



## Bible Reading Guide July 2015

### Isaiah 40 - 66

#### Introduction:

Isaiah began his ministry around 740 BC, at a time when Judah and Israel were in conflict with one another and both nations were spiritually corrupt. Israel was later (722-721BC) taken into captivity by the Assyrians. In the midst of great political chaos, Isaiah's message did not say God would spare His people from oppression and military occupation, but rather it pointed the people to God for refuge and redemption. Isaiah foretold God's chastisement of Judah through being taken into exile to Babylon (586BC) and the subsequent re-gathering of God's people in His great mercy, but also in parallel, prophesied the birth of Christ and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom through the Saviour's birth, suffering, death, and resurrection.

The book can be seen as consisting of two parts. Chapters 1-39, often referred to as Isaiah I, were most likely written in the early 700's BC, before the demise of Assyria. Chapters 40-66, often known as Isaiah II, may have been written in Isaiah's later years, giving a message of comfort to those under exile. The great Isaiah Scroll, part of Dead Sea Scrolls, does not divide the book into the two parts.

<b>Day 1</b>	<p><b>Read Isaiah 40    Coming of the victorious God to weary exiles</b></p> <p>The Lord's message to Isaiah is that He intends to comfort His people and lead them out of exile back to Jerusalem. The all-powerful Lord alone can do this.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In the opening verses, who is God talking to and what is he asking them to do?</li> <li>2. What is the primary message of "the voice" in vs 3-5? Who was this voice later to be found in NT times?</li> <li>3. What is the primary message of "the voice" in vs 6-8?</li> <li>4. What is the primary message of "the voice" in vs 9-11?</li> </ol> <p>The remainder of the chapter continues to clarify just who this great God of ours is.  <u>For personal meditation:</u> Is there anything that needs leveling and preparing before you are ready for the Lord?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "...but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.." — 40:31</p>
<b>Day 2</b>	<p><b>Read Isaiah 41    The merciful Lord who controls history</b></p> <p>The chapter pictures God summoning the unbelieving nations to come before Him in a court to prove who has been faithless, who is responsible for the atrocities brought by the conqueror from the east (Cyrus the Great of Persia, as told us in 44:28, 45:1), but</p>

	<p>they all cannot defend themselves. The case shows that God is the loving and righteous Lord. Even as He chastises His people He is merciful and will eventually rescue them.</p> <p>As Cyrus approaches, the people come together to help and encourage one another, to build even bigger idols. How does God redirect the thinking of His people? (vs 8-10)</p> <p>Why does God allow difficulties in our lives (v.17-20)?</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> If you were summoned to court to debate the Lord, who would be found faithless? In what way?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the Lord will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them." —41:17</p>
<p><b>Day 3</b></p>	<p>Read Isaiah 42 <b>Servant of the Lord – The Messiah and Israel contrasted</b></p> <p>In 42:1-9 the Servant that Isaiah tells us about is none other than the Messiah. What are some of the things we learn about Him in verses 1-4?</p> <p>How do verses 5-9 remind you of Jesus' ministry as recorded in the Gospels?</p> <p>In 42:10-25 God is not only the glorious God worthy of praise. He is also the righteous God. Who is the enemy God is marching against in v 13?</p> <p>What is being described in verses 13-17, punishment or blessing?</p> <p>Verses 18 to the end are yet another plea for the people to repent and follow God. But many would not and thus they suffered God's burning anger.</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> Are there any areas in your life where you are still turning a deaf ear or an intentional blind eye to sin, or where you do not speak in love to someone about their ongoing sin?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> " I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them." —42:16</p>
<p><b>Day 4</b></p>	<p>Read Isaiah 43:1-44:5 <b>Renewal of Israel</b></p> <p>Verses 1-7 promise the re-gathering of God's people from captivity so that the people have no reason to fear. Vs 8-13 depict a trial; first, witnesses are called for the Lord and then witnesses are called for the nations. The Lord then makes His claim that the witnesses will attest to that He alone is the sovereign Lord, because He conducts His people through history in a way that they can follow with confidence; and His ability to predict the future and to chart it out.</p> <p>The immediate fulfilment of this prophecy for Israel will be their return from the captivity—which has been predicted as well as their captivity. But that fulfilment is merely a harbinger of the greater ingathering that would take place at the end of the age.</p> <p>V.14ff promise that God will deliver His people from bondage. This section falls into three main parts: the declaration that God will deliver them (14-21), the explanation that they do not deserve this (22-28), and the exhortation for them not to fear (44:1-5). What does it mean to you when God says "You are my witnesses", "my servant whom I have chosen" (vs 10)?</p> <p>Read chapter 43:14-28. What are some of the words that help us define "grace" in these verses?</p> <p>Our confidence in the promises here is only as strong as our knowledge of the Lord. So this passage, and those to come, will have very strong theology on the sovereignty of God.</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> To what extent does your experience resonate with the unfaithfulness of Israel and the long-suffering and mercies of the Lord?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life." —43:4</p>

