

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, February 20, 2022

Passage: Isaiah 1:2-20

Memory Passage: Isaiah 1:16-18

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Isaiah 1:2-20.** As you read through this section, take note of its structure. Identify main characters, repeated words or phrases, shifts in subject matter or mood, etc. Make an outline of the structure.

(b) What genre are you reading, and how does this help you read and understand this section? Since we are reading Hebrew poetry (☺), one helpful characteristic to remember is its use of parallelism. Rather than using rhyme and meter (as English poetry often does), Hebrew poetry often uses parallelism, a way of rhyming thoughts or ideas rather than sounds. Hebrew Parallelism uses groupings of lines (usually 2 or 3 but sometimes 4) in which the thought or idea of the first line is restated differently in the following lines (Synonymous Parallelism), or the thought of the second line is the opposite of the thought or idea of the first (Antithetical Parallelism), or the second and following lines advance or intensify the thought of the first line (Synthetic Parallelism). There are other types of parallelism, such as Emblematic Parallelism (in which a figure of speech is stated in the first line and explained in the second) or Climactic Parallelism (in which each line builds to a climax in the last), but these are the main three. Hebrew poetry also makes use of simile (a comparison using *like* or *as*), metaphor (a comparison not using *like* or *as*), synecdoche (using part of something to stand for the whole), and personification (assigning human characteristics to non-human things or inanimate objects). Knowing these devices found in Hebrew poetry will be a great help as you read and interpret Isaiah.

(c) Now that you're an expert in Hebrew poetry ;-), take note of examples of parallelism and other devices in 1:2-20.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Is. 1:2-20.** What image is invoked in the first half of v. 2 (cf., Deut. 4:26; 30:19; 31:28; 32:1)?

(b) How does Isaiah describe the nation and its situation in vs. 2-4 (you should have at least 11 descriptions, or 6 if you recognize and account for the synonymous parallelism)? How does he describe God in vs. 2-4?

(c) Explain the metaphor used in vs. 5-6 and the simile used in vs. 7-8.

(d) Isaiah often mixes judgment with hope. What hope is presented in v. 9?

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Is. 1:2-20.** What grammatical clues exist to show a new sub-section begins in v. 10?

(b) What is the difference between the simile using Sodom and Gomorrah in v. 9 and the metaphor using Sodom and Gomorrah in v. 10? What is Isaiah communicating about God and Israel in each verse?

(c) If verses 2-9 deal with the nation's standing before God, with what aspect of life do verses 10-20 deal?

(d) What is wrong with their worship practices in vs. 11-15? Is God against the practices (i.e., burnt offerings, the blood of animals in v. 11; coming before the LORD in v. 13; holding feasts and assemblies in vs. 13-14; prayer in v. 15)? If not the practices themselves, then with what is God fed up and burdened?

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Is. 1:2-20.** Again, we find both judgment and hope! What does Yahweh command of His people in vs. 16-17 that will begin the process of restoration? Notice the parallelism and how it helps you fully understand what Yahweh desires.

(b) Verses 19-20 bring the third summons from God to His people (cf. vs. 2, 10, 18). What is meant by the call to “reason together” in v. 19?

(c) Explain the relationship between the stipulations in v. 19 and the promise in v. 18?

(d) What is the difference between “eat” the good of the land and “be eaten” by the sword (v. 19)?

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Is. 1:2-20.** In what ways do you, as part of God's chosen people, resemble the behavior and attitudes described in these verses that brought God's judgment? Consider your relationship to God: do you love and obey Him as a Father who has redeemed you and revealed Himself to you (vs. 2-3); do you cherish sin rather than His presence and His word (vs. 4-6); are you living in the consequences of unrepentant sin (vs. 7-8) but continuing to rebel (v. 5a)?

(b) Consider your worship practices: do they seem outwardly obedient but void of inward devotion (i.e., you attend worship, pray, read your Bible, participate in a discipleship group, etc., but you are not growing in sanctification)? Are you engaged in outward acts of worship in order to manipulate God, put up a spiritual front for others, or “get something” from God through your obedience?

(c) Consider your daily life: in what ways do you practice repentance leading to obedience (vs. 16-19) which reveals that you know God (v. 3) and are part of God's elect people (vs. 2c, 9)?

(d) In what ways will you begin today to reverse habits and thoughts in your life that will lead to blessing rather than curses, to life rather than judgment? Be specific with your intentions.

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Come, Hear, and Reason