

A BETTER KING, SERVANT, CONQUEROR

The Book of Isaiah

Isaiah 2—5

Verse to Remember

Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths. Isaiah 2:3

In our passage for this week, Isaiah writes about events taking place in three different time periods. He describes the way Judah has forsaken God in the present, God's resulting judgment in the near future, and God's promise of redemption and restoration in the distant future. Isaiah does not record these time periods in chronological order, but instead weaves them together in a way that beautifully highlights God's justice, mercy, compassion, covenant faithfulness, love, and goodness. This lesson will look at chapters 2—5 through the lens of each of these time periods.

In Scripture, the phrases "last days" and "in that day" refer "most often... to the time initiated by Jesus' first coming to earth and climaxed by his second coming to judge and to reign forever."¹ (Joel 2:28–32; Heb. 1:1–2)

Day 1 — Read Isaiah 2—5 to see how Isaiah weaves together the themes of God's judgment and his blessing in the three time periods mentioned above.

Day 2 — The present: Judah's sinful disobedience

Beginning in 2:6 Isaiah paints a detailed picture of Judah's rejection of God and his ways. He also describes some of her underlying attitudes and motivations (Lk. 6:45). Read the following verses about Judah's behaviors. Why do you think each one is offensive to the LORD?

Is. 2:6b

Is. 2:7; Is. 5:8

Is. 2:8

Is. 2:11; Is. 3:9; Is. 5:21

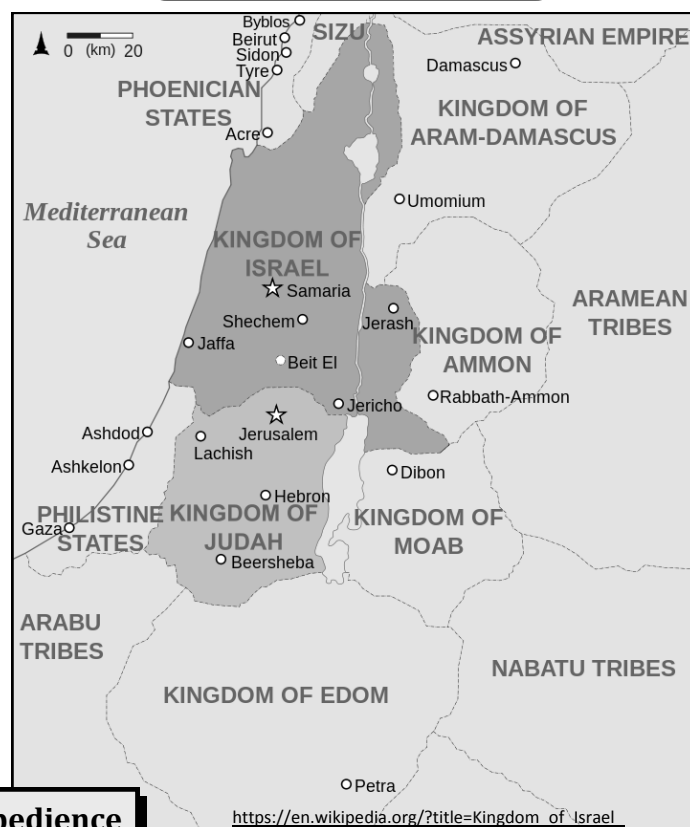
Locate each kingdom and its capital on the map below.

Northern Kingdom:

Israel, Samaria (capital city)

Southern Kingdom:

Judah, Jerusalem or Zion (capital city),
house of Jacob, daughter of Zion



https://en.wikipedia.org/?title=Kingdom_of_Israel

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Is. 2:22

Is. 3:8

Is. 3:14–15; Is. 5:23

Is. 3:16

Is. 5:11, 22

Is. 5:12, 24b

Is. 5:18–19

Is. 5:20

Day 3 — The near future: God's righteous judgment of Judah in the Old Testament

In chapters 2–5 the LORD rises to judge his people, and his anger is aroused against them. All the while God longs for them to repent and return to him, as Isaiah expresses in the Song of the Vineyard in chapter 5.

1. Describe the judgment God has in store for his people and the effect it has on them.

Is. 2:9–11, 19–21

Is. 3:1–8, 11

Is. 3:17–24

Is. 3:25–4:1

Is. 5:5–6, 9–10

Is. 5:13–15

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2. Isaiah uses a string of images (word pictures) in 5:24–30 to describe the Assyrian army’s invasion of Judah. Pick two images and explain how they convey the terror of the coming destruction.

3. If you only had the verses you’ve studied today on which to base your understanding of God, how would you describe him?

4. Isaiah weaves the themes of Judah’s disobedience and God’s judgment throughout his book. The Song of the Vineyard is another example of this. Read Isaiah 5:1–7.
What else do we learn about God’s relationship with his people in this song? (Is. 5:1–4a)

5. Review how you described God in question 3 above. How does the Song of the Vineyard give you a fuller picture of who God is?



The image of **the vineyard** runs through the Old Testament and would be familiar to any Jew. Read Mark 12:1–12 to see how Jesus drew upon this imagery in his confrontation of the Jewish leaders.

Day 4 — The distant future: God’s redemptive plan for Judah **Read Isaiah 2:1–5.**

The purpose behind God’s judgment is restoration. He desires his people to repent and return to loving and worshipping him alone. Judah’s unfaithfulness stands in stark contrast to God’s faithfulness to his covenant. He will make good on his promises: to Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses, David, and Isaiah. These promises culminate in God’s sending of a redeemer who will one day reign over all the earth with justice and righteousness.

1. How does Isaiah characterize “the mountain of the LORD’s temple”? (Is. 2:2)


2. What is the priority of the people in these last days? (Is. 2:3)

3. What dramatic changes will the LORD’s reign and rule bring about on the world scene? (Is. 2:4)

4. In the past, Judah had “no regard for the deeds of the LORD, no respect for the work of his hands” (Is. 5:12). How will this be different in the future? (Is. 2:5, 11b)

Day 5 — The distant future: God's redemptive plan for the entire world
Read Isaiah 4:2–6.

1. The Branch of the LORD ultimately refers to the Son of David, the Messiah: Jesus. He will be the long-awaited King that will rule with both justice and mercy. He will be the one through whom God fulfills his promises of restoration.

How does Isaiah describe him? (Is. 4:2; Is. 11:1–3a;  Zech. 6:12–13)

2. How does Isaiah describe what it will be like in Zion at this time? (Is. 1:26–27; Is. 4:2–6)


3. How do the images that Isaiah uses describe God's relationship with his people? (Is. 4:5–6)

God's promise to create a
cloud and fire
over Mount Zion is reminiscent of his
protective presence with his people
after he rescued them from slavery
in Egypt. (Exod. 13:17–22)

Personal Reflection

For the questions below, consider the themes of rebellion, judgment, and redemption.

1. How is your story both similar to and different from that of Judah?
2. How is the story of Jesus both similar to and different from the story of Judah and your story?
3. How does the story of Jesus intersect with and transform your story? (Is. 53:10–11; Rom. 5:9–11)

*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

¹ Kathleen B. Nielson, *Isaiah: The Lord Saves*, Living Word Bible Studies (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2011), 31–32.