

## READ The BIBLE Together



### ISAIAH 40-66

16<sup>th</sup> April – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2017

**SHALOM CHURCH, SINGAPORE**  
**(Upholding the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith)**

The *reading* of Scriptures is an important discipline for our Christian Life, and it is our aim to inculcate this godly culture in Shalom Church through our **READ-The-Bible-Together** program.

Since this is **READ-The-Bible-Together** and not **STUDY-The-Bible-Together**, the questions and notes in the following pages are kept relatively simple, serving as our reading aid.

If you desire to study **ISAIAH 40-66** in greater depths, you may wish to consult any of the following:

- The Book of Isaiah (Volume 3) by *Edward J Young*
- The Prophecy of Isaiah by *J. Alec Motyer*
- Matthew Henry's Commentary on Isaiah

May the Holy Spirit make our reading of Scripture an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners in our midst, as well as building believers up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation!

For this week [[16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2017](#)] you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **ISAIAH 40**.

You may use Questions 1-9 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 40**, or you can go straight to Question 10 after reading the text.

### **40:1-11**

The immediate context of **ISAIAH 40** would be **ISAIAH 39:5-7** where *Isaiah* told *Hezekiah* that the Babylonians will come and take the people of Judah into exile. In other words, a great day of trouble is approaching.

To these people facing a coming day of trouble, God calls them "*My people*" and speaks comfort to them (**40:1-2**). The comfort that comes from God has to do with a Coming One.

1. What can we say about this Person who is coming? (**Verses 9h-11**)
2. Before this Person arrives, what will take place? (**Verses 3-5**) What is the significance of this?
3. What will be some of the effects of His coming? (**Verse 2**)
4. From the New Testament, we know that this Coming One is Jesus Christ our Lord (**MATTHEW 3:1-3, JOHN 18:37, JOHN 10:11-16, I JOHN 2:1-2**). True and lasting comfort can only be found in Jesus Christ.

For us living *after* Calvary and Pentecost, we can see this message much clearer, though the call remains: *Put all our trust in Him who alone can give us true and lasting comfort.*

For those Jews living in the 8<sup>th</sup> century during *Isaiah's* days, although they cannot see clearly who the Coming One is, yet the call to them is the same: *Put all your trust in this Coming One in whom alone you shall have true and lasting comfort.*

We may be tempted to look elsewhere, but we must be reminded repeatedly that all flesh is grass, the grass withers but the word of God stands forever.

5. How does **ISAIAH 40:1-11** call you to change the way you live?

### **40:12-31**

The passage takes the form of a 'disputation'. A position is being adopted (**verse 27**). **Verses 12-26** argue against that position, showing why it is fallacious. **Verses 28-31** present the correct conclusion that should be drawn instead.

6. The fallacious position is stated in **verse 27** ~ *Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my just claim is passed over by my God"?*

The people of God are complaining. In fact, the "say" and "speak" is continuous, meaning they keep on complaining. And this is their complaint:

*Their way is hard, but God has shut His eyes from seeing. Hence, "my way is hidden from the LORD." They have experienced injustice, but it is pointless bringing the matter to God, since He keeps on passing over their just claim!*

How is your own situation similar to or different from what was presented in **verse 27**?

7. **Verses 12-26** contain the argument against the fallacious position of **verse 27**. While it can be broken down into four parts, taken together it is a call to consider and remember who is God.

(a) What can we learn about God from **verses 12-17**?

(b) An answer to the question posed in **verse 18** can be found in **verses 19-20**. What is it?

- (c) What can we learn about God from **verses 21-24**?
- (d) What can we learn about God from **verses 25-26**?
8. **Verses 28-31** present the correct conclusion that we should draw from the argument of **verses 12-26**.
- (a) In addition to all that can be said about God above in 7(a)-(d), **verse 28** tells us another truth about God. What is it?
- (b) What can we expect from such a God, and what should we be doing instead of complaining? (**Verses 29-31**)
9. (a) How does **ISAIAH 40:12-31** challenge (or confirm) your understanding of God?
- (b) How does **ISAIAH 40:12-31** lead you to trust God and His promise in Jesus?
- (c) How does **ISAIAH 40:12-31** call you to change the way you live?
10. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 40** during your 10 minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[23<sup>rd</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> April 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in  
**ISAIAH 41.**

You may use Questions 1-11 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 41**,  
or you can go straight to Question 12 after reading the text.

**41:1-7**

1. "*Coastlands*" (**verses 1, 5**) and "*ends of the earth*" (**verse 5**) stand for the Gentile nations. In these 7 verses, God is calling them to come before Him for judgment.

To these Gentiles, God asks them a series of questions found in **verses 2-4b**, and then gives them the answer in **verse 4c-d**. The message is that God and God alone rules this world, for He is the One who initiates the career of world leaders, determines what they shall do and how. In simple words, above the human leaders of this world is the LORD God Himself!