<p><b>Day 5</b></p>	<p>Read Isaiah 44:6-45:25 <b>“No God but Me”</b></p> <p>The court case continues (see chapter 41). On cross examination, the false gods and idols prove to be nothing. There is no God but our Lord.</p> <p>44:12-20 describes the mindless idolatry of people. Why do people choose to worship idols rather than the magnificent true God? What are some examples of idolatry today?</p> <p>In 44:21-28, what appeal and promise are made to Israel, and to us?</p> <p>In Ch 45, it is clear that the Lord, not Cyrus, will free His people from the Babylonian exile. Cyrus, the King of Persia, will merely be an instrument in God's hands. He will use Cyrus, an unbeliever, to rebuild Jerusalem and his temple. Why would He do that when Israel is His chosen servant?</p> <p>In 45:14-25. These far flung countries mentioned in verse 14 are not physically in bondage to Israel; what does this spiritual picture convey?</p> <p>What do the remaining verses of this chapter tell us about who God is and what He desires?</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> Are there idols in my life that are standing in the way of my total devotion of the Lord?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "Remember these things, Jacob, for you, Israel, are my servant. I have made you, you are my servant; Israel, I will not forget you. I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you." —44:21-22</p>
<p><b>Day 6</b></p>	<p>Read Isaiah 46 <b>The Lord's transcendence</b></p> <p>Our God is a jealous God. He alone has the right to be jealous. He insists that we obey the first commandment and have no other gods before Him (Ex 20:3; Dt 5:7; 6:4).</p> <p>46:1-2 describe idolatry as burdensome. How is that true in your observation?</p> <p>46:3-4 describe God's loving kindness to His people, despite their unfaithfulness. He asks "To whom will you compare me..?" How does He compare with other gods that people choose to worship?</p> <p>How do you understand God's promise in vs. 12-13 in the light of NT revelation?</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> Why do people choose to worship "idols" (religious, materialistic or psychological ones) instead of the Heavenly Father? Have you had that tendency also?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are now far from my righteousness. I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away; and my salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendor to Israel." —46:12-13</p>
<p><b>Day 7</b></p>	<p>Read Isaiah 47 <b>Fall of Babylon</b></p> <p>The prophet taunts Babylon in song. "Both of these will overtake you in a moment, on a single day: loss of children and widowhood." (47:9) because Babylon commits the sin of Adam and Eve in seeking autonomy from God and acts as Him.</p> <p>When this chapter was written, Babylon hadn't even become a world power yet, let alone being taken captive in shame. But huge unexpected political shifts have also happened in recent history. What is the reason for Babylon's rise and destruction?</p> <p>What things did the people of Babylon rely upon in their idolatrous worship?</p> <p>Why are such things so alluring?</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> How might you apply the message of this chapter to things in your own life?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "I will take vengeance; I will spare no one (of oppressing evil)." Our Redeemer—the Lord Almighty is his name—is the Holy One of Israel. 47:3-4</p>
<p><b>Day 8</b></p>	<p>Read Isaiah 48 <b>Exhortation to His people</b></p> <p>The Lord was exasperated with His people. They attributed God's work and glory to everyone but God—even to idols.</p> <p>What are some modern day examples of this behavior, in the unbelieving world, and</p>

