



Standard LESSON QUARTERLY[®]

NIV[®] BIBLE TEACHER

FALL 2025
JUDAH, FROM ISAIAH
TO EXILE

▶ International Sunday School Lessons

NIV® BIBLE TEACHER

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FALL 2025 JUDAH, FROM ISAIAH TO EXILE

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Judah, from Isaiah to Exile

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Quarterly Quiz

Use these questions as a pretest or as a review. The answers are on page iv of *This Quarter in the Word*.

Lesson 1

1. Isaiah's throne-room vision occurred in the year that King Uzziah died. T/F. *Isaiah 6:1*
2. How many additional years did the Lord promise Hezekiah? (1; 15; 20) *Isaiah 38:5*

Lesson 2

1. It was decided that Hezekiah's Passover would occur in the _____ month. *2 Chronicles 30:2*
2. Hezekiah's Passover celebration resulted in "great ____ in Jerusalem." *2 Chronicles 30:26*

Lesson 3

1. Who gave "the Book of the Law" to Shaphan? (Ahikam, Hilkiah, Asaiah) *2 Chronicles 34:15*
2. Which prophetess did Hilkiah speak with concerning the Book of the Law? (Huldah, Deborah, Noadiah) *2 Chronicles 34:22*

Lesson 4

1. The servant was "pierced for our _____." *Isaiah 53:5*
2. The Lord has laid on the servant the iniquity of us all. T/F. *Isaiah 53:6*

Lesson 5

1. Jeremiah considered himself too old to speak. T/F. *Jeremiah 1:6*
2. Jeremiah prophesied that "this house" (the temple) would become like what other location? (Sheol, Shechem, Shiloh) *Jeremiah 26:9*

Lesson 6

1. The Lord warned that deceptive words repeat this phrase: "The _____ of the Lord." *Jeremiah 7:4*
2. The Lord asked, "Has this house, . . . become a den of _____ to you?" *Jeremiah 7:11*

Lesson 7

1. Who commanded the Rekabites to never drink wine? (Joshua, Jehonadab, Jehu) *Jeremiah 35:6*

2. The Rekabites lived in tents, just as they were commanded. T/F. *Jeremiah 35:10*

Lesson 8

1. On which did the Lord say he would "write" the law? (hearts, souls, minds) *Jeremiah 31:33*
2. Which two "came through Jesus Christ"? (choose two: law, grace, covenant, truth) *John 1:17*

Lesson 9

1. How many men did the king command Ebed-Melek to take to rescue Jeremiah? (13; 30; 300) *Jeremiah 38:10*
2. Immediately after his rescue, Jeremiah left "the courtyard of the guard." T/F. *Jeremiah 38:13*

Lesson 10

1. Nebuchadnezzar's siege against Jerusalem began in the _____ year of Zedekiah's reign. *2 Kings 25:1*
2. Who set fire to the temple, palace, and houses in Jerusalem? (Nebuchadnezzar, Zedekiah, Nebuzaradan) *2 Kings 25:8–9*

Lesson 11

1. The Lord called Ezekiel by what title? (Son of Judah, Son of man, Son of Jacob) *Ezekiel 3:10*
2. Ezekiel would be a "signal" to the people of Judah. T/F. *Ezekiel 24:27*

Lesson 12

1. The Lord made Ezekiel a "_____ for the people of Israel." *Ezekiel 33:7*
2. The Sovereign Lord takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. T/F. *Ezekiel 33:11*

Lesson 13

1. The man went eastward and measured a total of 4,000 _____. *Ezekiel 47:3–5*
2. Ezekiel saw "a great number of _____" on both sides of the river. *Ezekiel 47:7*

Quarter at a Glance

by Editorial Staff

This quarter invites us to discover and appreciate how God, through prophets and other leaders, gave help and guidance to the people of Judah. As we study these people, we will see God's hand at work in their lives, just as he is at work in our lives and all human affairs.

Isaiah and the Renewal of the Temple

The first unit presents us with the prophetic ministry of Isaiah. These lessons recount the theological reasons for the decline of Judah, seen mainly through Isaiah and two faithful kings of Judah. Lesson 1 introduces the call of that prophet and the substance of his witness to a king of Judah (Isaiah 6:1–8; 38:1–5; see lesson 1).

While most kings of Israel and Judah earn bad grades from the writers of Kings and Chronicles, two seventh-century kings of Judah are revealed as seeking the Lord and reforming worship. King Hezekiah celebrates Passover according to what was written in the Law of Moses (2 Chronicles 30:1–9, 26–27; see lesson 2), while King Josiah is a “by-the-book strategist” who sought proper obedience to the Lord (34:15–22, 26–27; see lesson 3).

The destruction of the temple, according to Scripture, was the result of social injustice, moral decay, and covenantal disobedience. Isaiah finds a spark of hope in the devastation—the prophetic suffering of the people has a redemptive purpose, testifying to God's judgment and restoration. Near the end of the Babylonian exile, the prophet envisions a humiliated and afflicted servant who carries the sins of many (Isaiah 52:13–53:12; see lesson 4).

Jeremiah and the Promise of Renewal

The second unit explores the prophetic career of Jeremiah, a prophet who lived during the worst of the Babylonian assault on Judah and Jerusalem. The Lord called Jeremiah to preach a harsh message to the people of Judah, one they wouldn't heed (Jeremiah 26:8–9, 12–15; see lesson 5).

Through the prophet, the Lord warned the people: “Reform your ways and your actions” (Jeremiah 7:3; see lesson 6). The people had repeatedly forsaken the covenant; therefore, Jeremiah warns that judgment is coming. As Jerusalem teeters on the brink of extinction, Jeremiah is given a word of hope: after punishment, God will bring the people back home. On that day, the law of God will no longer be written in stone but on the human heart (31:33; see lesson 8).

Ezekiel and the Exile of Judah

The final lessons recount Ezekiel's prophetic messages to the people in exile. The account of 2 Kings 24:18–25:9, detailing the last days of Judah, is hard to read, as it is full of violence and desperation (lesson 10). Into that environment, the prophet-priest Ezekiel, in Babylon among the exiles, reports the devastation in Jerusalem (Ezekiel 24:20–21; see lesson 11). His prophecies are replete with visions, signs, and symbolic actions, testifying to the utter ruin of the homeland and promises of renewal.

Ezekiel serves as a “watchman” to the people, keeping the promise of a return from exile alive.

When Ezekiel's wife dies, he obediently follows God's command not to mourn as a sign to the people that no one will weep when Jerusalem falls (Ezekiel 24:15–16). Ezekiel serves as a “watchman” to the people, keeping the promise of a return from exile alive (33:7–16a; see lesson 12).

Ezekiel's message reaches its hopeful climax in his vision of a renewed temple with water flowing from it (Ezekiel 47:1–12; see lesson 13). Ezekiel died in captivity, his life a living symbol that God's Word is forever active, present, and powerful. His ministry helped transform the people into the remnant who find a renewed orientation for hope in the promises of God.

Get the Setting

by Ryan D. Donell

The Role of a Prophet

Who were the prophets? Prophets are God's mouthpieces delivering a divine perspective on history, politics, and the behavior of God's people (Deuteronomy 18:18; Jeremiah 1:9; etc.). While prophecies could contain unforeseen horizons, such as Jesus' messianic first and second advents, they were nevertheless primarily concerned with the present crisis of their audience and the immanent consequences of responding to or neglecting God's messages (Matthew 13:17; 1 Peter 1:10–12).

Prophets and prophecy were already present in cultures outside of Israel in the Iron Age throughout the ancient Near East and identified as "seers" and "prophets." However, the unique embodiment of God's oracles to Israel was represented by the prophets' indictments, judgment, instruction, support, and explanations in the aftermath of events. Understanding their role in God's purposes will provide a crucial background for many of the lessons this quarter.

Jeremiah's Example

We turn now to consider one vignette in the ministry of the prophets of ancient Israel, following the fall of Samaria in 722 BC. Jeremiah was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah. His experiences convey a glimpse of God's heart that wept over Jerusalem. Even as a young prophet, he pleaded with a rebellious generation to repent.