Do you have any problems accepting this truth? What are some of your challenges in accepting this clear teaching from **ISAIAH**?

2. **Verses 5-7** describe the reaction of the Gentiles to God's call in **verse 1**.
  - (a) What is it? Why do you think they have this reaction?
  - (b) Do you find yourself reacting in the same way as these Gentiles here in **verses 5-7**, and if so, why did you behave in this way?
  - (c) While the text does not say so, it is possible that some people would actually put their trust in the one whom God has raised up (**verses 2-3**). Is this better than the response of **verses 5-7**? Have you done the same as well?
3. In what way must your life change after reading **ISAIAH 41:1-7**?

### **41:8-16**

Thrice in this passage (**verses 10, 13, 14**) God said to His people, "*Fear not*".

4. Why should God's people not be afraid?

**Verses 10-13:**

**Verses 14-16:**

5. Why would God speak this word of comfort and assurance to Israel? (**Verses 8-9**)
6. What will be the final outcome when "*you worm Jacob*" defeat and overcome "*those who were incensed*" against him? (**Verse 16c-d**)
7. **ROMANS 15:4** says, "*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*"

How does **ISAIAH 41:8-16** teach us patience and comfort?

### **41:17-20**

8. What is the picture presented here and how does this picture lead you to trust God and His promise in Jesus?

### **41:21-29**

9. In **verses 21-24**, God gave the idols two challenges. What are they?

10. Although the idols are unable to meet both challenges laid down by God, God Himself could! How can we see this from **verses 25-29**?
  
11. We can summarize the message of **ISAIAH 41:21-29** as "*The impotence of idols and the omnipotence of God*". What is the response called for, upon grasping this message?
  
12. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 41** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[30<sup>th</sup> April - 6<sup>th</sup> May 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **ISAIAH 42 & ISAIAH 43**.

You may use Questions 1-11 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 42 & 43**, or you can go straight to Question 12 after reading the text.

### **42:1-8**

In **verse 1**, we are called to look at the Servant of the LORD. We are told that the LORD has called Him in righteousness, will hold His hand and keep Him, give Him as a covenant to Israel and as a light to the Gentiles (**verse 6**). From **MATTHEW 12:18-21**, we know that the Servant of **ISAIAH 42:1** is our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. (a) What is His mission (**verses 1, 3-4** cf. **2:2, 11:3-4**) and how will God enable and support Him in carrying out His mission (**verse 1**)?  
  
(b) How will He carry out His mission (**verses 2-3**) and will He be successful (**verse 4**)?

2. Why do you think **verse 7** is being applied to the gospel work of the apostle *Paul* in **ACTS 26:17-18**?
  
3. What has the mission of the Servant got to do with God not allowing the idols to share His glory (**verses 8**)?
  
4. (a) In what way(s) has **ISAIAH 42:1-8** change your thinking about Christ and His church?  
  
(b) In what way(s) does **ISAIAH 42:1-8** encourage you to persevere in your Christian Service?

### **42:9-13**

In response to the new things God will do (**verse 9**), God's people will sing a new song.

5. (a) What does "a new song" mean?  
  
(b) Who should be singing this new song (**verses 10-12**)?  
  
(c) The new song is about God, for the singers are called to "*declare His praise*" (**verse 12**). What particular actions of God are being celebrated in this new song (**verse 13**)?  
  
(d) Are you singing the new song today? Why?







This Holy Redeemer of Israel acts for His people.

- (a) One of His acts is called “*former things/things of old*” (**verse 18**), and the details are given in **verses 16-17**. What is the event being referred?
- (b) Another of His acts is called “*a new thing*” (**verse 19**), and the rest of **verse 19** to **verse 21** provide us the details of this act. What is this new thing? (Cf. **Verse 14-15**)
- (c) Seeing God’s surprising, unexpected dealings with His Old Testament people, how does it lead you to trust your God today?

### **43:22-28**

The word “*not*” appears numerous times in this passage:

- The first “*not*” is in **verse 22**.  
God complains that Israel did not call upon Him, meaning they have given up prayers. The reason is because they are weary of God!
- The second “*not*” is in **verse 23a**.  
God complains that Israel did not bring Him sacrifices. **Verse 24a** is another elaboration of this “*not*”. How can we understand this, since we know from the earlier chapters of **ISAIAH** as well as from other Old Testament prophetic books that God’s people have offered many sacrifices to God all these years!

Reading **verse 23a** (*have not brought*) in parallel with **verse 23b** (*have not honored*) will provide us with the answer. Outwardly, they may bring the sacrifices, but inwardly there is no honor, no respect and no true worship of God. Hence, the real complaint of God is that Israel did not give to Him real, spiritual worship!

\*\* A word of clarification from God is found in **verse 23c-d**. He did not weary them with huge unreasonable demands for sacrifices. In short, what He expected from them was very reasonable.

