVIEW

God Demonstrates His Power over nations.

- I. PROPHECIES AGAINST BABYLON (21:1–10)
- II. PROPHECIES AGAINST EDOM & ARABIA (21:11–17)
- III. PROPHECIES AGAINST JERUSALEM (22:1-25)
- IV. PROPHECIES AGAINST TYRE (23:1-18)

EXPLORE IT

1. Against what major power did God post Isaiah as a lookout for its destruction? (21:1-10)
2. What future did Isaiah prophesy for Edom and the border territories? (21:11-17)
3. What humiliating experience did Isaiah predict for Jerusalem and its leaders? (22:3)
4. What was Isaiah's response to God's revelation about the future of Jerusalem? (22:4)
5. How did the people of Jerusalem respond to the threat against them? (22:9-11)
6. How did God emphasize the sinful attitudes of the people of Jerusalem? (22:14)
7. Why did Isaiah say the Lord planned to destroy Tyre? (23:9)
8. What kingdom did Isaiah say that Tyre and Sidon should fear? (23:13-14)
9. What would God do to the kingdom of Tyre after seventy years? (23:16-18)

GET IT

10. What attitude prevailed in Jerusalem on the eve of its destruction? (22:12-13)

APPLY IT

11. What common themes do we see in the people destroyed by God?

Lesson 11 – Dec 13th: Isaiah 24:1-27:13

OVERVIEW

All the earth will be judged, but for God's people it will be a day of salvation, comfort and joy.

- I. DESTRUCTION IS COMING (24:1-23)
- II. A DAY OF REST IS COMING (25:1-12)
- III. A SONG OF SALVATION (26:1-19)
- IV. A SONG OF WARNING (26:20-27:13)

EXPLORE IT

1. To what extent does God judge the world and its inhabitants? (24:1-23)
2. Who is responsible for turning the earth itself into a wasteland? (24:3-6)
3. How did Isaiah illustrate God's inescapable judgment? (24:17-18)
4. What are the various powers that will be judged by God? (24:21-23)
5. What will God do for His people in that day? (25:6-9)
6. What prevents the wicked from experiencing God's favor? (26:10-11)
7. What did Isaiah instruct God's people to do while God judges the world? (26:20-21)
8. What is Isaiah's image for God's nurturing care of His people? (27:2-6)

GET IT

9. Why does Isaiah sing a song of praise for God? (25:1-5)
10. For what purpose did God strike and contend with Israel? (27:7-11)

APPLY IT

11. Where do present day Christians fit into this prophecy, if at all?

Lesson 12 – Dec 20th: Isaiah 28:1-31:9

OVERVIEW

Isaiah prophesies Israel's rejection and restoration, and warns of an alliance with Egypt.

- I. WOE TO EPHRAIM (28:1-29)
- II. WOE TO ARIEL (JERUSALEM) (29:1-24)
- III. WOE TO EGYPTIAN ALLIANCE (30:1-31:9)

EXPLORE IT

1. How did God illustrate the pride of Ephraim? (28:1-4)
2. What will this day of the Lord, which will come upon Ephraim, be to His remnant? (28:5-6)
3. What has happened to the priests and the prophets? (28:7-8)
4. What would the people of Israel discover about their supposed refuge? (28:17-20)
5. How did Isaiah use the imagery of a farmer to communicate that God will not totally destroy? (28:23-29)
6. According to Isaiah, what would become of Ariel (Jerusalem), the "Lion of God"? (29:1-4)
7. At the same time they sent gifts to buy the favor of Egypt, what did the people say to the prophets (such as Isaiah) who were telling them the truth? (30:6-11)
8. How would God rescue His people from their enemies? (30:27-33)
9. What did Isaiah insist would be the outcome of reliance on Egypt? (31:1-3)

GET IT

10. What were the people saying about Isaiah and his teachings? (28:9-10)
11. Why could the people not understand the word of God? (29:10-14)

APPLY IT

12. How do we treat the teachings of God?

Lesson 13 – Dec 27th: Isaiah 32:1-35:10

OVERVIEW

In chapters 32 & 33 Isaiah prophesies of God's reign over a restored Israel and woe against the Assyrians. In 34 & 35 he foretells of the day of the Lord and of Israel's glory in the Kingdom.