The prophets were the poet-preachers of inconvenient truths. Grief poignantly marked the life of Jeremiah and won him the title "the weeping prophet." Jeremiah's anguish joined God's lament against Judah's repeated rejection of his words and ways (Jeremiah 13:17; 9:1, 10). Jeremiah was sent to prophesy against kings in his own community: Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah. After Jehoiakim's deportation in 598 BC, instead of endorsing Zedekiah's false hopes, Jeremiah dares to tell the

king to submit to Babylon and the assured invasion (38:1–4). If Judah surrenders to Babylon, they will survive. However, this requires them to renounce the propaganda that God's people will never suffer defeat. Unable—or refusing—to believe that God would use a prophet to predict the siege of Jerusalem, Judah's officials accuse Jeremiah of not seeking "the good of these people" (38:4). Jeremiah is thrown into a deep cistern and left in the mud to die (38:6). Even when he is finally lifted out, he does not soften God's challenges to Zedekiah, no matter how harsh. Despite the hard words Jeremiah delivers, Zedekiah fails to yield. He refuses to heed the word of the Lord, and as a result Jerusalem is laid waste with a second wave of exiles being deported in 586 BC.

Application for Today

God's messages through the prophets prefigured the bodily disclosure of God's Word, Jesus Christ (John 1:1–18; Hebrews 1:1–3). While the majority of us will not be called upon to serve in the same kind of prophetic role as Jeremiah and other Old Testament prophets were, we do have a part to play in bringing God's word to his people today.

According to Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann, the church today must embody three prophetic tasks. First, we are to announce the reality of things, speaking forth the truth. Second, we are to grieve over sin both within God's people and without. Third, we must offer the hope of restoration. In recovering and living into this prophetic role, we may reclaim this promise given by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you, because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:11–12).

Mon, Nov. 17	Love Others Despite Suffering	1 Peter 4:1–11
Tue, Nov. 18	Rejoice to Share Christ's Sufferings	1 Peter 4:12–19
Wed, Nov. 19	Answering for Sin	Ezekiel 18:1–9
Thu, Nov. 20	I Confess My Iniquity	Psalms 38:1–2, 10–22
Fri, Nov. 21	Restore One Another in Gentleness	Galatians 6:1–10
Sat, Nov. 22	See to Your Own Sins First	Matthew 7:1–6
Sun, Nov. 23	Let the Wicked Repent	Ezekiel 33:7–16a
Mon, Nov. 24	God Breathes New Life	Ezekiel 37:1–7
Tue, Nov. 25	A Resurrection of Hope	Ezekiel 37:8–14
Wed, Nov. 26	The Thirsty Will Be Refreshed	Isaiah 55:1–9
Thu, Nov. 27	Rivers of Living Water	John 7:2–10, 37–39
Fri, Nov. 28	Hope for God's New Creation	Revelation 21:1–7
Sat, Nov. 29	The Tree of Life	Revelation 22:1–5
Sun, Nov. 30	The River of Life	Ezekiel 47:1–9, 12

Answers to the Quarterly Quiz on page 2

Lesson 1—1. True. 2. 15. **Lesson 2**—1. second. 2. joy. **Lesson 3**—1. Hilkiah. 2. Huldah. **Lesson 4**—1. transgressions. 2. True. **Lesson 5**—1. False. 2. Shiloh. **Lesson 6**—1. temple. 2. robbers. **Lesson 7**—1. Jehonadab. 2. True. **Lesson 8**—1. hearts. 2. grace, truth. **Lesson 9**—1. 30. 2. False. **Lesson 10**—1. ninth. 2. Nebuzaradan. **Lesson 11**—1. Son of man. 2. False. **Lesson 12**—1. watchman. 2. True. **Lesson 13**—1. cubits. 2. trees.

This Quarter in the Word

Mon, Sep. 1	God Sends a Messenger	Mark 1:1–8
Tue, Sep. 2	God Defends the Chosen People	Isaiah 7:1–7
Wed, Sep. 3	God Warns of Coming Disaster	Isaiah 20:1–6
Thu, Sep. 4	God Fulfills Promises	Matthew 11:1–6
Fri, Sep. 5	God Works through a Messenger	Matthew 11:7–15
Sat, Sep. 6	God Is Gracious and Merciful	Psalms 145:1–12
Sun, Sep. 7	God Strengthens the Called	Isaiah 6:1–8; 38:1–5
Mon, Sep. 8	An Everlasting Kingdom	Psalms 145:13–21
Tue, Sep. 9	A Call to Bear Good Fruit	Matthew 3:4–12
Wed, Sep. 10	A Summons to Repent	Acts 3:12–20
Thu, Sep. 11	A Ministry of Care and Comfort	James 5:12–18
Fri, Sep. 12	A Feast of Remembrance	Exodus 12:3–14
Sat, Sep. 13	A Dwelling for God's Name	Deuteronomy 12:5–12
Sun, Sep. 14	An Act of Repentance and Renewal	2 Chronicles 30:1–9, 26–27
Mon, Sep. 15	The Command to Love	Matthew 22:36–40
Tue, Sep. 16	Righteous in God's Sight	Romans 2:9–16
Wed, Sep. 17	Promised Restoration	Deuteronomy 30:1–10
Thu, Sep. 18	Choose Life	Deuteronomy 30:11–21
Fri, Sep. 19	A Greater Message	Hebrews 1:13–2:4
Sat, Sep. 20	Hidden Treasure	Matthew 13:44–52
Sun, Sep. 21	Sorrow Leads to Joy	2 Chronicles 34:15–22, 26–27

Mon, Sep. 22	The Humble Servant	Philippians 2:5–10
Tue, Sep. 23	The Faithful Servant	Isaiah 42:1–7
Wed, Sep. 24	The Resurrected Servant	Acts 2:25–31
Thu, Sep. 25	A Light for the World	Acts 13:44–49
Fri, Sep. 26	A Doorkeeper in God's House	Palm 84
Sat, Sep. 27	God's Servant Obeys	Isaiah 50:4–9
Sun, Sep. 28	The Suffering Servant	Isaiah 53:1–7
Mon, Sep. 29	Passion for God's Laws	² Chronicles 34:1–7
Tue, Sep. 30	The Piercing Word of God	Hebrews 4:12–16
Wed, Oct. 1	Return to the Father	Jeremiah 3:12–19
Thu, Oct. 2	Cleanse Yourselves and Be Saved	Jeremiah 4:5–14
Fri, Oct. 3	God's Discipline Proves God's Love	Hebrews 12:3–17
Sat, Oct. 4	God Is a Consuming Fire	Hebrews 12:18–29
Sun, Oct. 5	A Defiant Prophet	Jeremiah 1:6–10; 26:8–9, 12–15
Mon, Oct. 6	Endure to the End	Mark 13:1–13
Tue, Oct. 7	God Will Protect God's People	Mark 13:14–27
Wed, Oct. 8	To Obey Is Better than Sacrifice	¹ Samuel 15:20–26
Thu, Oct. 9	Keep Christ's Commandments	John 14:12–17
Fri, Oct. 10	An Indestructible Temple	John 2:12–22
Sat, Oct. 11	The Sacrifice That Pleases God	Psalms 51:15–19
Sun, Oct. 12	Amend Your Ways!	Jeremiah 7:1–11, 21–23
Mon, Oct. 13	The Dangers of Strong Drink	Proverbs 23:29–35
Tue, Oct. 14	Keep Earthly Pleasures in Perspective	Ecclesiastes 9:4–10
Wed, Oct. 15	Be Filled with the Spirit	Ephesians 5:11–19
Thu, Oct. 16	The Nazirite Vow	Numbers 6:1–8
Fri, Oct. 17	Called to Holiness	¹ Thessalonians 4:1–7
Sat, Oct. 18	Keep Awake!	¹ Thessalonians 5:1–10
Sun, Oct. 19	A Vow of Holiness	Jeremiah 35:5–11