\*\* A word of contrast is found in **verse 24c-d**. While they did not give to God worship, they gave Him offenses, burdening Him with their sins and wearying Him

with their iniquities. In short, they failed to do what He expected and did in abundance what He forbade!

- The third “*not*” is in **verse 25**.

In contrast to the first two “*not*”, this third “*not*” concerns what God did – *He will not remember their sins!* Instead, He will blot out their transgressions, so that you can look for them but you will not be able to find them at all!

Why would God be so forgiving towards them? Could it be because the past generations have done well, accumulated sufficient merits before God to be used now in exchange for pardon? **Verses 26-28** debunk that idea completely! The fact that even your first father sinned is enough to kill that sentiment completely.

The only answer why God will forgive is found in those four words in **verse 25**: *For My own sake*. God is gracious and will forgive, because He chooses to do so! The reason is found in God, and God alone!

11. Imagine yourselves reading **ISAIAH 43:22-28** with an unbelieving friend. How will you share the gospel with your friend from these 7 verses?

12. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 42** or **ISAIAH 43** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[7<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> May 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD’S WORD in **ISAIAH 44**.

You may use Questions 1-11 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 44**, or you can go straight to Question 12 after reading the text.

#### **44:1-5**

1. (a) What can we say about the relationship between God and Israel from **verses 1-2**?

(b) Arising from this relationship, God promised to do something. What will He do, and what will be the result? (**Verses 3-5**)

2. What is the relevance of these 5 verses to New Testament believers?

**44:6-8**

3. What does it mean that God is the First and the Last (**verse 6**)?

4. What challenge did God issue in these 3 verses, and in what way do they call you to change the way you live?

**44:9-20**

**ISAIAH 44:9-20** is a polemic (*a writing/speech in which one argues forcefully for or against someone/something*) against idolatry.

5. In what way(s) is idolatry foolish?

6. Is idolatry a sin against God, a judgment from God, or both? (Make sure you take the entire passage into consideration in your answer).

7. How is **ISAIAH 44:9-20** applicable to you today?

### **44:21-28**

8. In these 8 verses, God went to great length to describe Himself. What did He call/describe Himself?
  
9. From **verses 26c-28**, God declared what He will do for His people. What is it?
  
10. One reason for our disbelief of God's promise is our ignorance of who God is. How can we see this from these 8 verses?
  
11. How does **ISAIAH 44:21-28** lead you to trust God and His promise in Jesus?
  
12. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 44** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[14<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **ISAIAH 45**.

You may use Questions 1-13 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 45**, or you can go straight to Question 14 after reading the text.

### **45:1-7**

Cyrus is the Persian king who issued a decree allowing the exiled Jews in Babylon to return to their homeland. In this sense, he can be said to deliver God's people from the bondage, and hence a type of Christ who will bring about a greater deliverance --- rescuing God's people from the bondage of sin. Hence, this deliverance from the Babylonian exile by Cyrus is a pattern (type) of our greater, spiritual deliverance from our bondage to sin and Satan by Jesus Christ our Lord (antitype).

In **verse 1**, Cyrus was called the anointed of the LORD. Edward J. Young explained that the term *“suggests that there is a specific task that he is to accomplish and that for this he has been anointed by the sovereign God of Israel, who has imparted to him His Spirit to equip him for the performance of this task. In this sense Cyrus is a type of the Messianic Servant of the Lord, upon whom the Spirit came in greater measure, that He might be equipped for the task, infinitely greater than that of Cyrus, of setting His people free from the spiritual bondage of sin and guilt.”*

In other words, this anointing simply means God equipping a person to do the work He wants him to do, regardless of whether the person knows God or otherwise.

1. **Verse 1** also tells us that Cyrus will be very successful, conquering many nations.

(a) What was it that enabled Cyrus to be so successful? (**Verses 2-3**)

(b) What are the purpose(s) for his success?

**Verse 3b:**

**Verse 4:**

**Verse 6:**

2. Do you think Cyrus is a worshipper of YAHWEH? Elaborate.

3. How should we understand **verse 7**? Here is an explanation provided by Edward J. Young:

*“In our approach to this difficult subject we must be guided alone by what Scripture says, and at this point the significance of systematic theology becomes very clear. The Bible teaches that there is a decretum absolutum, that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. Likewise, the Bible also teaches the responsibility of the creature. Both are scriptural truths and both are to be accepted. To stress the first aspect of the truth at the expense of the second is to fall into the error of fatalism or hyper-Calvinism. To stress the second at the expense of the first is to fall into the*

*error of Arminianism. There is a third position, namely to accept both aspects even though one cannot harmonize nor reconcile them. They can, however, be reconciled by God. Hence, even though we say that God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, we are not thereby denying the responsibility of the creature.*

*But this is not to assert that God is the author of sin. The statements of the present verse must be explained in the light of the whole Bible. Scripture is its own interpreter, and Scripture makes clear that God is not evil and not the source of evil. God has included evil in His plan, and has foreordained its existence; and yet He Himself is not evil nor is He its author. Again, we have a line of teaching that we as creatures are unable to harmonize or reconcile; we must be believers. We gain nothing by seeking to minimize the force of the present verse. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. 11:33-36)."*

Is the explanation above helpful to you? If yes, please share how it has helped you. If no, what alternative explanations can you provide?

