

Women's Bible Study

Fall 2020: Isaiah

Suggested Abbreviated Reading Plan for Tuesday, October 20th

"Chapters 36-39 form a narrative bridge between the first and second parts of Isaiah's book. These events fulfill many of Isaiah's predictions in chapters 1-35. At the same time, they foreshadow the exile in Babylon that is the background of chapters 40-66. In 36:1-37:38 Isaiah recounts Assyria's siege of Jerusalem in 701 BC, a crisis the prophet has been promising for years. In 38:1-39:8 Isaiah describes events that ... were chronologically earlier, but the mention of Babylon prepares us for chapter 40." (NavPress Isaiah LifeChange Study)

The full reading assignment for this week is Isaiah 36-39 and Week 7 in the workbook. Following is a suggested reading plan for those who would like a briefer, more focused reading assignment.

1. **Optional:** For those who would like to brush up on a little historical background on King Hezekiah, here are three options:
 - a. Read a summary of Hezekiah's life—there are many on the Internet. [Here's](#) a fairly short one, and here's [another](#) that is a little longer.
 - b. Go straight to the Bible: Read 2 Kings 18-20 and 2 Chronicles 29-32.
 - c. Watch the Bible Project's [nine-minute video on I & II Kings](#). It covers a lot of ground, but will help you situate Hezekiah and Isaiah in Israel's history.
2. Read the two short paragraphs on p. 51 in the workbook ("The Place of the Passage" and "The Big Picture").
3. Skip to p. 55, and read through the "Gospel Glimpses," "Whole Bible Connections," and "Theological Soundings" sections to get a sense for the major themes of these chapters.
4. Read **Isaiah 36:1-10 and 13-15**, and answer the question at the bottom of p. 52 ("The Rabshakeh asks Hezekiah...").
5. Read **Isaiah 37:1-2 and 15-20**, look back at **Isaiah 7:1-13**, and answer the question at the top of p. 53 ("Hezekiah dramatically repents...").
6. Read **Isaiah 38:1-3 and 9-20**. To consider: Hezekiah offers three prayers in this section: 37:15-20; 38:3; and 38:9-20. What do you think of Hezekiah's prayers? How are they relevant to your own prayer life? What do these prayers reveal about Hezekiah's beliefs about God, life, and death? (Adapted from NavPress Isaiah LifeChange Study)
7. Read **Isaiah ch. 39**, and answer the question at the top of p. 55 ("How does Isaiah 39..."). You might also consider these additional questions about Hezekiah, adapted from *Breaking Free* by Beth Moore:
 - a. To whom did Hezekiah show his treasures, and why? (Is. 39:1-4)

- b. What does the constant repetition of the word *his* in 39:2 suggest?
 - c. Why wasn't Hezekiah devastated over Judah's coming captivity? (Is. 39:5-8)
8. **Optional:** After you've completed items 2-7, if you'd like, you can go back and read the full section of Isaiah (chapters 36-39) and answer the remaining workbook questions.
9. **Optional:** Spend some time praying with the words of King Hezekiah.
- "Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth" (Is. 37:16).
 - *Begin in a posture of praise, acknowledging God as the Almighty, the Holy One of Israel, the maker of heaven and earth.*
 - In 37:14, Isaiah tells us that "Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord." Hezekiah then prays: "Give ear, Lord, and hear; open your eyes, Lord, and see; listen to all the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God" (Is. 37:17).
 - *What is happening in the world right now, or in your life or the lives of people you love, that you want to "spread out before the Lord"?*
 - "Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, Lord, are the only God" (Is. 37:20).
 - *From what do you (or someone you love) need to be delivered right now? Humbly present your prayer for deliverance to the Lord.*
 - "Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes" (Is. 38:3).
 - *Many of us might not feel that we can honestly pray this prayer with Hezekiah. Take a few moments to confess to God the ways you have not always walked faithfully before Him with wholehearted devotion.*
 - "I will walk humbly all my years because of this anguish of my soul. Lord, by such things people live; and my spirit finds life in them too. You restored me to health and let me live. Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back" (Is. 38:15b-17).
 - *How has the Lord taken an experience of pain in your life, and used it to your benefit? Give thanks to God for holding you in His love through times of trial and pain.*
 - "The living, the living—they praise you, as I am doing today; parents tell their children about your faithfulness. The Lord will save me, and we will sing with stringed instruments all the days of our lives in the temple of the Lord" (Is. 38:19-20).
 - *Close by praising God for His faithfulness—to His people in the past, to His people now, and to you personally. Perhaps end your prayer time by singing or listening to a favorite song of praise.*