- I. BEHOLD THE COMING KING (32:1–20)
- II. WOE TO THE SPOILER OF JERUSALEM (ASSYRIA) (33:1–24)
- III. WOE TO THE NATIONS (34:1–17)
- IV. BEHOLD THE COMING KINGDOM (35:1–10)

EXPLORE IT

1. What would characterize the reign of the king that Isaiah foretold? (32:1-4)
2. What warning did Isaiah have for some women of Jerusalem? (32:9-13)
3. What judgment did God declare for His destroyer, Assyria? (33:1)
4. What prayer did Isaiah utter for God's faithful? (33:2)
5. What will characterize the LORD's time? (33:5-6)
6. How would the experiences of the sinner and the righteous person differ? (33:10-19)
7. What will characterize Zion in the future? (33:17-24)
8. What sobering news did Isaiah announce to all people and nations? (34:1-2)
9. On whose behalf did the Lord plan retribution? (34:8)
10. What would happen when God saves His people? (35:5-7)
11. Where does the highway in Zion go? (35:8-10)

GET IT

12. How long did Isaiah predict the punishment would continue? (32:14-15)
13. When does the glory of the Lord come? (35:1-4)

APPLY IT

14. What do these promises of Hope mean to you?

Lesson 14 – Jan 3rd: Isaiah 36:1-39:8

OVERVIEW

These chapters contain historical information. Isaiah describes the Assyrian crisis: the siege of Jerusalem under Sennacherib and the glorious deliverance by the Lord. Then he describes King Hezekiah's sickness, healing, and self-exaltation.

- I. HEZEKIAH'S SALVATION FROM ASSYRIA (36:1–37:38)
- II. HEZEKIAH'S SALVATION FROM SICKNESS (38:1–22)
- III. HEZEKIAH'S FOOLISHNESS (39:1–8)

EXPLORE IT

1. What sources of help did the king of Assyria belittle for their supposed inability to help Judah sustain a rebellion? (36:4-7)
2. Why did the officials from Jerusalem ask the Assyrian field commander to speak to them in Aramaic? (36:11)
3. Why was the Assyrian commander convinced that God could not help the people of Jerusalem? (36:18-20)
4. According to Isaiah, how did God view the words of the Assyrian commander? (37:5-7)
5. How did God plan to emphasize His power over Assyria? (37:28-29)
6. What miraculous event caused the Assyrians to withdraw from Jerusalem? (37:36-37)
7. What was Hezekiah's reaction to the prophecy about his imminent death? (38:2-3)
8. What two specific promises did God make in answer to Hezekiah's prayers? (38:4-6)
9. How did Hezekiah view his physical and mental suffering after he was delivered? (38:17)
10. What did Hezekiah see as the duty of those to whom God gives the gift of life? (38:18-19)
11. What did Isaiah prophesy about the future of Judah when he learned about the visitors from Babylon? (39:5-7)

GET IT

12. How did Hezekiah know that the gods of other nations had no bearing on what would happen to Jerusalem? (37:19)

APPLY IT

13. Why would Hezekiah respond to Isaiah's prophecy that way? (39:8)

Lesson 15 – Jan 10th: Isaiah 40:1-41:29

OVERVIEW

Chapter 40 is the key to the remainder of the prophecy and contains the prophet's message that after judging his people, God will comfort them. In chapter 41 God assures His people of His help.

- I. COMFORT BECAUSE OF ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE (40:1–11)
- II. COMFORT BECAUSE OF GOD'S CHARACTER (40:12–31)
- III. COMFORT BECAUSE OF GOD'S GREATNESS (41:1–29)

EXPLORE IT

1. In contrast to previous messages, how did Isaiah begin this message from God? (40:1)
2. What good news did Isaiah have for Jerusalem? (40:2)
3. What were the people supposed to do in preparation of the coming of the LORD? (40:3-4)
4. What is the difference between human life and the Word of God? (40:6-8)
5. How did Isaiah illustrate the greatness and wisdom of God? (40:12-13)
6. What did people do when they made a graven image of God? (40:18-26)
7. What promises did God give in response to Judah's claim that He had forgotten them? (40:27-31)
8. Who is the one God made to rule over kings? (41:2)
9. What is God going to do for Israel? (41:8-20)
10. What challenges did God lay before the idols of Israel's enemies? (41:21-24)
11. Why did all of the idols prove totally inadequate in the face of God's wrath? (41:25-29)

GET IT

12. What is the significance of understanding who raised up kings and conquerors? (41:1-4)

APPLY IT

13. Why is the promise of comfort important?

Lesson 16 – Jan 17th: Isaiah 42:1-45:25

OVERVIEW

Isaiah introduces the true servant of the Lord, a prophecy of the Christ. He then tells how God will restore Israel and foretells of a coming servant, Cyrus, to do God's work. What Cyrus does for God foreshadows the Work of the Christ.