4. In what ways can **ISAIAH 45:1-7** lead you to rely on God more closely in this coming week?

#### **45:8-10**

5. (a) In **verse 8a-b**, what were the heavens and skies commanded to do?

(b) In **verse 8c-d**, what was the earth commanded to do?

(c) What is the picture and message of **verse 8**?



6. A woe was pronounced in **verse 9**. Upon whom was it pronounced, and why?
  
7. Another woe was pronounced in **verse 10**. Why was woe pronounced upon this person?

### **45:11-13**

In **verses 9-10**, the defiant person has asked God what He has produced? Now in **verse 11**, God responded by inviting Israel to ask Him, even tells them that they may command Him to answer their question.

8. What is it that God wants Israel to ask Him?
  
9. **Verses 12-13** contain God's answer to the question.
  - (a) **Verse 12** is a reference to a past work of God. What was it?
  
  - (b) The Almighty God who did what was stated in **verse 12** shall do what is stated in **verse 13**. What will God be doing?

### **45:14-21**

After experiencing the deliverance wrought by Cyrus (cf. **verse 13**), the people of God will undergo a most wonderful transformation in their fortunes (**verse 14**):

*The nations (represented by Egypt, Cush and the Sabeans) will come to Israel voluntarily, bringing gifts and submitting themselves to Israel. With one voice they will confess that Israel's God is the only true God, and He is with them!*

When will this come to pass? While it could be partially fulfilled after the Jews returned from exile during the time of Zerubbabel-Ezra-Nehemiah, this was ultimately fulfilled



What is the purpose of the contrasts?

**45:22-25**

12. **Verse 22** is a command.

- (a) What is it and what does it mean?
  
- (b) To whom is the command given?
  
- (c) What happens when the command is obeyed?
  
- (d) Why should anyone obey this command?
  
- (e) What have you done with this command?

**Verse 22** is an Old Testament version of the gospel call. We can think of **MATTHEW 11:28** as its New Testament counterpart: *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* As the gospel call is sounded forth, what will be the result? **Verses 23-24** (cf. **PHILIPPIANS 2:10-11**) inform us that at the end of the age, every knee will bow before the Lord, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Does this mean that everyone will be saved? No, but those who are hostile towards the LORD, on that day they shall be ashamed (**verse 24**) and lost! However, for all who truly belong to Israel (God's people), everyone shall be justified and glorified (cf. **ROMANS 8:29-30**).

13. How does **ISAIAH 45** call you to change the way you live?

14. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 45** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[21<sup>st</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> May 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **ISAIAH 46** and **ISAIAH 47**.

You may use Questions 1-5 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 46 & 47**, or you can go straight to Question 6 after reading the text.

### **46:1-13**

1. **ISAIAH 46** is another polemic against idols whereby YAHWEH mocks the impotence of man-made gods. Two major contrasts between God and idols can be found in these 13 verses. Can you find them?

Contrast #1:

[Hint: It has to do with 'borne' and 'carry']

Contrast #2:

[Hint: It can be found in **verses 7-11**]

2. What was Judah/Israel supposed to do after hearing this polemic, and what is the relevance of this to us today?

3. (a) To whom was God speaking in **46:12-13**?

(b) What did He promise to do?

- (c) How should we understand this divine promise, and has the divine promise come to pass -- how and when?

### **47:1-15**

As indicated by the title used by our NKJV, **ISAIAH 47** is about *The Humiliation of Babylon*. God had used the Babylonians to punish Judah for her sins (**verse 6**), but they were totally oblivious of it.

Instead, trusting in their own wisdom and ability, relying upon their counselors and enchanters, they believed they were invincible and that no one could trouble them at all (**verses 7-13**).

Yet the very thing they trusted in are the very things that will fail them miserably (**verses 14-15**)! From **verses 1-5**, it is clear that their humiliation is ultimately an act of judgment from God upon their pride and wickedness.

4. How would **ISAIAH 47:1-15** be an encouragement to God's people during the days of *Isaiah*, and how can it be an encouragement to us today?
  
5. Imagine yourselves reading **ISAIAH 47** with an unbelieving friend. How will you share the gospel with your friend from **ISAIAH 47**?
  
6. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 46** or **ISAIAH 47** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[28<sup>th</sup> May - 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **ISAIAH 48** and **ISAIAH 49**.

You may use Questions 1-11 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 48 & 49**, or you can go straight to Question 12 after reading the text.

### **48:1-11**

God is addressing Judah/Israel in these 11 verses.

1. (a) How are these people being described in **verses 1-2**?  
  
(b) What does it mean to make mention of the God of Israel but not in truth or righteousness (**verse 1**)?  
  
