

MESSIAH

THE WORLD'S ONLY HOPE

CHRIST IN ISAIAH

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Director of Curriculum Resources: Alex Bauman

MESSIAH, THE WORLD'S ONLY HOPE: CHRIST IN ISAIAH
Adult Bible Study Leader's Guide

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How to Use *Life Design*



LIFE DESIGN: Bible Study Designed for the Life You Live. These Bible study materials are designed to engage adult learners in inductive Bible study and in applying the truths of that study to their daily lives.

As you prepare to teach these lessons, keep these two factors in mind:

- The **FOCUS** of productive adult Bible learning is the learner. The intent of teaching is not teaching, but learning—the learner’s learning.
- The **GOAL** of productive adult Bible learning is an appropriate life-response to Biblical truth. You do not teach simply to impart information; you teach so that the Holy Spirit of God can use the truths of the Word of God to change the child of God into the image of the Son of God.

The Lesson Plan

Each *Life Design* lesson has three distinct parts. **GETTING STARTED** is the attention-getter. The questions and activities “set the table,” as it were, for the Bible study. **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES** is the heart of the lesson. A series of inductive Bible study questions leads the teacher and learners through the Biblical text. **MAKING IT PERSONAL** applies the truth to life.

As is true of any teaching experience, you can adapt the parts of the lesson to fit your particular class. You may choose to alter the beginning activities or change

the focus of the application. You will find more material in the Bible study than you can cover in one class session. Ask God to help you as you tailor the lesson for your learners.

The Study Book

This leader’s guide is designed to accompany the Bible study book. As the teacher, you will want a copy of the Bible study. Commit to working through the questions before you plan your lesson. We encourage you to distribute Bible study books to your learners. Urge them to complete the study before class. The more your learners have studied on their own, the better the class discussions will be. When a question in the leader’s guide is picked up from the Bible study book, you will notice the question number in parentheses. The answers to the questions are usually in the lesson commentary. They are also grouped together in the back of this book.

Other Resources

If you want to use transparencies as you teach, a packet of sixteen full-color transparencies is available. If you prefer to use PowerPoint, the resource CD includes a PowerPoint presentation for each lesson.

Some teachers stay very close to the outline as they teach. If this is true of you, and if you want your learners to capture that outline, reproducible in-class worksheets are included on the CD. The same worksheets may be downloaded from the Web and photocopied for class members. Visit www.regularbaptistpress.org/downloads or www.rbpadultministries.org. Thank you for choosing *Life Design* teaching materials. May God richly bless you and your learners as you study and apply His Word.

Preface

On what are you pinning your hopes? Everyone needs hope in something or someone. Too many uncertainties fill our lives for us to continue without hope. Some people put hope in themselves. They work hard to control every aspect of their lives. Others put their hope in money and things, thinking that they will have enough resources to buy their way out of uncertainties. Still others put their hope in people, like a spouse or a friend, to give them stability and to rescue them when their lives fall apart.

But the hope for the world is not hard work, money, or people. The world will find true hope in only one Person, Jesus Christ. *Messiah, the World's Only Hope*, presents Christ from the pen of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah wrote his book of prophecy at a dark time in the history of Judah, a time when the nation was running out of hope. His prophecies on Christ gave hope to Judah. As you study Christ in Isaiah, you will also find confidence for now as well as the future.

As you teach this course, depend on the Lord to help you convey to your learners the solid hope available to them in Christ. Some of your learners may be wondering if Christ is the answer to their struggles. They may be wavering in their faith. Others may not know much about Christ and will be eager to find out what Isaiah has to say about Him. You have the privilege of giving them the message of hope. May the Lord use your ministry to strengthen your learners.

Resources for This Course

The transparency packet for this course (RBP1736) includes a transparency on which to record the summary statements from each lesson on Isaiah. The transparency will help you track and review these lessons. Starting with lesson 1, use transparency 1 at the end of each lesson or at the beginning of the next lesson to record the summary statement for each lesson. You may use the suggestions in this leader's guide or ask your learners to suggest summary statements.

The Resource CD (RBP1737) for this course includes a PowerPoint presentation for each lesson. All of the transparencies are part of the PowerPoint presentation. The transparencies are also included on the CD as printable PDFs. If you would like to make your own transparencies or PowerPoint slides, the CD includes backgrounds ready for your own text.

To help in your promotion of this course, the CD includes a PowerPoint slide, posters, and a flyer. You can add your group's information to all of the promotional material.

The CD also provides in-class worksheets. Each in-class worksheet has a fill-in-the-blank outline that follows the corresponding outline in this leader's guide.

Other classroom resources on the CD include visuals and handouts. The leader's guide refers to each visual as a resource. Each resource is included in the correspond-

ing PowerPoint presentation. Instructions on when to use the handouts are included in this leader's guide.