Mon, Oct. 20	A New Salvation	Joel 2:28–32
Tue, Oct. 21	A New Heart	Ezekiel 36:25–35
Wed, Oct. 22	The Law's Essence	Deuteronomy 10:12–21
Thu, Oct. 23	A New Covenant	² Corinthians 3:1–6
Fri, Oct. 24	A New Spirit	² Corinthians 3:7–11
Sat, Oct. 25	A New Freedom	² Corinthians 3:12–17
Sun, Oct. 26	A New Relationship with God	Jeremiah 31:27–34
Mon, Oct. 27	Speak as the Spirit Leads	Matthew 10:16–27
Tue, Oct. 28	Do Not Fear Mortal Powers	Matthew 10:28–42
Wed, Oct. 29	Wait Patiently for the Lord	Palm 37:1–13
Thu, Oct. 30	God Never Forsakes the Righteous	Palm 37:25–28, 35–40
Fri, Oct. 31	Overcome Evil with Good	Romans 12:12–21
Sat, Nov. 1	Speak Even When the Message Stings	Jeremiah 38:1–6
Sun, Nov. 2	An Advocate Pleads for Justice	Jeremiah 38:7–13
Mon, Nov. 3	The Master Is Coming Soon	Luke 12:42–48
Tue, Nov. 4	The Purifying Fire of Change	Luke 12:49–53
Wed, Nov. 5	The Lord's Purifying Purpose	Lamentations 2:17–22
Thu, Nov. 6	Hope in the Lord	Lamentations 3:21–36
Fri, Nov. 7	Faith Tested by Fire	¹ Peter 1:1–12
Sat, Nov. 8	Prepare for Action	¹ Peter 1:13–25
Sun, Nov. 9	God's Judgment Is Sure	² Kings 24:18–25:9
Mon, Nov. 10	With Righteousness Comes Suffering	¹ Peter 3:8–17
Tue, Nov. 11	Christ Exalted through Suffering	¹ Peter 3:18–22
Wed, Nov. 12	God Rescues Us from Our Afflictions	Palm 34:6–19
Thu, Nov. 13	Comfort for the Brokenhearted	Matthew 5:3–12
Fri, Nov. 14	Speak if People Listen or Not	Ezekiel 3:4–11
Sat, Nov. 15	Steadfastness amid Persecution	² Thessalonians 1:1–4
Sun, Nov. 16	Unspeakable Grief	Ezekiel 24:15–27

Lesson Cycle Chart

International Sunday School Lesson Cycle, September 2022–August 2026

Year	Fall Quarter (Sep, Oct, Nov)	Winter Quarter (Dec, Jan, Feb)	Spring Quarter (Mar, Apr, May)	Summer Quarter (Jun, Jul, Aug)
2022– 2023	God's Exceptional Choice Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Judges, 1 Samuel, Ephesians	From Darkness to Light 2 Chronicles, Isaiah, Joel, Luke, 1 Corinthians, 2 Timothy, James, 1 Peter	Jesus Calls Us Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts	The Righteous Reign of God Prophets, Matthew, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians
2023– 2024	God's Law Is Love Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians	Faith That Pleases God Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Chronicles, Proverbs, Prophets, Matthew, Luke, Romans, Hebrews	Examining Our Faith Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, Romans, 2 Corinthians, 1 Peter, Jude	Hope in the Lord Psalms, Lamentations, Acts, Epistles
2024– 2025	Worship in the Covenant Community Genesis, Exodus, 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Psalms, Isaiah, John	A King Forever and Ever Ruth, 2 Samuel, Psalms, Matthew, Luke	Costly Sacrifices Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Matthew, Hebrews, 1 John, Revelation	Sacred Altars and Holy Offerings Genesis, Gospels, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Hebrews, 1 Peter
2025– 2026	Judah, From Isaiah to Exile 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel	Enduring Beliefs of the Church Exodus, Psalms, Gospels, Acts, Epistles, Revelation	Social Teachings of the Church Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Nehemiah, Psalms, Prophets, Gospels, Acts, Epistles	Faithful Witnesses Judges, 1 Samuel, Amos, Gospels, Acts, 2 Timothy, Philemon

Prep with Internet Resources

Teacher Tips by Tanae Murdic

Many teachers desire additional resources to guide them in their study and preparation for teaching adults. You can move beyond physical resource limitations if you have access to the internet. Use of various websites can expand your access to resources exponentially, bringing numerous options to your fingertips with just a few clicks. Please note that the listing of websites in this article is neither exhaustive nor is it necessarily an endorsement of everything to be found on these sites. Standard Lesson serves a broad audience, and some sites may have been created by those who hold different doctrinal convictions from ours or your own. As in all things, use discernment.

Resources for Nearly Any Lesson

No concordance handy? No worries! Just visit www.biblegateway.com. You can search for keywords and topics on this site. It also contains a wide range of Bible translations that can be displayed in parallel columns for side-by-side comparison. Another Bible site is www.blueletterbible.org, which offers several Bible translations alongside commentaries and other study tools.

For matters of history and setting, you may want to visit www.bible-history.com. The Bible History home page displays a long list of categories on the left side of the screen, which may aid your preparation. This site also includes several church history resources. Another helpful resource is the “Resource Pages for Biblical Studies” found at www.torreys.org/bible. Here you can find pages that examine texts and translations, electronic publications, and materials relating to the social aspects of the Mediterranean world.

Like Bible Gateway, the Bible Study Tools site (www.biblestudytools.com) is a great resource with many aids. It houses several Bible translations

as well as Bible commentaries, encyclopedias, dictionaries, a parallel Bible, and an interlinear Bible. In the search window, you can search within specified categories, such as Bible, topic, Bible study, references, Bible stories, and even pastors. The “References” tab holds a wealth of resources, including the works of Josephus. Josephus’s works are a wonderful resource for a typically reliable, though not inspired, history of the Jews from the first century.

For archaeological evidence and background for Bible lessons, visit www.biblehistory.net. This site has several tabs (“volumes”) that contain links to various articles that may prove useful in lesson preparation. Clicking on a link will open a page that you can save to your computer as a PDF file, which you can use as a handout or simply read in preparation for the lesson. For example, the information found at www.biblehistory.net/joshua.html provides some interesting details about a letter that archaeologists discovered, which was sent from Jerusalem to Egypt asking for help against the “Habiru” (possibly referring to the “Hebrews”).

Regarding Old Testament studies, some Jewish resources can be helpful. One such site is www.jewishencyclopedia.com, which provides the entire text of the 1906 print edition of the Jewish Encyclopedia online. Topics can be found instantly by typing a word in the search window.

Finding Information on General Sites

General search engines can also provide help. But use these with care. As with any media consumption, consider the reputability of your source. Since just about anyone can post anything to the internet, the presence of information there does not necessarily mean it is accurate. Use discretion when deciding which sources to use and cite in your study preparation.

Isaiah's Call and Ministry

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 2:1–5

Background Scripture: Isaiah 6:1–13; 7:1–7; 20:1–6; 38:1–22

Isaiah 6:1–8

¹ In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵ “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Isaiah 38:1–5

¹ In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, “This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.”

² Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, ³ “Remember, LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: ⁵ “Go and tell Hezekiah, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life.’”

Key Text

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” —Isaiah 6:8

Judah, from Isaiah to the Exile

Unit 1: Isaiah and the Renewal of the Temple

Lessons 1–4

Lesson Aims

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. Summarize what Isaiah saw and his reaction to it.
2. Compare and contrast Isaiah's reaction to God's call with that of Jeremiah in reaction to his own call (lesson 5).
3. Express how to distinguish an authentic call of God from a mere felt need.

Lesson Outline

Introduction

- A. It's Your Call (and His)
- B. Lesson Context

I. Commissioned by God (Isaiah 6:1–8)

- A. What Isaiah Saw (vv. 1–2)
- B. What Isaiah Heard (v. 3)
- C. What Isaiah Sensed (v. 4)
- D. What Isaiah Said (v. 5)

Majesty Approached

- E. What Isaiah Received (vv. 6–8)

Discerning God's Call

II. Communication with a King (Isaiah 38:1–5)

- A. Message of Death (v. 1)
- B. Tears of Bitterness (vv. 2–3)
- C. Extension of Life (vv. 4–5)

Conclusion

- A. Here Am I. Send Me!
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

Introduction

A. It's Your Call (and His)

At age 11, I first sensed God calling me to vocational ministry. During a revival meeting, an evangelist approached me and said, "Young man, I'm setting you aside for the ministry." At that time, the encounter did not impact me, but I reconsidered the evangelist's words years later.

Throughout my teenage years, I continued to sense that call to ministry. Trusted friends repeatedly encouraged me. People in my congregation confirmed the call and encouraged me to begin training for ministry. Backed by the encouragement and confirmation from my congregation, I enrolled in a Bible college to follow the Lord's call.

There seem to be two types of calls from God. The first type is what we might designate as a "general" call. These are the thoughts, actions, and attitudes that God expects of every believer. The expectations of this call are found in the pages of Scripture.

The second type is what we might designate as a "specific" call: a sensed call of God to a particular or specialized ministry. There is disagreement regarding whether every believer receives this kind of call. Today's lesson examines the details of a call unmistakably from God.

B. Lesson Context

Isaiah began his prophetic ministry about 200 years after the nation of Israel divided. In 931 BC, the united monarchy of Israel split into two parts: Israel (the northern kingdom) and Judah (the southern kingdom). Isaiah's ministry focused on the southern kingdom of Judah, as reflected by the Judean kings listed in Isaiah 1:1.