(c) What treacherous conduct did God charge these people with?  
  
(d) Have you ever been guilty of similar conduct towards God? Elaborate.
2. Despite her treacherous conduct, yet Judah/Israel will not be cut off.  
  
Why, and how can you use this reason to help you trust in Jesus more in the coming week?

### **48:12-22**

God is addressing Judah/Israel in these 11 verses.

3. How is God being described, and what kind of relationship does He have with them, as seen in these 11 verses?
4. In **verses 18-19**, God told them that had they heeded His commandments, they would not have suffered the Babylonian defeat and exile. In other words, their suffering was deserved *due to their rebellion*.  
  
Yet God did not stop there, but went on to announce grace to them. Where can we see this?

5. At the end of God's announcement of grace, He appends a warning. What is this warning (**verse 22**) and why is this warning needed?
6. How does **ISAIAH 48** call you to change the way you live?

### **49:1-13**

Two persons are talking in the first 7 verses: the LORD and the LORD's servant. Who is this servant of the LORD? It is not *Isaiah*, it is not the nation of *Israel*, but it is the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ!

This can be seen from **ACTS 13:47** where the apostle *Paul* applied **ISAIAH 49:6** to the Christian mission! For it to be applied to Christian mission (the church doing its work), it must first be applied to Christ (the Head of the church), for what is true of the Head will then be true of the Body!

7. (a) From **verses 1-3**, how was the LORD's servant described?
- (b) According to **verse 5**, what was His mission?
- (c) How should we understand the words of the servant of the LORD in **verse 4**?
- (d) In response to what He has said in **verse 4**, the Lord promised to ensure the success of His mission. How can we see this from **verse 6** and **verse 7**?

Hence, as the victorious Servant of the LORD, He calls the coastlands and peoples from afar (representing the Gentiles) to hear His word (**verse 1**). This should remind us of **MATTHEW 28:18-20**.

8. “*In an acceptable time/in the day of salvation*” (**verse 8**) refer to the gospel age, which is today. We can know this from **II CORINTHIANS 6:1-2** whereby the apostle *Paul* quoted this verse and applied it once more to Christian mission.

(a) From the middle of **verse 8** to **verse 11**, some pictures were given to depict the salvation of God’s people. What are they?

**Verse 8e-f:**

**Verse 9a-b:**

**Verse 9c-10b:**

**Verse 10c-11:**

(b) Who will be included among those saved? (**Verse 12**)

(c) Why should the heavens sing and the earth be joyful? (**Verse 13**)

#### **49: 14-26**

9. Despite the wonderful news announced in **verses 8-11**, Zion (God’s people) responded with unbelief and skepticism (**verse 14**). In response, God gave a picture, and made an assertion.

What is the picture and what is the assertion (**verse 15-16**)?

10. Despite Zion’s unbelief, God in His kindness promised that her enemies would go away while her sons will be gathered to her. They shall be her pride, and they shall be so numerous that there is no place to contain them (**verses 17-20**), and when this happens, Zion will be filled with amazement and wonder (**verse 21**).



What will happen so that Zion will know that God is the LORD, and waiting on Him will not end up in shame? (**Verses 21-24**)

11. **Verses 25-26** provide another picture of God's redemption.

(a) What is it?

(Hint: **MARK 3:27** makes use of this picture to depict the work of Christ in our salvation)

(b) What is the end goal of this great redemption accomplished by the LORD?  
(**Verse 26c-d**)

12. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 48** or **ISAIAH 49** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> June 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in  
**[ISAIAH 50:1-52:1-12](#)**.

You may use Questions 1-7 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 50:1-52:12**  
or you can go straight to Question 8 after reading the text.

### 50:1-11

1. After reading **ISAIAH 50**, write down what you have learnt, or any questions you might have:

2. Read **Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on ISAIAH 50** (below):

Verses 1-3 Those who have professed to be people of God, and seem to be dealt severely with, are apt to complain, as if God had been hard with them. Here is an answer for such murmurings; God never deprived any of their advantages, except for their sins. The Jews were sent into Babylon for their idolatry, a sin which broke the covenant; and they were at last rejected for crucifying the Lord of glory. God called on them to leave their sins, and prevent their own ruin. Last of all, the Son came to his own, but his own received him not. When God calls men to happiness, and they will not answer, they are justly left to be miserable. To silence doubts concerning his power, proofs of it are given. The wonders which attended his sufferings and death, proclaimed that he was the Son of God, (Matthew 27:54 ).

Verses 4-9 As Jesus was God and man in one person, we find him sometimes speaking, or spoken of, as the Lord God; at other times, as man and the servant of Jehovah. He was to declare the truths that comfort the broken, contrite heart, those weary of sin, harassed with afflictions. And as the Holy Spirit was upon him, that he might speak as never man spake, so the same Divine influence daily wakened him to pray, to preach the gospel, and to receive and deliver the whole will of the Father. The Father justified the Son when he accepted the satisfaction he made for the sin of man. Christ speaks in the name of all believers. Who dares to be an enemy to those unto whom he is a Friend? or who will contend with those whom he is an Advocate? Thus St. Paul applies it, (Romans 8:33 ).

