

# A BETTER KING, SERVANT, CONQUEROR

*The Book of Isaiah*

Isaiah 31—35

### Verse to Remember

*And the ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*

Isaiah 35:10



Read 2 Kings 18:13–25, which is the stage on which Isaiah and his people find themselves.

As you read the next several chapters, imagine Isaiah’s gaze going back and forth between rulers in this world who seem to hold all the power and God, who truly holds all power; back and forth between the present and the future, when the promised King and his kingdom are established on earth.

### Day 1 — Read Isaiah 31.

1. Egypt was the land of slavery for the nation of Israel but God “brought [his] people Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror” (Jer. 32:21). What is behind Judah’s desire to return and seek help from Egypt?

Is. 31:1a (📖\* Is. 2:22)

Is. 31:1b, 6–7

2. Complete the chart below to show why the people of Jerusalem could be confident as they face Assyria.

Verse	Image	Reason for Confidence
Is. 31:4		
Is. 31:5		
Is. 31:8–9 (📖 Mt. 19:26)		

3. The “woe” pronounced in Isaiah 31:1 is a recurring theme: God’s people have put their trust in something or someone other than God. Use the following questions to examine your own life. Consider sharing one aspect with your small group.

- Where are you tempted to place your trust other than God?
- How has God taught you that any other trust is foolish and dangerous?
- What helps you keep your eyes on your “great lion” when you are afraid?
- When have you placed the full weight of your trust on God alone and found him faithful to rescue you?

**Day 2 — Read Isaiah 32.**

1. Now Isaiah’s focus swings from the present-day rule of Assyria to the future reign of God’s anointed King.

**What characterizes God’s king and his subjects? (Is. 32:1–5,8)**

**What characterizes those who have rejected God’s king and his subjects? (Is. 32:6–7)**

2. Look again at Isaiah 32:9–14. Refocusing on the Jerusalem of his day, Isaiah turns his attention to the women. What is inappropriate about their attitude?
3. Again God enables Isaiah to see beyond the depressing judgment of his people and the land he loves. What change does he see coming? (Is. 32:15–20;  Ezek. 36:26–38; Acts 2:17–21, 32–33)

**Day 3 Background of Isaiah 33**

“The background of this [passage] is the Assyrian times. The *brave men* are the military leaders [of Judea] coming belatedly, like Hezekiah (37:3), to a realization of their ineffectiveness. The *envoys*, those sent to negotiate the terms of surrender (2 Kings 18:14), now weep as they discover how they have been duped [by the ‘destroyer,’ the Assyrian king]. Neither human power nor human wisdom [has] proved sufficient. The invasion has left *highways* and *roads* deserted, and the prospects of peace by *treaty* are in ruins along with the whole landscape. Humankind without God only brings desolation.”<sup>1</sup>

**Read Isaiah 33.**

1. With the Assyrians just outside Jerusalem, Isaiah voices his people’s need for God and seeks God’s strength and salvation on their behalf. Why do you think Isaiah appeals to God’s graciousness (Is. 33:2)?

Day 3 continues on page 3 

2. Hezekiah’s “envoys of peace” (33:7) have failed in their mission to appease the king of Assyria. How does Isaiah describe the effect of putting their hope in earthly solutions? (Is. 33:7–9)
  
3. In the midst of this siege, there still dwell in Jerusalem some Jews who refuse to align themselves with God or confess their need for him. These “sinners in Zion” see God as a “consuming fire” (33:14). Is this an accurate or inaccurate view of God?
  
4. Verse 15 describes others in Jerusalem who are following Hezekiah’s lead and turning to God. What benefits will those who trust in the Lord enjoy? (Is. 33:16–24)

#### Day 4 — Read Isaiah 34.

##### What’s Edom?

The Edomites were descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob. These brothers literally began their struggle with one another in the womb,<sup>2</sup> and struggle is what characterized the relationship between the nations that descended from them.<sup>3</sup> The prophet Amos, a contemporary of Isaiah, said Edom “pursued his brother with a sword, stifling all compassion, because his anger raged continually and his fury flamed unchecked....”<sup>4</sup> It appears that in this passage **Edom<sup>5</sup> symbolizes all the nations who are hostile toward God’s people.** Interestingly, King Herod the Great, who attempted to kill the young Jesus, the king of the Jews,<sup>6</sup> was an Edomite!

Chapters 34—35 are similar to chapters 24—27: they summarize God’s devastating judgment against all the nations and then contrast it with the exquisite beauty of the coming kingdom. For this reason, Day 4 of this lesson is very dark, but it will brilliantly set off Isaiah’s description of what God has planned for his people!

1. How does the language Isaiah uses show the extent of God’s judgment? (Is. 34:1–5)
  
2. As God upholds his people’s cause (34:8), what effect does his wrath have on his enemies and their land? (Is. 34:6–17)

Day 4 continues on page 4 

3. Consider how Isaiah uses the image "sword of the LORD" in Isaiah 34:5–6. With this in mind look at Revelation 19:11–21 where Jesus wields it. What does this image convey in both passages?

### Day 5 — Read Isaiah 35.

Phew - you've made it to chapter 35! Keep in mind as you read this chapter that the land and roads of Isaiah's time were devastated by the Assyrians.

1. Jot down a few of your favorite phrases or images that Isaiah uses to describe the transformation God has promised from 35:1–7.

2. What do you think is the connection between the horrors of chapter 34 and the blessings of chapter 35?
3. When Israel was leaving Egypt after their years of slavery, Moses made a request to pass through Edom on the "King's highway," but Edom refused (Num. 20:14–21). Now God promises another highway for his people. This is truly the King's highway, the Way of Holiness, for it leads to Zion, the city of God.
  - a. How is this highway unlike any common highway? (Is. 35:8–9;  Rev. 21:22–27)
  - b. How does Isaiah portray the day when God's people stream into Zion? (Is. 35:10;  Rev. 21:1–4; Rev. 22:14)

### "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20)

\*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

<sup>1</sup> J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 264.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 25:21-23

<sup>3</sup> Read how Edom treated Jacob's descendants when they were leaving Egypt in Numbers 20:14-21.

<sup>4</sup> Amos 1:11

<sup>5</sup> Bozrah was the capitol city of Edom.

<sup>6</sup> Mt. 2:1-16