Surprisingly, the Lord's call on Isaiah doesn't occur until Isaiah 6. This is at variance from the usual pattern of recording a prophet's call at or very near a book's beginning (examples: Jeremiah 1:4–19; Ezekiel 1:1–3:15). Perhaps the writer wanted to establish the context of the call, which the first five chapters of Isaiah accomplish.

The people of Judah had become a "sinful nation," being openly rebellious against the Lord (Isaiah 1:1–5). A sense of self-sufficiency accom-

panied a facade of economic prosperity, military security, and religious arrogance (2:7–8). The Lord depicts his people as a vineyard that produced unacceptable fruit (5:1–7). In their doing of injustice, they had redefined the terms *good* and *evil* (5:20).

Such was the era that Isaiah found himself in when his call came about.

I. Commissioned by God

(Isaiah 6:1–8)

A. What Isaiah Saw (vv. 1–2)

1a. In the year that King Uzziah died,

Uzziah (also known as “Azariah” in 2 Kings 15:1–7) reigned as *king* of Judah for 52 years (2 Chronicles 26:3). We don’t know the exact years of his reign, but one estimate gives the range of 792–740 BC.

For much of his reign, Uzziah “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord” and, as a result, God allowed him to experience blessing (2 Chronicles 26:4–5). However, pride led to his downfall when he entered the temple to burn incense (26:16–21).

1b. I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.

At least two possibilities exist regarding the setting of *the temple*. One possibility is that the setting is the earthly temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. Another option is that Isaiah sees the heavenly temple. Given the actions of Uzziah in the Jerusalem temple (see above), some commentators suggest this setting allows Isaiah to realize that the presence of the Lord has not departed from the temple (contrast Ezekiel 11:22–23). Still, others suggest that the vision’s grandeur indicates the heavenly temple (compare Revelation 11:19). Regardless, the significance is that Isaiah sees the location where the enthroned Lord rules.

That Isaiah *saw the Lord* is echoed in John 12:41. This fact does not contradict Exodus 33:20 or John 1:18. What Isaiah sees is called a *theophany*, which is a manifestation of God, not God in his actual essence (compare Genesis 28:13–15; Exodus 24:9–11; 1 Kings 22:19).

The Lord’s position *seated on a throne* reveals

him as the living heavenly King. Although the earthly King Uzziah has died, the Lord still reigns! The Lord’s elevated position reflects the *exalted* nature of his being (compare Isaiah 57:15; Revelation 4:2).

The expansive nature of the *train of his robe* is echoed in Revelation 1:13. Special garments marked the identity of significant figures, like priests or kings (compare Exodus 28:33–34; 39:24–26, where the word is translated “hem”). However, the garment Isaiah sees is unlike any garment worn by a human. The size of this garment *filled the temple*, leaving Isaiah incapable of giving further description.

2. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.

The word *seraphim* is a transliteration (not a translation) of a Hebrew word. That’s where a word in one language is brought over into another language simply by swapping the letters of the word in the original language into the letters that sound the same in the receptor language.

The transliteration of this word occurs only here and in Isaiah 6:6, below. This Hebrew word elsewhere refers to snakes (Numbers 21:6, 8; Deuteronomy 8:15; Isaiah 14:29; 30:6). The root of this word may come from a Hebrew word meaning “fiery” or “burning.” One possibility is that the seraphim appear as flaming, winged creatures.

What Do You Think?

What does the covering of the seraphim reveal to us about postures of worship and prayer?

Digging Deeper

How do physical, mental, and emotional postures affect your acts of worship?

B. What Isaiah Heard (v. 3)

3a. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;

These seraphim’s proclamation *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord Almighty* is similar to that of the four “living creatures” in Revelation 4:8. The repetition

of the word *holy* stresses its significance: the Lord's holiness is unparalleled!

The Hebrew adjective translated "holy" appears in 34 verses in Isaiah; clearly, it's a vital concept to the writer, implying "separation" or "distinctiveness." The Lord's holiness means that he is separate from his creation in that he is morally perfect (Deuteronomy 32:4; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 18:30; Habakkuk 1:12–13; etc.).

The designation *Lord Almighty* or "Lord God Almighty" appears 291 times in the Old Testament, with about 75 percent of those occurring in the prophetic books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. As the timeline of history advances, God's power is increasingly stressed since the title reflects the Lord's power as king and commander of the heavenly armies (see 1 Samuel 4:4; Psalm 24:10; Isaiah 1:24; etc.).

3b. "the whole earth is full of his glory."

No human-made structure can confine the glory of God (1 Kings 8:27). Since *the whole earth* belongs to God as its creator, it cannot but help to reflect *his glory* (Numbers 14:21; Psalm 72:19).

What Do You Think?

How do you describe the relationship between God's holiness and the holiness of his people (1 Peter 1:15–16)?

Digging Deeper

How can you help others worship God for his holiness?

C. What Isaiah Sensed (v. 4)

4. At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

The *voices* of the seraphim have an impressive impact, causing *the doorposts* to move. Although the text does not indicate the location of this door, it is likely at the entrance of the envisioned *temple* (see Isaiah 6:1b, above).

The presence of *smoke* in Scripture is sometimes associated with the presence of God (example: Exodus 19:18). That presence can be in a negative sense of divine judgment (example: Isaiah 9:18–19). Or it can be in a positive sense of divine guid-

ance or care (example: Isaiah 4:5). Smoke also serves to conceal the viewer from seeing aspects of the divine directly, thus preventing death (Leviticus 16:13). The smoke in the context of the verse at hand brings to mind the cloud that "filled the temple of the Lord" in Solomon's time (1 Kings 8:10).

D. What Isaiah Said (v. 5)

5. "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

Isaiah pronounces *woe* more than 20 times in his book. All but two of those are voiced against those who conduct themselves in ways that oppose God. In the remaining two uses, the prophet pronounces "woe" against himself (here and in Isaiah 24:16).

The expression *Woe to me!* reveals Isaiah's feeling of unworthiness to experience the sights and sounds before him. He knows his unholiness prevents him from being in the presence of a holy God, *the Lord Almighty*, even in a vision. The prophet confesses that his sin makes him *unclean*. He also admits to living *among a people of unclean lips*, but this admission is not to shift the blame to excuse his own sinful condition. In acknowledging his own unholiness, he is taking personal responsibility for it.

What Do You Think?

In what ways can our corporate worship include times of confession?

Digging Deeper

What biblical examples of corporate confession can you name?

Majesty Approached

My first visit to Colorado was not what I expected. I was attending a conference near the base of Pikes Peak, one of the tallest mountains in the state. I looked forward to a few days of crisp air, blazing sunshine, and exhilarating mountain views.

When my friend and I arrived, a dense fog hung over the landscape like a blanket. We arrived at our hotel and parked our rental car without

catching a glimpse of Pikes Peak. But the following morning, the sky was clear, and the sun was dazzling. As we drove toward the conference center, Pikes Peak dominated our view. Of course, the mountain had been there the night before, but the fog had concealed it. What the fog had concealed was now revealed!

The sight of a towering mountain has a way of humbling me, reminding me of the majesty of its Creator. Isaiah felt unworthy to view the majesty of the holy and enthroned Lord. How do you combine that same realization with Hebrews 4:16 in approaching his throne in prayer? —N. H.

E. What Isaiah Received (vv. 6–8)

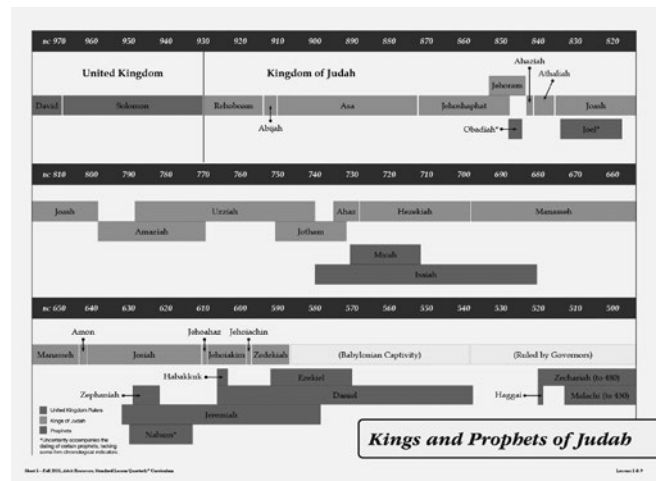
6. Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.