- I. COMFORT BECAUSE OF GOD'S SERVANT (42:1–25)
- II. COMFORT BECAUSE OF ISRAEL'S RESTORATION (43:1–44:28)
- III. COMFORT BECAUSE OF GOD'S USE OF CYRUS (45:1–25)

EXPLORE IT

1. What did God say would distinguish His Servant? (42:1-4)
2. What did God promise to accomplish through His Servant? (42:6-9)
3. Who, according to Isaiah, will sing the "new song" of praise to God? (42:10-12)
4. What response did God want, and what response did He get, when He turned Israel over to her enemies? (42:23-25)
5. What price was God going to pay for Israel's ransom? (43:4)
6. What does God declare about Himself? (44:6-8)
7. What did God do on Israel's behalf that should motivate Israel to return to God? (44:21-22)
8. How is God's sovereignty over all creation made manifest to His people? (44:24-28)
9. For whose sake did God choose to honor a pagan king who didn't honor Him? (45:4)
10. To what does Isaiah liken the foolishness of questioning God? (45:9-10)
11. How will the future be different for people who turn to Him versus people who rage against Him? (45:22-25)

GET IT

12. Why is it foolish to use metal or wood or to make idols? (44:9-19)

APPLY IT

13. What idols do people make for themselves today?

Lesson 17 – Jan 24th: Isaiah 46:1-48:22

OVERVIEW

God speaks of the humbling of Babylon and the refining of Israel by the afflictions they went through. He also speaks of redeeming Israel to lead them in the way they should go.

- I. COMFORT BECAUSE OF BABYLON'S DESTRUCTION (46:1–48:22)

EXPLORE IT

1. What observations does Isaiah make about Bel and Nebo, the gods of the conquering Babylonians? (46:1-2)
2. What happens to the wealthy and refined "Virgin Daughter of Babylon"? (47:1-3)
3. How did Babylon treat God's people when He gave them into their hand? (47:6)
4. From what did Babylon consider herself exempt? (47:7-10)
5. Of what were the gods and priests of Babylon completely incapable? (47:13-15)
6. What inconsistencies did God see in the people of Judah? (48:1-2)
7. Why did God give plenty of notice but then act suddenly with respect to Judah? (48:3-5)
8. What was God's reason for delaying His wrath against Judah? (48:9)
9. For whose sake did God test Judah with afflictions? (48:10-11)
10. What does God do for His people, and what did they fail to do? (48:17-19)
11. What joyful announcement did God have for His captives in Babylon? (48:20-21)

GET IT

12. How do these so called gods contrast with Jehovah? (46:3-7)
13. How does Go show Himself to be different from idols? (46:8-10)

APPLY IT

14. How should we understand the afflictions we encounter?

Lesson 18 – Jan 31st: Isaiah 49:1-50:11

OVERVIEW

Isaiah prophesies of the Servant of the Lord (the Messiah), his mission, and his obedience. These chapters record for us the communication between the Father, his Son, and Israel.

- I. THE MESSIAH'S MISSION (49:1–26)
- II. THE MESSIAH'S OBEDIENCE (50:1–11)

EXPLORE IT

1. When is the Servant called? (49:1)
2. Although His work seemed to be in vain, what would vindicate the Servant? (49:4)
3. What was God also going to do besides bringing Israel back to Himself? (49:5-6)
4. When did God say He would use His Servant and for what purpose? (49:8-9)
5. What was God's promise to Zion who thought He had forsaken them? (49:14-18)
6. What seemed impossible yet showed what God is to Israel? (49:24-26)
7. Why had God put away their mother? (50:1)
8. What characterized the tongue of God's Chosen One? (50:4)
9. What did God's Messiah refuse to do, unlike the people of Israel? (50:5)
10. In obeying God, what suffering would the Messiah have to endure? (50:6)
11. Why was the Messiah not worried about those who condemn Him? (50:9)
12. What should we do whenever we find ourselves "walking in the dark"? (50:10)

GET IT

13. How does Isaiah's prophecy describe the calling of God's people? (49:9-13)

APPLY IT

14. What will happen to those who insist on lighting their own way? (50:11)

Lesson 19 – Feb 7th: Isaiah 51:1-53:12

OVERVIEW

Isaiah conveys the Lord's encouragement to his faithful people and calls Israel to be ready for the coming of the Lord. In 52 and 53 God describes the suffering of Messiah, with graphic details of His brutal beating and crucifixion more than 700 years before it happened.

