

God Argues His Case (3:13-26: 4:1-6)

- “The Lord rises to argue his case” (still in relationship)
- Accusing the elders and princes of misleading the people, exploring the poor, crushing the oppressed:
- “What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor? Says the Lord God of hosts.” (v 15)
- Particularly hard on the daughters of Zion, will take away their finery, their men shall fall by sword and war, they will be desolate, desperate to remove their shame

Renewal of Zion (4:2-6)

- The hopeful promise—when the people are back in right relationship, here is what to expect

The Song of the Unfruitful Vineyard (5: 1-30)

- The beloved plants a vineyard, but it produces wild grapes
- The wild grapes are (1) the rich, (2) the pleasure seekers, (3) the blatant sinners, (4) the confused moralists, (5) the arrogant and self-righteous, (6) the mighty (5: 8-23)
- Chapter ends with God as military leader, bringing an invasion to lay waste to the vineyard

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1. *How do you imagine the people of Isaiah’s day—kings and couriers, people of power in the land—would have received Isaiah’s message?*
2. *How might we bring this teaching to our personal lives? How does it speak to our condition today?*
3. *What do you hear about God in this section? How does that fit with an image of a loving God?*

Welcome, Friends! to

“The Book of Isaiah”

A ten-week class exploring the Book of Isaiah and its relevance to our faith and practice today.



Michelangelo's "Isaiah" from the Sistine Chapel, Vatican City

WEEK 2: Ch 2 – 5

Early Messages of Isaiah

- Scholars believe that these chapters were written early in Isaiah's ministry
- The first message is one of great hope, speaking of "The Future House of God" (some scholars call this "Zion's Glorious Future"). This hope speaks of many who turn to God and see relationship with him, walking in God's paths of peace. Many see a foreshadowing of the Messiah in the early verses of Chapter 2. (2: 1-4)
- The second message is about the Arrogance of Israel (or "Zion's Inglorious Present"). The people of the day were being judged for their worldliness, materialism, and idolatry.
- The "Song of the Unfruitful Vineyard" in Chapter 5 is said to be a depiction of the relationship between God and Israel and the coming judgment.

A People Willing to Be Taught (2:1-3)

- The mountain of the Lord's house, established as the highest of the mountains
- Many people shall come and say, "Come let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths."

*What do you hear? What images are compelling for you?
Do you see this happening anywhere today?*

Wisdom and Peace (2:4)

- A fair God: "He shall judge between the nations"
- "they shall beat their swords into plowshares"
 - A **plowshare** is the cutting or leading edge of a moldboard, which is close to the ground-breaking spikes when plowing.

An Arrogant People & God's Response (2:5-22)

- In verses 2:5-10, Isaiah describes the state of the people and makes a plea for them to turn toward God
 - Forsaken their people
 - Full of diviners and soothsayers
 - Arrogant and haughty
 - Enamored with riches
- In verses 2:11-22, we hear how God will respond to the waywardness of the people
 - Richard Foster's note here: "The ferociousness of 'the day' that is anticipated is reinforced by the phrase "the Lord of hosts," which refers to God as a leader of military troops."

What does this description of 'the day' evoke in for you?

Removal of Good Leadership (3:1-12)

- In Ch 3, we hear about the disruption of the entire social order that is coming about as a result of the arrogant and errant behavior of Israel:
 - Bread and water
 - Support and staff
 - Leaders of all types "soldiers, judges, prophets, elders, even magicians and enchanters"
 - Good leadership will be turned upside-down: "I will make boys their princes and babes will rule over them"
 - People will exploit one another, even social rules within the clan will be violated
 - Those with healing or leading gifts will turn away; none will choose to be good leaders of the people
- And yet, a glimmer of hope in the middle: "Tell the innocent how fortunate they are, for they shall eat the fruit of their labors." (v 10)