In response to Isaiah's admission in the previous verse, *one of the seraphim* goes into action on the man's behalf. *The altar* from which the seraph takes *a live coal* refers possibly to the altar in the temple Solomon built (1 Kings 9:25). But an altar in a temple of the heavenly environs cannot be ruled out because an altar is present there as well (Revelation 6:9; 14:18; 16:7). Isaiah undoubtedly watches with great apprehension as the scene unfolds. Having just confessed his own sinful unworthiness, is he about to be punished?

7. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

We can only imagine the emotions that surge through Isaiah as he witnesses the seraph approaching with a burning coal. Three of Isaiah's five senses have informed his experience thus far. By sight he has beheld the Lord (Isaiah 6:1); by hearing he has perceived the declaration of the seraphim (6:3); by sight and (assumed) smell he is aware of smoke (6:4). Now the fourth sense, touch, comes into play. We do not know if Isaiah feels any sting or pain from the red-hot coal that touches his *mouth*. If so, it must be temporary, as the words *your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for* speak not of judgment but of forgiveness.

At least four Hebrew words can be translated "(burning) coal," so we should be rigorous in



Visual for Lessons 1 & 9. Display this visual as you discuss the prophets and kings of this quarter's lessons.

allowing context to determine meaning and significance. The act of touching this coal to Isaiah's mouth symbolizes his purification from sin. We also notice that although Isaiah's unholiness is corrected through the cleansing action taken by one of the seraphim, the prophet's own confession of unholiness comes first.

8a. Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"

First, the seraphim spoke (Isaiah 6:3, above). Then Isaiah spoke (6:5). Then one seraph spoke (6:7). Now, *the Lord* himself speaks by asking two questions. The first question deals with "sender action," and the second deals with "servant action." These are important questions because the Lord expects those who trust in him to be his hands and feet at times (Romans 10:15). Sadly, that does not always happen (example: Ezekiel 22:30).

The first-person plural pronoun *us* is similar to the language used in account of creation and in response to the building of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 1:26; 11:7). The plural pronoun may refer to the Lord and the seraphim who make up his heavenly counsel (compare 1 Kings 22:19). Other commentators suggest that the plural pronoun may refer to the three persons of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah, however, is probably not mulling over such matters at this point; all he hears is the call for someone to *go* on the Lord's behalf. And he wastes no time in responding.

Discerning God's Call

Charles Spurgeon, the famous nineteenth-century preacher, had no formal theological education. Yet he preached to thousands every Sunday for more than 40 years!

How did God call him to such a task? Once, when describing his call to ministry, Spurgeon said it was “an intense, all-absorbing desire for the work.” Those who like neat logical categories may be unsatisfied with that description. They may desire to have the idea of God’s calls examined in specific terms of form, content, etc.

Perhaps we may discern a more practical approach in the New Testament, where God’s calls seem to come about as character and spiritual giftedness are observed. The first-century church chose “seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom” to serve in a specific capacity (Acts 6:3–5). Can we not conclude that they answered God’s call to do so? Barnabas seems initially to have simply grown into his leadership role, having been recognized by others as a “son of encouragement” who led by example and spoke up on behalf of others (4:36–37; 9:27). These traits were evident before he was set apart for missionary travels by a specific directive of the Holy Spirit (13:2).

Martin Luther was on target when he described his call as “God’s voice heard by faith.” When our aptitudes, spiritual gifts, circumstances, and opportunities come together, let us make sure we are not overlooking God’s call. —C. R. B.

8b. And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Isaiah’s once unclean lips are ready to serve on the Lord’s behalf. He is willing to go wherever the Lord would *send* him. His willingness to be sent contrasts with the hesitancy of prophets

such as Moses (Exodus 3:11) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:6).

What Do You Think?

What prevents believers from saying, “Here am I. Send me!” to God?

Digging Deeper

What steps can believers take to remove these barriers?

II. Communication with a King

(Isaiah 38:1–5)

The events of Isaiah 38:1–5 occur sometime before the deliverance of Jerusalem from Assyrian invasion, described in Isaiah 36–37. This is based on Isaiah 38:6, which describes the rescue as a future promise. By this time, Isaiah’s lengthy prophetic ministry was several decades old. The parallel accounts to Isaiah 38:1–6 are found in 2 Kings 20:1–6 and 2 Chronicles 32:24–26.

A. Message of Death (v. 1)

1a. In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death.

Hezekiah reigned as king of Judah from 715 to 686 BC. The king’s diagnosis is untold. Part of his suffering includes a skin ailment, causing Isaiah to direct him to “prepare a poultice of figs and apply it to the boil” (Isaiah 38:21).

1b. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, “This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.”

We do not know whether the ailing king sent for *the prophet Isaiah* or whether the Lord directed Isaiah to appear before the king. Either way, Isaiah’s earlier proclamation, “Here I am. send me!” (Isaiah 6:8b, above), is consistent with his role as God’s messenger.

The descriptor of the prophet being the *son of Amoz* appears thirteen times in the Old Testament, seven of which appear in the book of Isaiah (here and in Isaiah 1:1; 2:1; 13:1; 20:2; 37:2, 21). Scripture gives no other details regarding Isaiah’s father.

The message Isaiah brings is not of his own but

How to Say It

Amoz	Ay-mahz.
Habakkuk	Huh-back-kuk.
Hezekiah	Hez-ih-kye-uh.
theophany	the-ah-fuh-nee.
seraphim	sair-uh-fim.
Uzziah	Uh-zye-uh.

from *the Lord*. Two phrases repeat the same mortal warning: Hezekiah *will not recover* and is *going to die* and *not live*. Isaiah gives no promise of healing. Instead, he directs the king to *put* his affairs *in order*.

What Do You Think?

How would you support someone who has received news of a terminal diagnosis?

Digging Deeper

In such a case, how do you discern whether or not to show your support by speaking up or remaining silent?

B. Tears of Bitterness (vv. 2–3)

2. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD,

The prophet's somber message devastates *Hezekiah*. Perhaps the king is lying on his bed when he receives Isaiah's word. Turning *his face to the wall* may be an attempt to hide his reaction from others present or to focus on his prayer—or both.

3. “Remember, LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

Hezekiah has reason to claim that he had *done what is good*. As king of Judah, he has renovated the temple, overseen its purification, and restored worship practices there (2 Chronicles 29). He has removed artifacts of pagan worship throughout Judah (2 Kings 18:4). The phrase *wept bitterly* is a two-word summary of the anguish he expresses in Isaiah 38:9–14.

C. Extension of Life (vv. 4–5)

4. Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah:

The parallel account in 2 Kings 20:4 adds more detail. It describes how Isaiah departs after giving the message but has not gone far when *the Lord* directs him to give another *word* to the king.

5a. “Go and tell Hezekiah, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says:

The declaration *this is what the Lord . . . says* indicates that the prophet's message is not his own. Instead, Isaiah brings it from the Lord (com-

pare Exodus 4:22; 2 Samuel 7:5; Jeremiah 2:2). The appeal to *your father David* highlights Hezekiah's position as David's descendant (1 Chronicles 3:10–13).

5b. “I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life.”

This message announces a reversal. The biblical record reveals that, at first, Hezekiah became prideful (2 Chronicles 32:24–25). But subsequent repentance paved the way for notable accomplishments (32:26–33).

Conclusion

A. Here Am I. Send Me!

Not everyone will experience the same call to vocational ministry as I described at the outset. However, God calls everyone to serve him. Regardless of where God calls us to serve, we should answer with our version of “Here am I. Send me!”

When we respond humbly and willingly, God will use us to represent him to others. Some of us may serve God through vocational ministry. Others will serve him via their witness through their “9-to-5” jobs, relationships with family and friends, financial support of mission work, etc. When we follow God's call, regardless of where it takes us, we are in a place of service to him.

B. Prayer

Heavenly Father, help us be attentive to how you have called us to go into the world and represent you. Give us the courage to speak of you to a world that desperately needs to know you and your message of salvation. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

C. Thought to Remember

Respond to God's call!

Visuals FOR THESE LESSONS

The visual pictured in each lesson (example: page 13) is a small reproduction of a large, full-color poster included in the *Adult Resources* packet for the Fall Quarter. Order No. 9780784739136 from your supplier.

Involvement Learning

Enhance your lesson with NIV Bible Student (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at www.standardlesson.com or in the back of the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition).

Into the Lesson

Begin class time by offering the following imaginary scenarios:

1. You are lost in a dark cave without a companion, weapon, or light. You hear a rumbling noise deep in the cave. The sound grows louder and seems to approach you. What would you do next?
2. You open your mailbox and discover an envelope containing a cashier's check written for \$10,000. The check is made out to you, but there is no personal information regarding the source of the check. What would you do next?