- I. THE MESSIAH'S ENCOURAGEMENT TO ISRAEL (51:1–52:12)
- II. THE MESSIAH'S ATONEMENT (52:13–53:12)

EXPLORE IT

1. What does God's dealing with Abraham & Sarah foretell about Zion? (51:1-3)
2. What good gifts did God promise to His people? (51:4-6)
3. What did God do in the past that he will do with the ransomed people? (51:9-11)
4. Why should the fearful prisoner not fear his oppressor? (51:12-16)
5. How did Isaiah describe the plight of God's people because of their disobedience? (51:17-20)
6. What great reversal between Israel and her enemies was prophesied by Isaiah? (51:21-23)
7. How did Isaiah communicate the fact that God did not "benefit" from the punishment His people? (52:3-5)
8. How did Isaiah say the news of God's deliverance would be greeted in Israel? (52:6-9)
9. Who will know about the salvation of the Lord when He comforts His people? (52:10)
10. Why was the message of God's deliverance unbelievable? (53:1-3)
11. What would the Messiah take upon Himself for mankind? (53:4-9)
12. Why was the Lord pleased to crush His Servant? (53:10-12)

GET IT

13. Why did Isaiah say that the Messiah would be exalted and "divide the spoils"? (53:12)

APPLY IT

14. How do people respond to the brutal suffering of Jesus?

Lesson 20 – Feb 14th: Isaiah 54:1-56:8

OVERVIEW

Isaiah describes Messiah's mission and issues a call to repent and seek the Lord.

- I. THE MESSIAH'S PROMISE OF ISRAEL'S RESTORATION (54:1–17)
- II. THE MESSIAH'S INVITATION TO THE WORLD (55:1–56:8)

EXPLORE IT

1. What misfortune for women of Isaiah's day did he compare with Israel's desolation? (54:1)
2. What did Isaiah say would happen to Israel's descendants? (54:1-3)
3. What did God promise Israel in spite of the shame of her youth? (54:4-8)
4. What picture does God paint of Jerusalem before and after God's salvation? (54:11-17)
5. Whom does God invite to come eat and drink in abundance? (55:1)
6. What advice does this Isaiah offer about seeking God? (55:6-7)
7. How does God contrast His thoughts and ways with ours? (55:8-9)
8. Whom does God encourage to preserve justice and do what is right? (56:1-5)
9. What will God do for the foreigners about whom Isaiah spoke? (56:6-8)

GET IT

10. What is God telling Israel He will do that will be like the days of Noah? (54:9-10)
11. Why does God invite us to listen and to come to Him? (55:3)

APPLY IT

12. How does the promise to eunuchs and foreigners apply to us? (56:4-8)

Lesson 21 – Feb 21st: Isaiah 56:9-57:21

OVERVIEW

A message is given to the wicked leaders and people that if they do not repent and have contrite hearts they will have no peace.

- I. THE MESSIAH'S REBUKE OF THE WICKED (56:9–57:21)

EXPLORE IT

1. How did Isaiah characterize Israel's watchmen? (56:10-12)
2. What did the people fail to understand when the righteous were perishing? (57:1-2)
3. Why does God receive no comfort from Israel? (57:3-6)
4. How did Israel break their covenant with God? (57:7-9)
5. What did Israel refuse to say in spite of her weariness with the pursuit of sin? (57:10)
6. How did Israel come to not fear the Lord? (57:11)
7. How would Israel be delivered if not from their idols? (57:12-13)
8. What does God tell us about Himself through Isaiah the prophet? (57:15-16)
9. In spite of their iniquity, what did God decide to do with His people? (57:17-19)
10. What truth did God reveal concerning the wicked? (57:20-21)

GET IT

11. Who will God heal and comfort?

APPLY IT

12. How does this section fit into the theme of many of Isaiah's prophecies?

Lesson 22 – Feb 28th: Isaiah 58:1-59:21

OVERVIEW

Isaiah details the nation's hypocrisy, and need for repentance.

- I. BLESSINGS OF TRUE WORSHIP (58:1–14)
- II. SINS OF ISRAEL (59:1–21)

EXPLORE IT

1. What was the outward appearance of rebellious Israel? (58:2)
2. What was the problem with the fasting of Israel? (58:3-5)
3. What kind of fast did God want His people to practice? (58:6-7)
4. What would result if they fasted properly as God says in vs.6-7? (58:7-12)
5. What did God promise if they would keep the Sabbath appropriately? (58:13-14)
6. What specific sins did God charge against His people? (59:3-4)
7. What prevented God's people from knowing His peace? (59:5-8)
8. What confession did Isaiah make on behalf of Israel? (59:9-15)
9. What did God do when he found no righteousness among His people? (59:16-17)
10. Whom did God promise to send and what would He have with Him? (59:20-21)

GET IT

11. Why was God not listening to or helping Israel? (59:1-4)

APPLY IT

12. What is the nature of God's covenant? Who is it through?

Lesson 23 – Mar 7th: Isaiah 60:1-61:11

OVERVIEW

Isaiah prophecies of Zion's glory and restoration.