The CD also offers supplemental case studies. Each case study can be used as an in-class review, as material for a midweek Bible study, or as an e-mail attachment to your learners. E-mailing the case studies to your learners will emphasize living out the truth in daily life. You may want to enlist a learner to handle collecting e-mail addresses and e-mailing the case studies each week.

You will also find one supplemental application idea on the CD. Use this idea as a handout at the end of lesson 6 or as e-mail attachments. The idea could form the basis for a class project. Read through the idea before you begin teaching this course so you can plan ahead how you will use it.

In addition, the CD includes a printable verse card for each lesson's key verse or verses. Blank verse cards are also included so you can enter different or additional verses for your learners to memorize. For your convenience, the verse cards are set for printing on Avery business cards. Use the Avery product number 8869 to avoid cutting apart the verse cards. You can find Avery business cards at avery.com. You could also simply print the verse cards on heavy paper and cut them apart using a paper cutter. Or you could e-mail the verse cards to your learners and have them print and cut their own.

LESSON 1

Needed: A Messiah

Scripture Focus

Isaiah 1

Key Verse

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. 1:18).

Overview

The sin of God’s people demonstrated their need for a Savior, Who is anticipated in the book of Isaiah.

Topic

God’s grace

Theme

God’s grace is greater than sin.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will recognize God’s grace in his or her life and praise God for it.

Outline

- I. The Lord’s Charges against Judah (Isa. 1:1–15)
 - A. Ignorance of their relationship to God (1:2–4)
 - B. Indifference to the chastisement of God (1:5–9)
 - C. Insincerity in their worship of God (1:10–15)
- II. The Lord’s Challenge to Judah (Isa. 1:16–20)
 - A. Change your path (1:16, 17)
 - B. Consider His pardon (1:18)
- III. The Lord’s Chastisement of Judah (Isa. 1:21–31)
 - A. Corruption: The reason for chastisement (1:21–23)
 - B. Correction: The reality of chastisement (1:24–26)
 - C. Conversion: The result of chastisement (1:27–31)

Materials

- RBP transparencies 1–4
- Isaiah 1:18 verse card from resource CD
- Lesson 1 case study from resource CD
- Newspaper clippings of recent events
- Paper and pens

Getting Started

A Nation in Decline?

Show the class newspaper clippings of recent events that might indicate

the nation's decline (crimes, scandals, political cover-ups). Read a few of the headlines or summarize an article. **Ask:** Is our nation declining? What do you see as evidence to support your answer? Is the decline a result of sin? Do we (Christians and unbelievers) deserve God's punishment?

Fakes

Ask: How many different fake items do you own (e.g., a plastic plant, fake jewelry, false teeth)? Give the students three minutes to make a list of their fake items. **Ask:** Why do most people want their relationships to be real? (Questions 1, 2)

Searching the Scriptures

At the time of Isaiah, Judah was in need of getting real. Their lives were fake and God challenged them about it. God's challenge also translates to our need to be real with God.

TRANSPARENCY: Display transparency 2 to show the history of Israel and Isaiah's place in it.



The Northern Kingdom of Israel fell (722 BC) to the Assyrians during the reign of Ahaz, the third king mentioned in Isaiah 1:1. The Southern Kingdom of Judah fell to the Babylonians about a century after Isaiah's time. (The final destruction of Jerusalem occurred in 586 BC) Isaiah witnessed Israel's fall as well as the Lord's threats against Judah. Isaiah warned Judah of her need to turn to God to avoid a fate similar to Israel's. He predicted that Judah would be taken captive by Babylon; but he also prophesied of Judah's return from captivity and of the ultimate deliverance God would bring through the Messiah's ministry. Today's study reveals Judah's need for a Messiah and anticipates God's provision of one.

I. The Lord's Charges against Judah (Isa. 1:1-15)

The opening chapter of Isaiah could be called "The Great Arraignment." God set forth His grievances against Judah, illustrated the evidences, exhorted the people to change their ways, and challenged them to a trial.

READ: Isaiah 1:1. **BIBLE STUDY:** Divide the learners into four groups. Assign each group one of the kings mentioned in the first verse of Isaiah: Uzziah (Azariah) (2 Kings 15:1-7); Jotham (2 Kings 15:32-38); Ahaz (2 Kings 16); Hezekiah (2 Kings 18-20). Each group determines whether or not the king assigned to them was good and what, if anything, the king did that God considered bad.

A. Ignorance of their relationship to God (1:2–4)

God was the speaker in this chapter. He called upon Heaven and earth as witnesses of the relationship between His people and Him: “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken” (v. 2). Israel’s ignorance shown in her rebellion, stupidity, and sin.