Alternative. Ask participants to describe when they experienced an extraordinary or surprising occurrence. How did they respond?

After either activity, lead into the Bible study by saying, "When we experience something extraordinary, our response may have a lasting and powerful effect. In today's study, consider how Isaiah responded to the extraordinary call of God."

Into the Word

Ask a volunteer to read aloud Isaiah 6:1–8. Divide participants into four groups: **Sight Group**, **Smell Group**, **Sound Group**, and **Touch Group**. Distribute a sheet of paper and a pen to each group. Ask them to write down words or phrases from the text related to their assigned sense. Then, encourage groups to use their "sanctified imagination" to add further details to the narrative regarding their assigned sense.

Alternative. Distribute copies of the "Four Senses" exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have learners work with a partner to complete as indicated.

Option 1. Distribute copies of the "Problem and Solution" activity from the activity page. Have participants complete it in groups of three before discussing conclusions in whole-class discussion.

Option 2. Divide the class into two groups: **Isaiah Group** and **Jeremiah Group**. Have each group read Isaiah 6:1–8 and Jeremiah 1:4–19. Dis-

tribute handouts (you create) to each group with questions for in-group discussion.

Isaiah Group. 1–Describe how Isaiah reacted to God's call. 2–How did God respond to Isaiah? 3–Compare Isaiah's call with the call of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah Group. 1–Describe how Jeremiah reacted to God's call. 2–How did God respond to Jeremiah? 3–Compare Jeremiah's call with the call of Isaiah.

After five minutes of discussion, reconvene the groups to share their findings.

Divide the class into small groups. Have groups study Isaiah 38:1–5 and decide whether each statement below is true or false. Distribute a handout (you create) with the statements:

1. Isaiah spoke a word to King Manasseh.
2. The king rejected Isaiah's word and refused to turn to God in prayer.
3. The king requested that the Lord remember the good works of the king's ancestors.
4. Isaiah wept when he saw the response of the king.
5. The Lord promised to add five years to the life of the king.

If the statement is false, they should rewrite it to make it true. (Note: every statement is false.) Give groups several minutes, then review as a whole class.

Into Life

Lead into the activity by saying, "Think of a time when you believed you had received a message or call from God. How did you know it was from God? How did you respond?" Ask participants to share responses with a partner. After three minutes, ask pairs to brainstorm ways to discern an authentic call of God from a mere felt need. Ask volunteers to share responses and write them on the board.

Distribute index cards and pens to participants. Read aloud Isaiah 6:8 as participants write down the phrase "Here am I. Send me!" Challenge participants to post the cards in a visible place as a daily reminder to pray for obedience to God's call.

Isaiah's Call and Ministry

Lesson 1, Isaiah 6:1–8; 38:1–5, NIV

Four Senses

Work with a partner to read Isaiah 6:1–8 and write down words or phrases in the text related to each header.

Sense of Sight	Sense of Smell	Sense of Sound	Sense of Touch/ Feeling

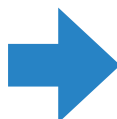
Using your “sanctified imagination,” list possible details about the vision regarding each sense.

Problem and Solution

Read Isaiah 6:5–8 and complete the charts below. Use the questions to guide you and write down one to three words for each answer.

Problem #1 (v. 5)

WHO expresses the problem? _____
WHAT is the problem? _____
WHY is it a problem? _____



Solution #1 (vv. 6–7)

WHO presents the solution? _____
WHAT is the solution? _____
WHY is it the solution? _____

Problem #2 (v. 8a)

WHO expresses the problem? _____
WHAT is the problem? _____
WHY is it a problem? _____



Solution #2 (v. 8b)

WHO presents the solution? _____
WHAT is the solution? _____
WHY is it the solution? _____



Standard LESSON QUARTERLY®

NIV® BIBLE
STUDENT

FALL 2025
JUDAH, FROM ISAIAH
TO EXILE

▶ International Sunday School Lessons

Judah, from Isaiah to Exile

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Isaiah's Call and Ministry

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 2:1–5

Background Scripture: Isaiah 6:1–13; 7:1–7; 20:1–6; 38:1–22

Today's Scripture: Isaiah 6:1–8; 38:1–5

I. Commissioned by God

Isaiah 6:1–8

¹ In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵ “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.

⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord

saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

1a. *Uzziah* reigned as *king* of Judah for 52 years. We don't know the exact years of his reign, but one estimate gives the range of 792–740 BC.

1b. At least two possibilities exist regarding the setting of *the temple*. One possibility is that the setting is the earthly temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. Another option is that Isaiah sees the heavenly temple. Regardless, the significance is that Isaiah sees the location where the enthroned Lord rules.

That Isaiah *saw the Lord* is echoed in John 12:41. This fact does not contradict Exodus 33:20 or John 1:18. What Isaiah sees is called a *theophany*, which is a manifestation of God, not God in his actual essence.

The Lord's position *seated on a throne* reveals him as the living heavenly King. Although the earthly King Uzziah has died, the Lord still reigns! The Lord's elevated position reflects the *exalted* nature of his being.

The expansive nature of the *train of his robe* is echoed in Revelation 1:13. Special garments marked the identity of significant figures, like priests or kings. However, the garment Isaiah sees is unlike any garment worn by a human. The size of

this garment *filled the temple*, leaving Isaiah incapable of giving further description.

2. The word *seraphim* is a transliteration (not a translation) of a Hebrew word. That's where a word in one language is brought over into another language simply by swapping the letters of the word in the original language into the letters that sound the same in the receptor language.

3a. The repetition of the word *holy* stresses its significance: the Lord's holiness is unparalleled!

The Hebrew adjective translated "holy" appears in 34 verses in Isaiah; clearly, it's a vital concept to the writer, implying "separation" or "distinctiveness." The Lord's holiness means that he is separate from his creation in that he is morally perfect.

The designation *Lord Almighty* or "Lord God Almighty" appears 291 times in the Old Testament, with about 75 percent of those occurring in the prophetic books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. As the timeline of history advances, God's power is increasingly stressed since the title reflects the Lord's power as king and commander of the heavenly armies (see 1 Samuel 4:4; Psalm 24:10; Isaiah 1:24; etc.).

3b. No human-made structure can confine the glory of God. Since *the whole earth* belongs to God as its creator, it cannot but help to reflect *his glory*.

4. The presence of *smoke* in Scripture is sometimes associated with the presence of God. The smoke in the context of the verse at hand brings to mind the cloud that "filled the temple of the Lord" in Solomon's time (1 Kings 8:10).

5. The expression *Woe to me!* reveals Isaiah's feeling of unworthiness to experience the sights and sounds before him. He knows his unholiness prevents him from being in the presence of a holy God, *the Lord Almighty*, even in a vision. The prophet confesses that his sin makes him

unclean. He also admits to living *among a people of unclean lips*, but this admission is not to shift the blame to excuse his own sinful condition. In acknowledging his own unholiness, he is taking personal responsibility for it.

6. In response to Isaiah's admission in the previous verse, *one of the seraphim* goes into action on the man's behalf. *The altar* from which the seraph takes *a live coal* refers possibly to the altar in the temple Solomon built (1 Kings 9:25). But an altar in a temple of the heavenly environs cannot be ruled out because an altar is present there as well (Revelation 6:9; 14:18; 16:7). Isaiah undoubtedly watches with great apprehension as the scene unfolds. Having just confessed his own sinful unworthiness, is he about to be punished?

7. We can only imagine the emotions that surge through Isaiah as he witnesses the seraph approaching with a burning coal. Three of Isaiah's five senses have informed his experience thus far. By sight he has beheld the Lord (Isaiah 6:1); by hearing he has perceived the declaration of the seraphim (6:3); by sight and (assumed) smell he is aware of smoke (6:4). Now the fourth sense, touch, comes into play. We do not know if Isaiah feels any sting or pain from the red-hot coal that touches his *mouth*. If so, it must be temporary, as the words *your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for* speak not of judgment but of forgiveness.

8a. First, the seraphim spoke (Isaiah 6:3). Then Isaiah spoke (6:5). Then one seraph spoke (6:7). Now, *the Lord* himself speaks by asking two questions. The first question deals with "sender action," and the second deals with "servant action." These are important questions because the Lord expects those who trust in him to be his hands and feet at times.