	<p>within the church circle?</p> <p>In verses 9-11 God says he shows mercy for His own sake (cf. Eph 1:11-14 – “for the praise of His glory”). What does this mean?</p> <p>In vs 17, the Lord calls Himself both the Redeemer and the Holy One of Israel. What differences do these two names signify?</p> <p>Verses 20-21 point God's people to the promised release from captivity and to the greater redemption that lies beyond.</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> God refers to Israel as “you who ...invoke the God of Israel—but not in truth or righteousness”. Is there any element of that in our lives?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your well-being like the waves of the sea." —48:18</p>
<p><b>Day 9</b></p>	<p>Read Isaiah 49 <b>Mission of the Servant</b></p> <p>This is a "Suffering Servant" prophecy. He preaches God's word with apparently little effect, but actually He affects not only Israel but brings salvation even to the ends of the earth. This prophecy is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus' death on Calvary. He looks as if He is defeated (see 49:4), but actually through this He redeems the human race.</p> <p>Luther tells us “From this chapter to the end, there is nothing but Christ, and although the prophet at the same time occasionally corrects and rebukes, the scope of this treatise has to do with Christ, with the calling of the Gentiles, and with the rejection of the Jews” (LW, Vol 71, page 169)</p> <p>In verse 8 the Lord says He will make the Servant a covenant for the people. What does this mean (cf. 1Cor 11:25)? What are the benefits of this covenant (vs 9-13)?</p> <p>Read the remainder of chapter 49. If God's plan of salvation is going to be so wonderful, why would Zion (God's people) complain? What do we complain about today?</p> <p>In the pictures in the remaining verses of this chapter we see the return of the Babylonian exiles and also the eventual complete deliverance of believers in the New Jerusalem. What will amaze the people when they get to that point (vs 20-21)?</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> Can you relate different aspects of your own life to Israel's history, as foretold in this chapter?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!” —49:15</p>
<p><b>Day 10</b></p>	<p>Read Isaiah 50 <b>Israel's sin and the Servant's obedience</b></p> <p>This is another "Suffering Servant" prophecy which describes the Servant as a Prophet Who speaks "the word that sustains the weary." (50:4). In doing His work, the Servant has to suffer. He says: "I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting." (50:6). Nevertheless, He perseveres and sets His face like flint, knowing that He would not be put to shame. How does this prophecy remind you of the gospels' account of Jesus' experience as He progressed towards the cross?</p> <p>What is the LORD saying to His people in verses 1-3, then and now?</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> The Servant is reassured that the Lord will sustain him. (42:4, 49:4, 50:7, 50:9). Do you need to grasp this same assurance that the God of free and faithful grace will sustain you to the end?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "It is the Sovereign Lord who helps me. Who will condemn me?" —50:9a (cf. Romans 8:1-34)</p>
<p><b>Day 11</b></p>	<p>Read Isaiah 51:1-52:12 <b>Remnants comforted</b></p> <p>The prophet repeatedly tries to wake up Jerusalem (see 51:9, 17; 52:1). The Lord assures the prophet and us of His salvation and justice, if we but wake up and let Him have His way.</p> <p>Read chapter 51. Believers throughout history have faced dark and dreary circumstances, even those who pursue righteousness. What encouragement do these</p>