Verses 10-11 A child of God is afraid of incurring his displeasure. This grace usually appears most in believers when in darkness, when other graces appear not. Those that truly fear God, obey the voice of Christ. A sincere servant of God may for a long time be without views of eternal happiness. What is likely to be an effectual cure in this sad case? Let him trust in the name of the Lord; and let him stay himself upon the promises of the covenant, and build his hopes on them. Let him trust in Christ, trust in that name of his, The Lord our Righteousness; stay himself upon God as his God, in and through a Mediator. Presuming sinners are warned not to trust in themselves. Their own merit and sufficiency are light and heat to them. Creature comforts are as sparks, short-lived, and soon gone; yet the children of this world, while they last, seek to warm themselves by them, and walk with pride and pleasure in the light of them. Those that make the world their comfort, and their own righteousness their confidence, will certainly meet with bitterness in the end. A godly man's way may be dark, but his end shall be peace and everlasting light. A wicked man's way may be pleasant, but his end and abode forever will be utter darkness.

After reading the commentary above, what have you learnt, and what further questions do you have?

### **51:1-16**

3. “*You who followed righteousness and seek the LORD*” are God’s people. What did the LORD want His people to do in **verses 1-2**, and why?
  
4. What did God promise to do in **verse 3**?
  
5. What was the message God wanted His people to know in **verses 4-6**, in **verses 7-8**, and what is the relevance of these messages to us today?

**Verses 9-11** could be understood as a prayer of *Isaiah*. He prays, and is confident that God’s people shall return from exile with singing and joy (**verse 11**). His confidence is based on who God is and what He has done previously, when He rescued Israel from Egypt and brought them across the Red Sea (**verses 9-10**). Hence *Isaiah* began his prayer by calling on the Lord to awake and put on strength, meaning to act for His people again!

**Verses 12-16** can be understood as God’s response. He tells His people that there is no need to fear the oppressor, for he will die and be made like grass (**verse 12**). Instead, they should not forget Him, the God of Exodus (**verse 15**) and the God who will once again “adopt” them to be His people (**verse 16**).

### **51:17-23**

These 7 verses are linked together by “*the cup of His fury/trembling*” (**verse 17, 22**).

6. What does this cup symbolize? Who first drank from this cup? Who will next drink from this cup? And according to the New Testament, who will finally drink from this cup? (**MATTHEW 26:39**)

### **52:1-12**

In **verse 7**, we read of messengers running to proclaim the good news: *Your God reigns!* As a result of God’s reign, He will defeat Judah’s enemies, and He will bring them back from captivity, ending with His people breaking forth into praises, and all the people witnessing His almighty power in saving His people (**verses 8-10**).

Judah's captivity was their own undoing (**verse 3**), and their downtrodden state has only caused the name of God to be blasphemed daily (**verse 5**). But now things will change, for Zion is called upon to awake and put on strength, to see that they shall be loosed from the bonds (**verses 1-2**).

What should the people do, in the light of God's great deliverance? **Verses 11-12** provide the answer. They should follow His lead, and depart from their land of exile. To remain there would be wrong!

7. How can we see the Gospel from these 12 verses?
  
8. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 50**, **ISAIAH 51** or **ISAIAH 52:1-12** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[11<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> June 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in  
**[ISAIAH 52:13-53:12](#)**.

You may use Questions 1-4 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 52:13-53:12** or you can go straight to Question 5 after reading the text.

**ISAIAH 53** is about the Servant of the LORD. **ISAIAH 52:13-15** can be seen as the introduction to **ISAIAH 53**. While **52:13** praised the Servant of the LORD greatly, **52:14** portrayed Him as having his visage and form marred more than any persons alive. What was/were the reasons for this?

From **ISAIAH 53**, we are given the answer:

- He was smitten and afflicted (**verse 4**)
  - He was bruised and whipped (**verse 5**)
  - He was oppressed and afflicted (**verse 7**)
  - He was stricken and cut off from the land of the living (**verse 8**)
  - He was bruised and put to grief (**verse 10**)
1. What was/were the reason(s) for the tremendous sufferings of the Servant of the LORD?

2. What was/were the attitude of the people toward the Servant of the LORD?

3. What would be the final outcome of His sufferings?

4. Read **ACTS 8:32-35**.

*Philip* told the Ethiopian eunuch that **ISAIAH 53:7-8** is talking about Jesus. Would the apostle *Peter, John* and *Paul* agree with *Philip*? Explain.

5. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 52:13-53:12** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[18<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> June 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **ISAIAH 54 & 55**.

You may use Questions 1-10 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 54 & 55** or you can go straight to Question 11 after reading the text.