READ: Isaiah 1:2. **ASK:** What do we learn about the people of Judah by God’s comparison of them to rebellious children? (Question 3)

Isaiah compared Israel to a rebellious child who, despite his good upbringing, ignorantly rebels against his parents, who gave him life.

The ox is considered a stupid animal, and the donkey is known for its stubbornness, but both manifest more sense than Israel did. Even an animal knows its owner, who feeds it (v. 3). But Israel was ignorant of the God Who created and sustained her. By comparison, Israel had less understanding than an animal known for its stupidity.

Note the words of verse 4, which depict the people’s sin. The people of Israel spurned God and turned from Him, showing their ignorance. How different from what God intended for His people!

B. Indifference to the chastisement of God (1:5–9)

God had disciplined Israel’s sin, but the nation was indifferent to it. He asked, “Why should ye be stricken any more?” (v. 5). Their continuing rebellion brought repeated punishment; however, it was without effect.

1. The bruised body (vv. 5, 6)

Isaiah compared the nation to a bruised and bloody body. Outside (the head) and inside (the heart), from bottom (the sole of the foot) to top (the head), the body was afflicted. The various words Isaiah used to describe the body’s injuries reflect different sources for the hurt. “Wounds” are from a sword; “bruises” the result of a blow; “putrefying sores” from a whipping. Although God had tried to get Israel’s attention through discipline, she did not respond and made no attempt to correct her problems. The nation remained indifferent to God’s chastening hand.

DISCUSS: What might be some reasons a person would ignore God’s chastening hand? (Question 4)

2. The besieged city (vv. 7–9)

MAP: Display transparency 3 to show the nations of Israel and Judah at the time of Isaiah.

The Assyrians did not conquer Judah, but they did attack, even threatening the city of Jerusalem (see Isaiah 36 and 37). Some of the outlying towns fell to Assyria, and only the hand of God kept the whole nation from being conquered. Deuteronomy 28:49–52 predicted this judgment on a disobedient nation.



READ: Deuteronomy 28:49–52.

People generally lived in cities or towns, and they farmed the surrounding land. At harvest time, farmers would erect a temporary shelter or booth to house a guard who protected the crop from marauding animals or thieves. Although unconquered by Assyria, Judah stood alone with no one to guard her. It was God's mercy that kept Judah from being destroyed like the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

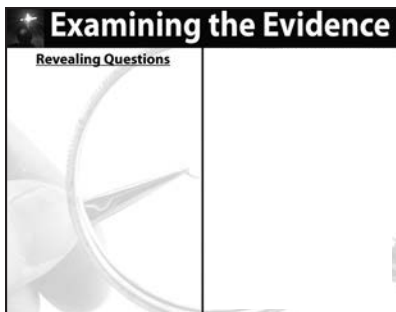
C. Insincerity in their worship of God (1:10–15)

The Jews of Isaiah's day probably felt they didn't deserve God's punishment. After all, they were still quite religious. Even though they still held to God's prescribed sacrificial system, they had abandoned Him in their hearts. In verses 10–15, God addressed the matter of Judah's worship.

READ: Isaiah 1:10–15. **ASK:** What three words would you use to describe Judah's worship of God? (Question 5)

The people offered unacceptable sacrifices. Addressing Judah as Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord asked why the people had offered sacrifices. He even stated that He was fed up with them. Why did God object to Judah's sacrifices when He had given them their form of worship? In short, it was because Judah's worship had become a mere matter of form; their relationship had decayed into superficial religion. They were guilty of formalism, of just going through the motions with no sincerity of heart in their worship of God. The people had shown as little respect for God as an animal who tramples something underfoot (v. 12). Their worship was an "abomination" (v. 13), a word usually used of pagan worship. (See Deuteronomy 7:25 and 1 Kings 11:5.)

Judah even observed the appointed holy days, but God had tired of the people's observances since they did not observe those days with a sincere heart. God rejected their empty formality so much that He would not even hear their prayers. They were as guilty as murderers; their hands were "full of blood" (v. 15).



TRANSPARENCY: Display transparency 4 with the right half covered. **DISCUSS:** What questions could you ask yourself as you examined your sinfulness and sincerity before God? (Question 6) Record learners' answers on the transparency.

II. The Lord's Challenge to Judah (Isa. 1:16–20)

Having demonstrated that His people were sinful, both in act and in attitude, God presented them with a challenge.

A. Change your path (1:16, 17)

Judah needed to stop her wicked ways (v.16).

READ: Isaiah 1:16. **ASK:** Why are the words “before mine eyes” so important in God’s instructions to Judah? (Question 7)

Judah needed to do more than just stop sinning; they also needed to begin doing good (v. 17).

