

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011

Passage: Isaiah 9:1-7 Part I

Memory Passage: Isaiah 9:6-7 (We will memorize these verses over 4 weeks)

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) We will examine Is. 6:1-9:7 over the next 4 weeks as we prepare for Christmas, and we will do so with the themes of “Preparation & Expectation” in mind. Each week we will examine a different chapter, as well as one of the 4 names given to Jesus in 9:6-7.

(b) **Read Is. 6 & 2 Chron. 26.** What words describe the quality of Uzziah’s reign in vs. 1-15? What was God’s opinion of his reign? What kinds of successes did God give to him and the nation during his reign?

(c) Verse 16 marks a distinct turning point: “But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction.” What did he do that was prideful? Why was this a prideful act? How did God respond? Did the king’s punishment fit his crimes? Why or why not?

(d) Think through the last week of your life and write down all of the times that you have engaged in prideful acts or thoughts (you can quit writing when you get to 5 actions/thoughts). Uzziah’s prideful acts grew from the fertile soil of his own strength, but what caused your prideful acts (i.e. from what soil did they grow)? Why do you think these acts/thoughts were prideful? Did you recognize these as prideful at the time? If so, how did you respond, and if you did not, how should you respond now? Since God desires us to walk humbly before Him, not prideful (Mic. 6:8, James 4:6-10, et. al.), what actions should you take to (a) repent of these acts and (b) respond differently to these temptations to be prideful in the future?

(e) *Family:* Pass our paper & pencils. As you **Read 2 Chron. 26:1-15** have your family record every good thing that happened during King Uzziah’s reign, or any good thing said about him. Remind them that every good gift comes from God (James 1:17), so that the king’s successes should have caused him to more fully trust in God. **Then Read 2 Chron. 26:16-23** and ask, “What did the king do to offend God?” & “Why was this wrong?” (See Ex. 30:1-10 & Nub. 16:40) Then ask, “Was his punishment fair?” Be ready to entertain good/hard questions about God & His character by remembering that God is holy (this is why Uzziah entering the temple was wrong) and that everything He does is both right and just. Then **Read James 4:6-10** and remind your family what you learned about God’s desire for us to remain humble, not prideful, as we serve Him.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 2 Chron. 26:1-9 & Is. 6.** “In the year that King Uzziah died” was app. 740 B. C. His son, Jotham had been reigning as co-regent for about 10 years, and would reign another 6 years after the king’s death. What was the spiritual state of the people of Judah according to 2 Chron. 26:2 (this is relevant given Isaiah’s confession in v. 5)? You can also read Is. 1-5 for a complete description of Judah’s spiritual rebellion.

(b) What contrasts are immediately visible between the King Isaiah sees and the earthly kings Uzziah & Jotham? What characteristic of God is most prominent in this vision? What characteristic of Isaiah is most prominent?

(c) Why does Isaiah pronounce a curse against himself? What does he recognize about himself, and what triggered that recognition? What would your response have been if you were Isaiah?

(d) What gracious act does God perform on Isaiah’s behalf in vs. 6-7? Why is this act necessary? For what does it prepare Isaiah? Since you have been touched by The Burning Coal (“your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for” by Jesus), for what have you been prepared? Are you living like Isaiah was before the grace of the coal (“Woe is me!”) or after the grace of the coal (“Here I am! Send me!”)?

(e) *Family:* **Read Isaiah 6:1-8.** As you read, have each person in your family draw a picture of the scene presented. You may want to read the passage twice, slowly. Then explain the picture of salvation presented, including the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the righteousness of Christ who lived and died to atone for our sins and take our guilt away (the coal), and the difference between a person convicted of their sin (v. 5) and one whose sins are forgiven (v. 8).

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Is. 6:8-13, Matt. 13:10-16 & Acts 28:23-28.** What does God tell Isaiah about the results of his future ministry (vs. 8-12)? How long must he minister (vs. 11-13)? How is God’s grace shown in Is. 6:8-13? If you were Isaiah, would you be overwhelmed by the judgment in these verses or strengthened by the grace?

(b) How do the NT verses you read inform your understanding of what Isaiah is being told? How do they inform your understanding of the people to whom you do/will preach the gospel? What encouragement do you find in these verses as you obey the command to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations?

(c) *Family*: **Read Is. 6:1-8a**, stopping after “Go, and say to this people:” Then ask, “What do you think God is about to send Isaiah to do!” Up to this point our expectations are that everything is being made right, and that God is going to do something wonderful for Judah (which He is, but He will do it through judgment and grace, not just grace), so your family will likely answer with positive, upbeat responses, and you will encourage these responses as you read vs. 1-8. After they respond, **Read Is. 6:8b-13** and list on your white board all of the things God tells Isaiah to do/say. Teach that God is telling Isaiah that he will preach, and through his preaching the nation will be hardened to the truth and reflect His judgment on them for their rebellion. But also he will save a holy remnant (v.13), and this is the grace in the midst of judgment that God will accomplish to bring glory to Himself. Then, to more clearly show the hope that is coming, **Read Is. 7:14 & 9:6-7**, explaining that these verses point to Jesus as the one who will come (has come!) as a baby in a manger to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Is. 9:6-7**. We will continue with our study of chapters 7-9 next week, but now we turn to the first of 4 names given to the Messiah, Jesus, to describe the King and His Kingdom: Wonderful Counselor. Write down what comes to mind when you think of Jesus as our Wonderful Counselor.

(b) **Read Is. 11:1-2, 28:29, 46:8-11, Jer. 32:17-19, Job 12:13, Rom 11:33-36, & Eph. 1:11**. Spend your time today meditating on what you learn about God’s counsel and write down your findings. Next, write down every person or situation you can think of that causes you to worry, control, be anxious, be fearful, be stressed, be depressed or despondent, be angry, etc., and write down concrete reasons, based on your study of Jesus as your Wonderful Counselor, that you should not engage in these sinful thoughts/actions.

(c) *Family*: Using your white board, guide your family through (a) & (b). Help them to see clearly why trusting in Jesus, who is perfect in wisdom, knowledge & counsel, is the wise approach to dealing with our sinful worrying, controlling, & stressing.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Ps. 16:7-8, 33:10-11 & 73:23-27**. Yesterday you looked at some verses that showed Jesus to be your Wonderful Counselor, and you applied this propositional truth to several areas of your life where you take things into your own hands, as if your counsel was perfect, instead of trusting Him. Today you will spend some time meditating on passages that give you specific instruction in how to accomplish this. (You will benefit from rereading the passages you studied yesterday prior to reading today’s Scriptures) Meditate on each Psalm, and for each one write down at least 5 applications that will help you better trust in Jesus as your Wonderful Counselor. Use your list from yesterday for real-life situations to consider.

(b) *Family*: Use your white board to guide your family through (a) above.

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Jesus Our Wonderful Counselor