### **ISAIAH 54**

God's people were likened to either women without children (**verse 1**) or widows (**verse 4**). Naturally, we expect to find them grieved and sad. However, **verse 1** calls them to sing, while **verse 2** calls them to enlarge their habitations in anticipation of multitudes of children.

The reason is because God will come and reverse their tragic conditions! He will be their Husband (figuratively), and He will bless with many children, meaning the nation of Judah/Israel will again be a great nation.

The reason why Judah/Israel was like a barren woman or a widow was because of her

sin/rebellion. As a result, God was angry, hid His face from them and left them, but now, with great compassion and everlasting love, He will gather them back to Himself (**verses 6-8**).

1. Why do you think God likened the situation depicted in **verses 1-7** to the days of Noah? (**Verses 9-10**)
  
2. The heritage of God's servants/people (**verse 17c-d**) is listed in **verses 11-17b**. What are they?

**Verses 11c-12:**

**Verse 13:**

**Verse 14:**

**Verse 15:**

**Verses 16-17b:**

[Do not simply do a cut-and-paste of the verses in the blank space above. Instead, put in your own words what God is promising His people in each of the verses listed above.]

3. How is **ISAIAH 54** relevant to us (New Testament believers) and in what way(s) does **ISAIAH 54** call you to change the way we live?

### **ISAIAH 55**

4. What are we called to do in **verse 1**?

5. What are we called not to do in **verse 2**?
  
6. What will happen, if we heed the call in **verse 1**? (**Verses 3-5**)
  
7. The call of **verse 1** is repeated and elaborated in **verses 6-7**. Instead of eating and drinking, we are called to seek Him and call upon Him. What is involved in seeking God (**verse 7**) and what if the seeker thinks that there is plenty of time to come to God (**verse 6**)?
  
8. **Verses 8-9** talk about God's thoughts and ways being higher than ours. How is this connected to the call to seek the Lord and call upon Him?
  
9. What is the message of **verses 10-13**?
  
10. God's Word is not only meant to inform our minds, but to transform our lives. In what ways should your life be transformed as a result of reading **ISAIAH 55**?
  
11. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 54** or **ISAIAH 55** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[25<sup>th</sup> June - 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in  
**ISAIAH 56 & 57.**

You may use Questions 1-5 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 56 & 57**  
or you can go straight to Question 6 after reading the text.

### **ISAIAH 56**

God's salvation is about to come (**verse 1**) and hence the Savior is about to come! As His people waiting for the coming Savior, this is what they must do: *keep justice and do righteousness*. In other words, continue to keep the commandments of the Lord, in preparation for the coming of the Lord.

What would "*keep justice and do righteousness*" look like? First of all, keep the Sabbath. When a person keeps the Sabbath, he is acknowledging God as His Creator and Redeemer, and honoring God as God (the focus here is on the *vertical*). Secondly, keep his hands from doing evil (the focus here is on the *horizontal*). The person who truly worships God (*vertical*) will really love his neighbor (*horizontal*), and these are pronounced blessed. That's the message of **verses 1-2**.

1. Two groups of people were addressed in **verses 3-8**: (i) Sons of the foreigner and (ii) eunuchs (cf. **DEUTERONOMY 23:1**).

(a) What encouragements did the LORD give to them, and why do you think they are significant?

(b) When did this come to pass?

Hint: Consult **MARK 11:17** and **JOHN 10:16**  
Read also **ACTS 10** and **ACTS 8:26-39**

2. Who are the beasts of the field (**verse 9**) coming to devour?

3. The blind watchmen are in view from **verses 10-12**.

(a) They were also called dumb dogs that cannot bark, greedy dogs that never had enough, and shepherds who cannot understand. What does each of these descriptions convey?



- (b) In the last line of **verse 10**, they are said to be “*sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber*”. What does this convey?
- (c) In the last line of **verse 11**, they are said to “*all look to their own way, each one for his own gain from his own territory*”. What does this convey?
- (d) What does **verse 12** mean?
- (e) Who are these blind watchmen?

#### **ISAIAH 57:1-13**

4. In your own words, explain what is happening in these 13 verses:

#### **ISAIAH 57:14-21**

5. The NKJV entitle this portion of Scripture as “Healing for the Backslider”. Do you agree with this title? Explain your reasons using the text itself.
6. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 56** or **ISAIAH 57** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD’S WORD in  
**ISAIAH 58 & 59.**

You may use Questions 1-8 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 58 & 59**  
or you can go straight to Question 9 after reading the text.

## **ISAIAH 58**

The people of Judah have been very religious (**verse 2**). Yet they found that God has been very silent and far away from them (**verse 3**). Have you ever found yourself in a similar situation? Were you very perplexed and upset at that time, feeling perhaps that God is very unfair to you and has given you a very raw deal?

In God's mercy, He called *Isaiah* the prophet to tell Judah where the problem lies (**verse 1**). God's answer can be found from **verse 3c-14**.