READ: Isaiah 1:17. **ASK:** Why would God mention doing good to rather insignificant orphans and widows in His instructions to Judah? (Question 8)

Orphans and widows were a downtrodden class of people, usually destitute and preyed upon by the unscrupulous and without anyone to champion their cause. God would see justice for them.

B. Consider His pardon (1:18)

READ: Isaiah 1:18.

Isaiah 1:18 is actually a challenge to go to trial. The word “reason” (*yakab*) is a law term used to indicate coming to a conclusion about a court case. God wanted to convince the people by their argumentation with Him that He was right and they were wrong about their condition.

In view of the case that God had against His people, there was little hope for them. Their sins were as brilliantly red as scarlet, as bright as crimson, and had to be judged so. Only when the offender acknowledges his guilt can he be pardoned. Hence, God proposed a trial in which He could find Israel only guilty. Then He would offer pardon and cleansing. Their blood-colored sins could become as white as snow.

How can God offer pardon to sinful man? How can He be just in doing so? Is He sweeping our sins under the rug? Is He merely overlooking sins? We find the answers to these questions in the redemptive work of Christ. At this point in Israel’s history, Messiah had not yet come. The pardon God offered was based on the belief that the Messiah would come. Later in the book, Isaiah prophesied of the coming Messiah and His pardon.

An individual’s response to the challenge of verse 18 determined whether he or she would experience blessing or judgment; it was either eat or be eaten. Respond and eat (v. 19): The obedient would enjoy the bountiful harvest God had promised in Deuteronomy 28:3–6. Or, refuse and be eaten (v. 20): The disobedient rebels would be eaten (“devoured”) by the enemy (“sword”) as promised in Deuteronomy 28:45–52. The seriousness of these promises and warnings is underscored by the words “for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (v. 20).

ASK: Based on God’s warnings and promises in Isaiah 1:18–20, what would you expect Judah’s response to be? (Question 9)

Ultimately, Judah doesn't repent and do good works. Looking back at their choices, it is easy to be critical of them. But, we as believers today can be just as stubborn and ignorant of our sin.

III. The Lord's Chastisement of Judah (Isa. 1:21–31)

In the final section of chapter 1, God continued to point out the sins of His people and warned that judgment would come. This judgment had the goal of getting His people to turn from their sins.

A. Corruption: The reason for chastisement (1:21–23)

The decline of the nation was evident. In the past, Jerusalem had been faithful to God, but in Isaiah's day, she had broken her covenant vows like a harlot (v. 21).

Silver and wine were valuable commodities in the ancient Middle East. But the Israelites were no longer valuable; instead they were as worthless as the residue left after silver had been smelted ("dross") or as worthless as diluted, watered-down wine.

The nation's decline could also be seen in the corrupt leaders who ignored the plight of orphans and widows (v. 23). Furthermore, bribery was rampant; justice was only for those who could afford to pay the bribe.

B. Correction: The reality of chastisement (1:24–26)

In verse 24 God promised that sin would not continue indefinitely. Judgment was sure to occur, and He would rid Himself ("ease me") of the wicked, even if those people were supposedly His followers.

God didn't intend His chastisement to be vindictive but rather to accomplish a purpose.

READ: Isaiah 1:25. **ASK:** Why is purging dross a good analogy for what God wanted to do to Judah? (Question 10)

In the Millennium, Jerusalem will once again be a faithful city. During that time, God will reinstitute the ancient system of judges to rule the kingdom, as He did before the kings.

C. Conversion: The result of chastisement (1:27–31)

The purpose of chastisement is to bring man to repentance. Unfortunately, not all people respond the way God would want. Some repent (v. 27), but others rebel (v. 28).

Rebels will be purged from the kingdom, leaving only the faithful remnant. Sadly, the majority of Judah rejected the pardon God provided, and their fate is described in the final verses of Isaiah 1.

READ: Isaiah 1:29–31. **ASK:** These verses give a bleak outlook for those in Judah who refused to repent. How do you see God's grace even in these bleak verses? (Question 11)

Making It Personal

Use the following activities to motivate your learners to apply this lesson.

Let's Be Honest

Transparency: Display transparency 4 with the right half covered. Challenge the learners to ask themselves the tough, revealing questions that will help them to see themselves as God sees them.

Praising Grace

Transparency: Display transparency 4. **Ask:** Give a statement of praise about God's grace. Record several statements on the transparency. (Question 12)

Review Transparency

Use transparency 1 to review the Hope of the Messiah for this lesson: God's grace is greater than all sin.

Memory Verse

Distribute copies of the Isaiah 1:18 verse card from the resource CD.

NEXT WEEK

Ask someone to prepare a brief oral report on seraphim. Suggest that the person look up the word in a Bible dictionary or Bible encyclopedia as well as finding Bible references where the word occurs. Ask for this report as you study Isaiah 6:2 in lesson 2.