	<p>verses give us in our trials?          In verse 17ff, Isaiah pictures the sins of Israel as a drunkard, as an animal completely unable to free himself from a trap. Yet, what is God's response?          Read chapter 52:1-12. Compare verse 7, read in context, with Romans 10:14-15. What is the message of peace, good tidings, and salvation that the messengers are bringing? Who are these messengers?  <u>For personal meditation:</u> Am I spiritually drowsy due to the cares of this world, and do I need revival and to abandon myself into the mighty arms of God?  <b>Promise:</b> "But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail."—51:6b</p>
<b>Day 12</b>	<p>Read Isaiah 52:13-54:17 <b>God's Suffering Servant and the future glory of Zion</b>          This last of the "Suffering Servant" prophecies is one of the most important revelations of all times. It prophesies in detail Jesus' sufferings and death in our place, for our sins, out of love for us.          Read Chapter 52:13 – 53:12          If this was all you ever knew about this Servant, what would you know about          - his young years on this earth (vs 2)?          - his older years on this earth (vs 52:14, 53:3-4)?          - What would you know about God's righteous (vs 4-6)?          Knowing that this prophecy is about Jesus, what would you understand about the gospel?          Read Isaiah 54. The sufferings and death of the Suffering Servant bear fruit abundantly. The barren and deserted wife, Zion, will have so many children that she must enlarge the space for her tent (54:2). How does this relate to Jn 12:24?          How does Isaiah assure us of God's continuing love and faithfulness, even when the ground under our spiritual life quakes?  <u>For personal meditation:</u> Re-read Isa 53:4-6. How shall I respond to God's amazing grace?  <b>Promise:</b> "In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the Lord your Redeemer.</p>
<b>Day 13</b>	<p>Read Isaiah 55-57 <b>Call to salvation</b>          The Lord will lead His people back from Babylon. In fact, He will extend His salvation to all people (cf. 1 Tm 2:4). Despite the spiritual blindness of the leaders and the faithlessness of the people, the Lord promises to revive, heal, lead, and comfort them (cf. John 6:35).          Read Chapter 55          Worldliness, despite its superficial attraction and false promises to fulfil is burdensome and enslaving. Only Christ is the "bread of life" (Jn 6:35) that sustains an abundant life (cf Mat 11:28).          In 55:1-7 What is the pathway to finding satisfaction and abundance in the Lord?          55:8-11 How are the facts that God's thoughts are infinitely higher than ours and His words will not return empty related to our turning to Him?          Read Chapter 56:1-8          What does it mean to "maintain justice and do what is right" (vs 1)? How does this fit in with "justification by faith"?          The reference to eunuchs infers rules like Deut 23:1 shall be abrogated under the new covenant.          Read Chapter 56:9 – 57:21          Suddenly the tone changes as God speaks to those who spurn His free gifts. Why do you think Isaiah compares the Jewish leaders and priests to blind watchmen and muted dogs?          What does it mean to take refuge in the Lord (vs 13)?          Does the message of judgment in the first half of chapter 57 mean God has given up on those who don't believe?</p>