The first-person plural pronoun *us* is similar to the language used in account of

creation and in response to the building of the Tower of Babel. The plural pronoun may refer to the Lord and the seraphim who make up his heavenly counsel. Other commentators suggest that the plural pronoun may refer to the three persons of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah, however, is probably not mulling over such matters at this point; all he hears is the call for someone to *go* on the Lord's behalf. And he wastes no time in responding.

8b. Isaiah's once unclean lips are ready to serve on the Lord's behalf. He is willing to go wherever the Lord would *send* him.

II. Communication with a King

Isaiah 38:1–5

¹ In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, “This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.”

² Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, ³ “Remember, LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: ⁵ “Go and tell Hezekiah, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life.’”

1a. The events of Isaiah 38:1–5 occur sometime before the deliverance of Jerusalem from Assyrian invasion, described in Isaiah 36–37. This is based on Isaiah 38:6, which describes the rescue as a future promise. By this time, Isaiah's lengthy prophetic ministry was several decades old.

Hezekiah reigned as king of Judah from 715 to 686 BC. The king's diagnosis is untold.

1b. We do not know whether the ailing king sent for *the prophet Isaiah* or whether the Lord directed Isaiah to appear before the king. Either way, Isaiah's earlier proclamation, “Here I am. send me!” (Isaiah 6:8b), is consistent with his role as God's messenger.

The message Isaiah brings is not of his own but from *the Lord*. Two phrases repeat the same mortal warning: Hezekiah *will not recover* and is *going to die* and *not live*. Isaiah gives no promise of healing. Instead, he directs the king to *put his affairs in order*.

2. The prophet's somber message devastates *Hezekiah*. Perhaps the king is lying on his bed when he receives Isaiah's word. Turning *his face to the wall* may be an attempt to hide his reaction from others present or to focus on his prayer—or both.

3. Hezekiah has reason to claim that he had *done what is good*. As king of Judah, he has renovated the temple, overseen its purification, and restored worship practices there (2 Chronicles 29). He has removed artifacts of pagan worship throughout Judah (2 Kings 18:4).

4. The parallel account in 2 Kings 20:4 adds more detail. It describes how Isaiah departs after giving the message but has not gone far when *the Lord* directs him to give another *word* to the king.

5a. The declaration *this is what the Lord . . . says* indicates that the prophet's message is not his own. Instead, Isaiah brings it from the Lord.

5b. This message announces a reversal. The biblical record reveals that, at first, Hezekiah became prideful (2 Chronicles 32:24–25). But subsequent repentance paved the way for notable accomplishments (32:26–33).

Involvement Learning

Isaiah's Call and Ministry

Into the Lesson

How would you respond to one the following scenarios?

1. You are lost in a dark cave without a companion, weapon, or light. You hear a rumbling noise deep in the cave. The sound grows louder and seems to approach you. What would you do next?
2. You open your mailbox and discover an envelope containing a cashier's check written for \$10,000. The check is made out to you, but there is no personal information regarding the source of the check. What would you do next?

When we experience something extraordinary, our response may have a lasting and powerful effect. In today's study, consider how Isaiah responded to the extraordinary call of God.

Key Verse

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"
—Isaiah 6:8

Into the Word

Read Isaiah 6:1–8. Write down words or phrases from the text related to the below senses:

Sight: _____

Smell: _____

Hearing: _____

Touch _____

Read Isaiah 38:1–5 and decide whether each statement below is true or false. If the statement is false, rewrite it to make it true.

1. Isaiah spoke a word to King Manasseh.

2. The king rejected Isaiah's word and refused to turn to God in prayer.

3. The king requested that the Lord remember the good works of the king's ancestors.

4. Isaiah wept when he saw the response of the king.

5. The Lord promised to add five years to the life of the king.

Into Life

List ways to discern an authentic call of God from a mere felt need.

Thought to Remember

Respond to God's call!

September 8–14

☐ Mon, Sep. 8 Psalm 145:13–21
☐ Tue, Sep. 9 Matthew 3:4–12
☐ Wed, Sep. 10 Acts 3:12–20
☐ Thu, Sep. 11 James 5:12–18
☐ Fri, Sep. 12 Exodus 12:3–14
☐ Sat, Sep. 13 Deuteronomy 12:5–12
☐ Sun, Sep. 14 2 Chronicles 30:1–9, 26–27

September 15–21

☐ Mon, Sep. 15 Matthew 22:36–40
☐ Tue, Sep. 16 Romans 2:9–16
☐ Wed, Sep. 17 Deuteronomy 30:1–10
☐ Thu, Sep. 18 Deuteronomy 30:11–21
☐ Fri, Sep. 19 Hebrews 1:13–2:4
☐ Sat, Sep. 20 Matthew 13:44–52
☐ Sun, Sep. 21 2 Chronicles 34:15–22, 26–27

September 22–28

☐ Mon, Sep. 22 Philippians 2:5–10
☐ Tue, Sep. 23 Isaiah 42:1–7
☐ Wed, Sep. 24 Acts 2:25–31
☐ Thu, Sep. 25 Acts 13:44–49
☐ Fri, Sep. 26 Psalm 84
☐ Sat, Sep. 27 Isaiah 50:4–9
☐ Sun, Sep. 28 Isaiah 53:1–7

September 29–October 5

☐ Mon, Sep. 29 2 Chronicles 34:1–7
☐ Tue, Sep. 30 Hebrews 4:12–16
☐ Wed, Oct. 1 Jeremiah 3:12–19
☐ Thu, Oct. 2 Jeremiah 4:5–14
☐ Fri, Oct. 3 Hebrews 12:3–17
☐ Sat, Oct. 4 Hebrews 12:18–29
☐ Sun, Oct. 5 Jeremiah 1:6–10; 26:8–9, 12–15

October 6–12

☐ Mon, Oct. 6 Mark 13:1–13
☐ Tue, Oct. 7 Mark 13:14–27
☐ Wed, Oct. 8 1 Samuel 15:20–26
☐ Thu, Oct. 9 John 14:12–17
☐ Fri, Oct. 10 John 2:12–22
☐ Sat, Oct. 11 Psalm 51:15–19
☐ Sun, Oct. 12 Jeremiah 7:1–11, 21–23

October 13–19

☐ Mon, Oct. 13 Proverbs 23:29–35
☐ Tue, Oct. 14 Ecclesiastes 9:4–10
☐ Wed, Oct. 15 Ephesians 5:11–19
☐ Thu, Oct. 16 Numbers 6:1–8
☐ Fri, Oct. 17 1 Thessalonians 4:1–7
☐ Sat, Oct. 18 1 Thessalonians 5:1–10
☐ Sun, Oct. 19 Jeremiah 35:5–11

October 20–26

☐ Mon, Oct. 20 Joel 2:28–32
☐ Tue, Oct. 21 Ezekiel 36:25–35
☐ Wed, Oct. 22 Deuteronomy 10:12–21
☐ Thu, Oct. 23 2 Corinthians 3:1–6
☐ Fri, Oct. 24 2 Corinthians 3:7–11
☐ Sat, Oct. 25 2 Corinthians 3:12–17
☐ Sun, Oct. 26 Jeremiah 31:27–34

October 27–November 2

☐ Mon, Oct. 27 Matthew 10:16–27
☐ Tue, Oct. 28 Matthew 10:28–42
☐ Wed, Oct. 29 Psalm 37:1–13
☐ Thu, Oct. 30 Psalm 37:25–28, 35–40
☐ Fri, Oct. 31 Romans 12:12–21
☐ Sat, Nov. 1 Jeremiah 38:1–6
☐ Sun, Nov. 2 Jeremiah 38:7–13

In the Word

November 3-9

- ☐ Mon, Nov. 3 Luke 12:42-48
- ☐ Tue, Nov. 4 Luke 12:49-53
- ☐ Wed, Nov. 5 Lamentations 2:17-22
- ☐ Thu, Nov. 6 Lamentations 3:21-36
- ☐ Fri, Nov. 7 1 Peter 1:1-12
- ☐ Sat, Nov. 8 1 Peter 1:13-25
- ☐ Sun, Nov. 9 2 Kings 24:18-25:9

November 10-16

- ☐ Mon, Nov. 10 1 Peter 3:8-17
- ☐ Tue, Nov. 11 1 Peter 3:18-22
- ☐ Wed, Nov. 12 Psalm 34:6-19
- ☐ Thu, Nov. 13 Matthew 5:3-12
- ☐ Fri, Nov. 14 Ezekiel 3:4-11
- ☐ Sat, Nov. 15 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4
- ☐ Sun, Nov. 16 Ezekiel 24:15-27

November 17-23

- ☐ Mon, Nov. 17 1 Peter 4:1-11
- ☐ Tue, Nov. 18 1 Peter 4:12-19
- ☐ Wed, Nov. 19 Ezekiel 18:1-9
- ☐ Thu, Nov. 20 Psalm 38:1-2, 10-22
- ☐ Fri, Nov. 21 Galatians 6:1-10
- ☐ Sat, Nov. 22 Matthew 7:1-6
- ☐ Sun, Nov. 23 Ezekiel 33:7-16a

November 24-30

- ☐ Mon, Nov. 24 Ezekiel 37:1-7
- ☐ Tue, Nov. 25 Ezekiel 37:8-14
- ☐ Wed, Nov. 26 Isaiah 55:1-9
- ☐ Thu, Nov. 27 John 7:2-10, 37-39
- ☐ Fri, Nov. 28 Revelation 21:1-7
- ☐ Sat, Nov. 29 Revelation 22:1-5
- ☐ Sun, Nov. 30 Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12:1-2

Your weekly Sunday school time will be enriched when you come to class each week prepared. One aspect of good preparation is continual contact with the Word of God. Of course, Bible reading is more than preparation. It is a vital link with the Father. Coupled with prayer, it is the most important item on your daily agenda.

