

- READ: 33:15-16. Foster: “It is characteristically promised in the OT that those who practice such an ethic will live a life of abundance, well-being, and security.”

### Chapter 34 & 35: God’s Rage & God’s Glory

- Chapter 34 includes difficult imagery and violent phrases about complete annihilation of the nations who have been rebellious.
- Foster says it “Describes God’s undoing of those parts of creation that refuse to accept the sovereignty of God.”
- Ch 5 opens with visions of solitude. The wilderness and the desert are classic symbols.
- V 35: 1-7, the earth is coming back to life. The weak are strengthened, the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame leap, the speechless sing. Once again, God makes a way where there was no way.
- READ V 35: 8-10. The Holy Way—a great superhighway leading from exile in Babylon back to Jerusalem—is “so broad, wide, and clear that not even foolish, careless travelers can get lost. All will travel home without anxiety. Those who come home are marked as the “redeemed” and the “ransomed,” the ones to whom God has been particularly attentive.

~ \* ~ \* ~ \* DISCUSSION QUESTIONS \* ~ \* ~ \* ~

1. *How might the world be different if nations turned to God instead of each other to form alliances?*
2. *Much of the language of God’s judgment shows us that God sees truly what is going on—in our world and in our hearts. What thoughts and feelings does this bring up for you?*

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 6: Ch 28-35**

## Background for this Section

- Isaiah Chapters 28-35 deal with the pressures and response of Judah as they prepare for the invasion of Assyria.
- Chapters 28-31 begin a new section in Isaiah, and Richard Foster's commentary says these chapters were probably written by the prophet during the reign of Hezekiah at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE.
- These chapters speak of harsh judgment for Jerusalem, predominately for pride.
- Jerusalem's government has a policy of making alliances with other nations rather than trusting in God.
- The oracles in 28:1, 29:1, 29:15, 30:1, and 31:1 all begin with a Hebrew word that means "Woe," although it is often translated as "ah," "oh," or "alas" in modern translations)

## Chapter 28: Judgment and Restoration

- Isaiah proclaims the vanity and pride of drunkards of Ephraim will come to an end, decries the "fading flower of beauty:
- READ: 28:5-6. Isaiah sees restoration during the time of God's governance.
- Verses 28:7-8, people are self-indulgent, not listening
- READ: 28: 11-13. Who will have a clear heart and mind to hear and respond to God's promise?

*Have you had an experience in your life when you suddenly felt God was trying to get your attention?*

- Verses 28:14-15: Scoffers have made a "covenant with death," *for we have made lies our refuge and in falsehood we have taken shelter.*
- READ: 28:16-18. A promise that God will deliver them from their blindness and false alliances.

- Crop metaphor; plowing and planting "They are well instructed, and God teaches them" (v 28:23-29)
- There is a reason for God's judgment, destruction, and restoration; being brought low to build again.

## Chapter 29: Truth Will Out and Hope for the Future

- READ 29: 15-16. The arrogance of those who believe God doesn't see their deeds.
- READ: 29: 18-24. Restoration, God-style.

*How do you feel when you read of this restoration, dear hearing, blind seeing, meek joyful, all needs met?*

## Chapter 30 & 31: Rebellious Children, Invited Home

- V 30:1, "carry out a plan, but not mine; make an alliance, against my will, adding sin to sin"
- V 30:9: They are willfully ignorant, saying to seers, "do not see" and to prophets, "do not prophesy to us what is right; speak to us smooth things, prophesy illusions"
- READ: 30: 15. Promise of restoration, special verse among Friends.
- READ: 30: 18-21. Beautiful image of harmonious, redeemed relationship with God.

## Chapter 32 & 33: Peace and Prosperity

- V32: 1 lifts up the Davidic belief in the great king which will bring in an era of safety and well-being and joy. These promises became the "root of messianic hope in the New Testament," which identified Jesus as the king who would make all things new.
- READ: 32: 16-18. After such judgment, the ultimate outcome for God's people will be justice, righteousness, and peace.