

Weekly Study Guide

February 12, 2017

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Daily Readings

Sunday	1 Kings 8:27, 18:21; 2 Kings 6:16-17, 22:8	Solomon builds the temple. Kings who follow cause the kingdom to split: north and south, Israel and Judah. God sends Elijah and Elisha who perform many miracles; both kingdoms fall.
Monday	1 Chronicles 28:2-5; 2 Chronicles 7:14, 36:19-21	1 Chronicles is a different version of David's reign. 2 Chronicles is a different version of the era of the Kings.
Tuesday	Ezra 3:3, 3:12 ; Nehemiah 2:17, 4:16-17	In returning from Exile, God's people rebuild the wall and the temple.
Wednesday	Esther 4:14 Job 1:21-22	Story of how God is working for his oppressed people in exile. Story of how God is present with Job even in the midst of individual trouble and oppression.
Thursday	Psalms 5:2	Prayers, songs, poems of God's people written through relationship with him; written by David, Solomon, and other worship leaders.
Friday	Proverbs 1:1, 1:7; Ecclesiastes 3:1, 3:14; Song of Songs 8:6-7 (also called Song of Solomon)	Three books attributed to Solomon. Proverbs: wise sayings. Ecclesiastes: a wrestling with meaning and faith. Song of Songs: comparing relationship with God to a love affair.
Saturday	Isaiah 17:10a, 9:6-7	Prophet warning the Northern Kingdom of the coming exile, then, once it happens, encouragement that one day they'd return home. Contains many prophecies of Jesus.

Regular habits of private Bible reading strengthen our relationship with God and teach us how to follow Jesus. In addition to the thematic exercise above, you can use this guide each week to lead you through relevant sections of the Bible.

Group Discussion Guide

CONNECT

What's your favorite thing about winter? What are you looking forward to most about the coming of spring?

LEARN AND APPLY

In the first week of our series, we read a passage from the Old Testament about Joseph and his brothers. In this second week, we are still in the Old Testament, but we are taking a look at a passage in Isaiah. While last week we read a narrative story, we are now reading the prophet Isaiah's prophecy.

WHAT'S A PROPHET? PROPHECY?

A prophet is someone who hears and proclaims the Word of God, and their prophecy is that proclaimed Word. A prophecy can foretell the future, but it can also help explain current and past events. The main thing to remember is that prophets receive a divine Word to share with other people.

HOW TO READ BIBLICAL PROPHECY

As a group, discuss how you go about reading a prophecy in the Bible.

- What difficulties have you had while reading a prophecy?
- What helps you understand what is being said?
- How might you find some of the context surrounding the prophecy?

READING ISAIAH

The book of Isaiah has prophecies of promise, hope, and judgement, making it a great book to practice reading biblical prophecy. For some context, Isaiah prophesied after Israel had divided. The Northern Kingdom had been living in sin for quite some time, and the southern nation, Judah, is headed in the same direction (if you would like to know more sometime, you can read 2 Kings 15 - 21 or 2 Chronicles 26 - 33). With that in mind, **read Isaiah 1**.

- Who is Isaiah speaking to, and why?
- How does Isaiah's tone shift throughout the passage? How might you split and group the chapter's verses to match the various tones?
- Imagine being one of the people receiving Isaiah's prophecy. How do you suppose they felt hearing the message as they heard judgement, commands, encouragement and a sense of promise?
- In this series we are learning to ask what Scripture tells us about God. What are you learning about God as you read this passage?
- We are also learning what it means to be part of the people of God. What are you learning about being the people of God?

READING PROPHECY AS CHRISTIANS

- When we read prophetic texts from the Old Testament, we are looking through the lens of what God has done for us through Jesus. See how this next passage teaches more about what we read in Isaiah 1. **Read Matthew 23:1-11**.
- Who is Jesus condemning? Who is he helping?
- Upon reading this passage and keeping Isaiah 1 in mind, what are you learning about the heart of God? What are you learning about the heart of someone who has decided to follow Jesus?

PRAY

Not everyone has the gift of prophecy, and that is a good thing! As we read in 1 Corinthians 12, the body of Christ is one made up of many parts and all are equally important. However, even though we are not all called to prophesy, each one of us can speak and be with God. Close in prayer with this in mind, asking God for his voice to guide your life. If you would like, **read Psalm 116** as a prayer, trusting that God is with you, which allows you to live to serve him.