	<p><u>For personal meditation:</u> “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters...Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.” (55:1-2). Is this invitation relevant to you?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> “Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.” 55:6-7</p>
<b>Day 14</b>	<p>Read Isaiah 58 <b>False &amp; true worship</b></p> <p>Superficial and ritualistic religious life is of no value in the eyes of God. Jesus denounced the Pharisees of His day of hypocrisy for exactly the same reason. True worship is seeking God's kingdom and His righteousness. This involves loving obedience to the Lord of our lives and living as He instructs us; glorifying Him in all that we do. Is the kind of hypocritical Christian life described in this chapter prevalent today? Why do you think that is the case?</p> <p>Verses 8-12 say that we will enjoy the Lord's rich blessings if we live righteously. Do you believe this to be true when we see so many good people suffer in this world?</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> 58:2 describes a pious external that is not consistent with other aspects of one's life. Am I guilty of such inconsistencies?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> If we uphold righteousness, "The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail." —58:11</p>
<b>Day 15</b>	<p>Read Isaiah 59 <b>Zion's confession and redemption</b></p> <p>This chapter opens with a description of the sin that separates humanity from God. We pray, but God doesn't seem to do anything. It's not that God doesn't care; rather, our refusal to repent separates us from God (vs 1-2). In His great mercy, the Lord intervened, while we were yet sinners, by sending Christ to save us from our slavery to sin.</p> <p>Would you agree that vs 3-8 are a true description of our world today?</p> <p>Notice how the pronouns change to “us”, in vs 9-15a. Isaiah is including himself in the realization that humanity is hopelessly separated from God because our sins are innate, so numerous, and so grossly offensive to God (cf. Mat 15:19, Rm 3:23). What is God's response to this dismal situation (v 16b)?</p> <p>What does the promise in v21 remind you of (cf. Jer 31:31-34 “The New Covenant”)?</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> How true is vs 1-2 as applied to myself, particularly before I came to receive Christ?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the Lord. "My Spirit, who is on you, will not depart from you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and on the lips of their descendants—from this time on and forever," says the Lord."—59:21</p>
<b>Day 16</b>	<p>Read Isaiah 60 <b>Zion's peace &amp; prosperity</b></p> <p>Isaiah prophecies about Israel's eventual and total redemption. The future will be filled with the blessing of enjoying the Lord forever. Zion will reflect the glory of the Lord and be “the everlasting pride and the joy of all generations” (15b; cf. Mt 5:14). Unbelieving nations and principalities will be defeated and bow down (cf. Eph 1:20-22). All these will be fulfilled “to the praise of His glory” (v. 16b, cf. Eph 1:14)</p> <p>Vs 1-3 foretell God's light coming to shine upon people living in the darkness of sin. How has this been fulfilled?</p> <p>Vs 4 describes Israel rebuilding as a nation as her dispersed people are brought back by the Lord. Has this been fulfilled? What do you think is the eventual fulfillment of this prophecy?</p> <p>Where do we (non-Jew) fit into this glorious picture of eventual blessedness?</p>

	<p><u>For personal meditation:</u> Vs 20 corresponds to Rev. 22:5. It is a picture of God dwelling with His people forever in the New Jerusalem. To what extent do you embrace this hope? Does this hope influence your day-to-day outlook on life?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end." (60:20).</p>
<b>Day 17</b>	<p>Read Isaiah 61-62 <b>The Lord's favour</b></p> <p>This chapter talks about God's restoration of Israel through the ministry of His servant. Jesus uses Isa 61:1-2 to describe His own ministry (Lk 4:18-21). Israel loses her blessings from the Lord because of her rebelliousness and sin and is chastised. They are unrighteous, yet they will be called "oaks of righteousness" (61:3b). Is her restoration the result of her self-motivated reform? How does it come about (see 61:3b &amp; 61:10-11)?</p> <p>What do you think 61:4 is referring to?</p> <p>62:1 is the prophet speaking, saying that he would keep on praying until God's promises are fulfilled and He re-establishes His people as "the praise of the earth" (62:7). In 62:4 Hephzibah means <i>my delight is in her</i>, and in 62:4 Beulah means <i>married</i>. 62:5 uses marriage as an analogy to illustrate God's relationship with His people, the Church (cf. Rev 19:7-9). What does this analogy convey to you as the essence of the relationship (cf. Eph 5:25-27)?</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> The two chapters convey a sense of comfort and gladness. How does this prophecy apply to you? Do you share the sense of gladness and hope? Do you pray consistently for the Lord to fulfil His promise of full restoration of His people?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." —61:1 – 2</p>
<b>Day 18</b>	<p>Read Isaiah 63-64 <b>The Lord's vengeance and redemption</b></p> <p>63:1 "Edom" symbolizes a world that hate's God people, and "Bozrah" is an important city in Edom, and has the same significance. The name means "grape gathering". This, together with "stained crimson", and the reference to treading the wine press in 63:2-4 is suggestive of the picture of God's vengeance on the unrighteous (cf. Rev. 14:19-20) and that in Rev 19:13 where Christ's robe is dipped in blood as He wages war against His enemies on His second coming. The day of His vengeance is also the time of His redemption for His people. Hence, the change of mood in v.7 ff to praise and thanksgiving.</p> <p>Then the prophet talks of God's faithfulness even in times of their rebellion (10-14), and finally he gets to his plea that God would not forsake His people (15ff). In verse 15, Isaiah makes it sound as if God is a long way away. Has He ever felt like that to you? Why do you think that is?</p> <p>63:18-64:4 describe times when our faith is severely challenged as evil seems to win. When this happens, what can we learn from Isaiah's prayer?</p> <p>In 64:5-12. Isaiah's prayer continues. God helps those who strive to do His will, but we know our continued sin angers him.</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> As we meditate on the magnitude of our sin and our lack of faithfulness to follow Him, we lament, with Isaiah, how we can ever be saved. Yet God Himself provides the solution (vs 8). He shapes and molds our lives much as a potter shapes his clay. He is indeed our Lord and Father (v.8).</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your Savior comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.'" They will be called the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord—Isaiah 62:11-12</p>