There are a variety of Bible reading plans available. We offer this one because it is designed to enhance your weekly Bible study of these lessons with an adult class.

Your devotional time can be enriched if you add to these Bible readings a time of prayer and meditation. The quarterly booklet *Devotions** combines these same readings with a meditation, daily Scripture verse, a hymn, and prayer thoughts. *Devotions** is available from your local Christian bookstore or from David C Cook (order no. 1629325; order no. 1629525 for large print).

REMOVE THIS PAGE, FOLD, AND KEEP IN YOUR BIBLE FOR REFERENCE.

September 1-7

- ☐ Mon, Sep. 1 Mark 1:1-8
- ☐ Tue, Sep. 2 Isaiah 7:1-7
- ☐ Wed, Sep. 3 Isaiah 20:1-6
- ☐ Thu, Sep. 4 Matthew 11:1-6
- ☐ Fri, Sep. 5 Matthew 11:7-15
- ☐ Sat, Sep. 6 Psalm 145:1-12
- ☐ Sun, Sep. 7 Isaiah 6:1-8; 38:1-5

Quarterly Quiz

Lesson 1

1. Isaiah's throne-room vision occurred in the year that King Uzziah died. T/F. *Isaiah 6:1*

2. How many additional years did the Lord promise Hezekiah? (1; 15; 20) *Isaiah 38:5*

Lesson 2

1. It was decided that Hezekiah's Passover would occur in the _____ month. *2 Chronicles 30:2*

2. Hezekiah's Passover celebration resulted in "great _____ in Jerusalem." *2 Chronicles 30:26*

Lesson 3

1. Who gave "the Book of the Law" to Shaphan? (Ahikam, Hilkiyah, Asaiah) *2 Chronicles 34:15*

2. Which prophetess did Hilkiyah speak with concerning the Book of the Law? (Huldah, Deborah, Noadiah) *2 Chronicles 34:22*

Lesson 4

1. The servant was "pierced for our _____." *Isaiah 53:5*

2. The Lord has laid on the servant the iniquity of us all. T/F. *Isaiah 53:6*

Lesson 5

1. Jeremiah considered himself too old to speak. T/F. *Jeremiah 1:6*

2. Jeremiah prophesied "this house" would become like what other location? (Sheol, Shechem, Shiloh) *Jeremiah 26:9*

Lesson 6

1. The Lord warned that deceptive words repeat this phrase: "The _____ of the Lord." *Jeremiah 7:4*

2. The Lord asked, "Has this house, . . . become a den of _____ to you?" *Jeremiah 7:11*

Lesson 7

1. Who commanded the Rekabites to never drink wine? (Joshua, Jehonadab, Jehu) *Jeremiah 35:6*

2. The Rekabites lived in tents, just as they were commanded. T/F. *Jeremiah 35:10*

Lesson 8

1. In which did the Lord say he would "write" the law? (hearts, souls, minds) *Jeremiah 31:33*

2. Which two "came through Jesus Christ"? (choose two: law, grace, covenant, truth) *John 1:17*

Lesson 9

1. How many men did the king command Ebed-Melek to take to rescue Jeremiah? (13; 30; 300) *Jeremiah 38:10*

2. Immediately after his rescue, Jeremiah left "the courtyard of the guard." T/F. *Jeremiah 38:13*

Lesson 10

1. Nebuchadnezzar's siege against Jerusalem began in the _____ year of Zedekiah's reign. *2 Kings 25:1*

2. Who set fire to the temple, palace, and houses in Jerusalem? (Nebuchadnezzar, Zedekiah, Nebuzaradan) *2 Kings 25:8-9*

Lesson 11

1. The Lord called Ezekiel by what title? (Son of Judah, Son of man, Son of Jacob) *Ezekiel 3:10*

2. Ezekiel would be a "signal" to the people of Judah. T/F. *Ezekiel 24:27*

Lesson 12

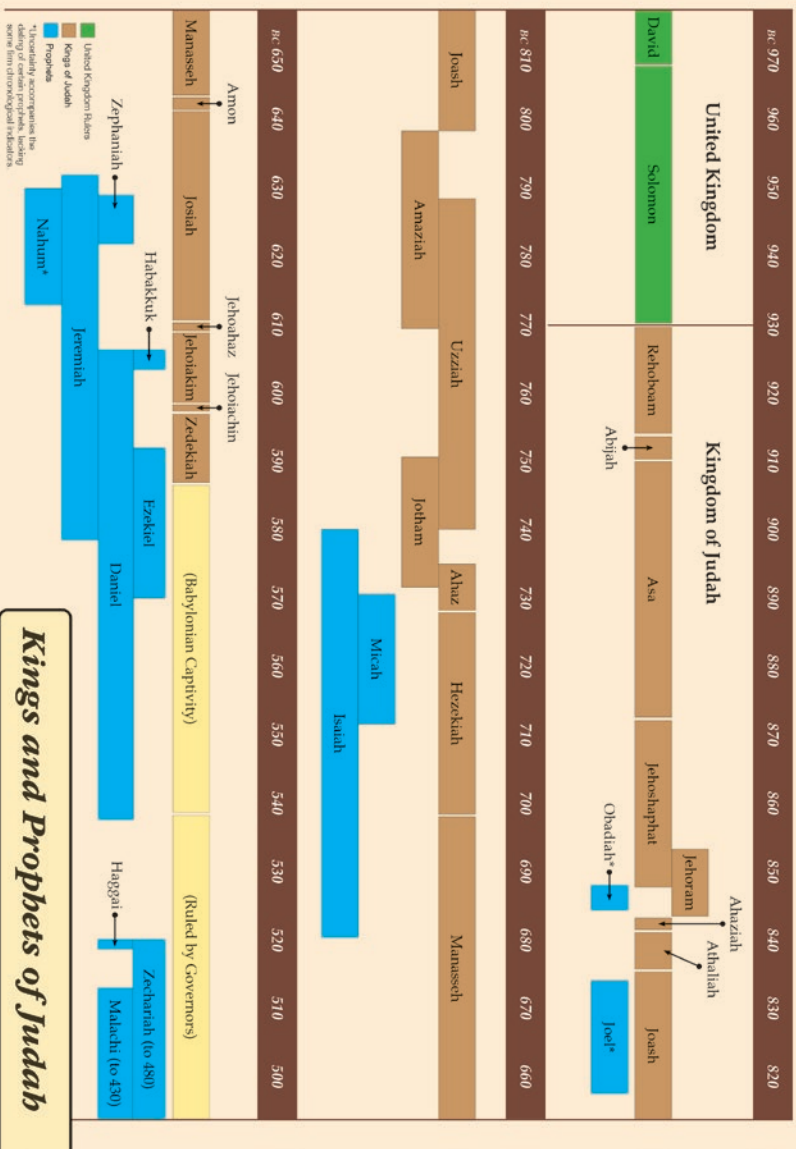
1. The Lord made Ezekiel a "_____ for the people of Israel." *Ezekiel 33:7*

2. The Sovereign Lord takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. T/F. *Ezekiel 33:11*

Lesson 13

1. The man went eastward and measured a total of 4,000 _____. *Ezekiel 47:3-5*

2. Ezekiel saw "a great number of _____" on both sides of the river. *Ezekiel 47:7*



Kings and Prophets of Judah