- I. GLORY OF ISRAEL IN THE KINGDOM (60:1–22)
- II. ADVENTS OF THE MESSIAH (61:1–11)

EXPLORE IT

1. How is Zion contrasted with the rest of the earth? (60:1-3)
2. Who will come to Zion? (60:1-3)
3. What is the future like for Zion? (60:10-12)
4. Who is the Savior and Redeemer of Israel? (60:16)
5. What former conditions would be replaced with Salvation and Praise? (60:18)
6. What will be the light in the City of God? (60:19-20)
7. What are the purposes for which God's Anointed was sent into the world? (61:1-3)
8. Besides riches, what honor did Isaiah say God would bestow on all His people? (61:6)
9. What everlasting covenant will God make with Zion? (61:8-9)
10. What did Isaiah portray as sprouting like seeds out of soil? (61:11)

GET IT

11. What will the whole world understand about God's people? (61:9)

APPLY IT

12. How does the promise of 61:9 compare with Jesus words in John 13:35?

Lesson 24 – Mar 14th: Isaiah 62:1-63:6

OVERVIEW

God speaks of Zion as his bride and the joy He will have for her. Then in chapter 63 we see an image of a warrior (the Lord) returning from battle with clothes covered in blood.

- I. FUTURE OF ZION (62:1–12)
- II. VENGEANCE OF GOD (63:1–6)

EXPLORE IT

1. What is the expectation for Zion? (62:1-3)

2. Why was Zion called Forsaken and Desolate? (62:4)

3. Why is Zion called Hephzibah (My delight is in her) and Beulah (Married)? (62:4)

4. What does God promise for Jerusalem? (62:6-9)

5. For whom is the way to be prepared? (62:10-13)

6. Why is this Mighty One coming from Edom? (63:1)

7. Why does Isaiah question this Mighty One coming from Edom? (63:2)

8. What is the source of the red stains on the Lord's garments? (63:3)

9. Why has he trampled the peoples? (63:4-6)

GET IT

10. Why did God's feelings for Zion change? (62:5)

APPLY IT

11. Who was supposed to prepare the way for the people? (62:10)

Lesson 25 – Mar 21st: Isaiah 63:7-65:16

OVERVIEW

The remnant humbles themselves before God and He answers and tells of His blessings to those who serve Him.

- I. PRAYER OF THE REMNANT (63:7–64:12)
- II. THE LORD’S ANSWER TO THE REMNANT (65:1–16)

EXPLORE IT

1. What kindnesses and praises does Isaiah mention about the LORD? (63:7-9)
2. What changed the relationship between the LORD and His people? (63:10)
3. With remembrance of Moses’ time, what does the remnant ask of God? (63:15)
4. What has happened to God's people as described by Isaiah? (63:17-19)
5. For what did Isaiah and the people pray to God? (64:1-4)
6. On what basis did Isaiah ask God to relent from His anger? (64:9-12)
7. Who are the people that found God?(65:1)
8. What did God promise He would do because of the people's sin? (65:6-7)
9. What did God promise to do on behalf of those who remained faithful? (65:9-10)
10. What is the future for God’s servants and those who reject God? (65:13-14)

GET IT

11. Why did the people remember the days of Moses? (63:11-14)

APPLY IT

12. Why is God’s own character our best appeal for forgiveness and restoration?

Lesson 26 – Mar 28th: Isaiah 65:17-66:24

OVERVIEW

Isaiah tells of a new creation, a New Jerusalem where righteous will prevail.

- I. GLORIOUS CONSUMMATION OF HISTORY (65:17–66:24)

EXPLORE IT

1. What will happen to the memory of the past? (65:17-18)

2. What does God create for Jerusalem and her people? (65:18)

3. When God rejoices over Jerusalem, what will be eliminated from it forever? (65:19)

4. What does God's blessing on His people contrast with? (65:20-23)

5. What will be totally absent from God's holy mountain? (65:25)

6. Why are people presumptuous to think of building a house for God? (66:1-2)

7. To whom does God compare the tender care He will give His people? (66:10-13)

8. With whom will God be angry and slay with fire and His sword? (66:14-18)

9. How will God's glory spread throughout the earth? (66:19-21)

10. What will become of the unrighteous and disobedient? (66:24)

GET IT

11. Who are those who cast out God's people? (66:5)

APPLY IT

12. What is the new creation, or New Jerusalem, and why is it important for us?