<p><b>Day 19</b></p>	<p>Read Isaiah 65 <b>The Lord's answer</b></p> <p>The last two chapters is God's response to Isaiah's (and our) prayer.</p> <p>In 65:1-5 God says He initiates the rebuilding of relationship between His obstinate people with Himself. Is this true in your personal experience?</p> <p>Is the description of the people's obstinacy factually true of this generation?</p> <p>Read chapter 65:6-16. Will God punish the people beyond measure? Why or why not?</p> <p>Read the remainder of chapter 65. Isaiah sees both life in Christ on earth and also life in the New Heavens and New Earth, the gathering of all believers to dwell with God Himself. Human thought and imagination, strained to its limits, cannot comprehend or express what life is like in heaven. Not only will it be a joy for the faithful, God says He delights in the faithful (vs 18)! The verses depict a type of peace largely foreign to us – joyful work, nothing in vain, blessed by the Lord, wolf and lamb feeding beside each other. How would you describe God's peace?</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> What is your hope as a Christian? How does it influence your direction of life and attitude towards worldly affairs?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "Lo, I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the things of the past shall not be remembered or come to mind. Instead, there shall always be rejoicing and happiness in what I create." —65:17-18</p>
<p><b>Day 20</b></p>	<p>Read Isaiah 66 <b>True worshiper</b></p> <p>The backdrop of this chapter might have been the repairing of the temple in the days of King Hezekiah. In 66:1-2, what do you think God wants His people to understand?</p> <p>Verse 3 describes worship that merely consists of external observance of the prescribed formalities without the offering a life of devotion to the Lord. If the worshiper lacks the qualities outlined in verse 2, his worship is considered by the Lord to be like idolatry. Is this too harsh a view? How prevalent is ritualistic worship in churches today?</p> <p>V4 is a sobering reminder of what God will do. When we reject God we will ended up seeking our own delusion. This will happen particularly during the Great Tribulation (2 Thess 2:11). Does our world seek its own delusions?</p> <p>V 7-11, Isaiah prophesies a day when the victory will come easily to Jerusalem: She gives birth - but without pain!</p> <p>Vs18-21: The LORD gathers and restores His people. The Lord has set a date for the entire world to stand before Him: to behold His glory and to be confronted with the truth that He alone is God (v 18). Prior to that, the Lord's glory will be declared among the nations by His dispersed people (v19). This might have been a reference to Act 2:5ff and the subsequent preaching of the gospel to the gentiles, as well as to the church carrying out the Great Commission of Mat 28:19-20.</p> <p>Vs 22-24 declare the certainty of the LORD's judgment and His restoration. God has an ultimate plan to reach the nations, seen in its ultimate fulfillment in Revelation 5:9-10. God will take people from every tribe and tongue, and "all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the Lord.</p> <p>The book of Isaiah closes with a sobering contrast, revealing the ultimate, eternal importance of this present life. Each life can choose its destiny: eternal life or eternal death.</p> <p><u>For personal meditation:</u> Are you one of those who "tremble at God's word?" They tremble at the searching power of God's Word. Do you come to church service, and say, 'Lord, grant that your Word may search me and try me, that I may not be deceived'?</p> <p><b>Promise:</b> "As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the Lord, "so will your name and descendants endure." —66:22</p>

Next month: Psalms