1. God took issue with a particular conduct of Judah. What was it? (**Verses 3c-5**)
  
2. Instead of behaving in the way depicted in **verses 3c-5**, how then should they live? (**Verses 6-9b**)
  
3. We can understand **verses 9c-14** as further elaborations of **verses 3c-9b**. Twice, God used the "if . . . then . . ." formula to convey His message. Locate them, and explain in your own words what these two messages are.  
  
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➤
  
4. God's Word is not only meant to inform our minds, but to transform our lives. In what ways should your life be transformed as a result of reading **ISAIAH 58**?

## **ISAIAH 59**

5. What is the message of **verses 1-3**?

6. **Verses 9c-11** paint a very sad picture of life in Judah then:

*We look for light, but there is darkness!  
For brightness, but we walk in blackness!  
We grope for the wall like the blind,  
And we grope as if we had no eyes;  
We stumble at noonday as at twilight;  
We are as dead men in desolate places.  
We all growl like bears,  
And moan sadly like doves;  
We look for justice, but there is none;  
For salvation, but it is far from us.*

What is the reason for this grim condition? (**Verses 4-8, 12-15**)

Note #1: The “*Therefore*” at the beginning of **verse 9** effectively links **verses 4-8** with **verses 9-11**.

Note #2: In the same way, the “*For*” at the beginning of **verse 12** tells us that **verses 12-15** is the reason for the condition of **verses 9-11**.

7. God’s response is to “*come to Zion*” (**verse 20**). His coming will result in two outcomes. What are they?

**Verses 18-19:**

**Verse 21:**

8. Imagine yourselves reading **ISAIAH 59** with an unbelieving friend. How will you share the gospel with your friend from **ISAIAH 59**?

9. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 58** or **ISAIAH 59** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[9<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> July 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in  
**ISAIAH 60 & 61.**

You may use Questions 1-7 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 60- & 61** or you can go straight to Question 8 after reading the text.

### ISAIAH 60

1. (a) Who is the “you” in **ISAIAH 60**?
- (b) Numerous wonderful things will happen to “you”. Can you name (at least) four of them, citing the Scripture verse(s)?
- - 
  - 
  -
- (c) While **verse 3** talks about Gentiles coming to “you”, **verse 9** talks about them coming to God. Since the “you” is distinct from God, what is the relationship between “you” and God? Explain.
2. What is the message of **verses 19-22**, and when will this come to pass?

3. What is the relevance of **ISAIAH 60** to New Testament believers today?

### **ISAIAH 61**

The “*Me*” of **ISAIAH 61** is Jesus Christ our Lord. We know this from **LUKE 4:16-21** where Jesus clearly and specifically stated that **ISAIAH 61** is talking about Him!

4. (a) What will Jesus do to/for God’s people, when He comes? (**Verses 1-3**)

(b) If you are one of God’s people, have you experienced the things stated in **verses 1-3**? Elaborate.

5. As a result of what Jesus did to/for the people of God, their situation will undergo a tremendous reversal. How can we see that from **verses 4-9**?

6. *Isaiah* used two pictures to explain why he will rejoice greatly in the LORD. What are these two pictures, and what is their message? (**Verses 10-11**)

7. How does **ISAIAH 61** call you to change the way you live?

8. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 60** or **ISAIAH 61** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[16<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in  
**ISAIAH 62-64**.

You may use Questions 1-10 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 62-64**  
or you can go straight to Question 11 after reading the text.

### ISAIAH 62

The “I” in **verse 1** refers to *Isaiah*. The “you” in **verse 2** refers to Zion (representing God’s people). The “Him” in **verse 11** refers to God’s promised Savior, who is our Lord Jesus Christ.

In **ISAIAH 62**, *Isaiah* laid hold of God’s promise (**verse 8**) to bless and save His people, and no longer allow their enemies to triumph over them. Hence, he devoted himself to pray for the fulfillment of this promise of God, and he is determined to keep praying until God does it (**verse 1**). In **verse 6**, he calls upon others to join him in making this intercession, and besides praying, he will also be watching!

1. Re-read **ISAIAH 62**. What else have you learnt from this chapter?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Let us imitate *Isaiah* in our intercession for unbelievers in our life, and not cease to pray until they are called *Hephzibah, Beulah, the Holy People, the Redeemed of the LORD, Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken*.
  - (a) Write down the names of those you will be interceding for:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - (b) Let your RTBT Group know whom you are interceding for, so that they can join you in their intercession, and encourage you to persevere.

Note #1: “Otto Kristian Hallesby was a Norwegian theologian who resisted the Nazis during World War II and suffered for it in a concentration camp. He understood what it means to pray all the way through until God answers. He said that prayer is like mining. Prayer is like boring holes deep into the rock of human hearts. It’s work. It tries our patience. We can’t see results. But in God’s time, he places the dynamite and lights the fuse, and the rocks crumble. God has called us to give him no rest until he makes a revived church the praise of the earth”

**Isaiah: God Saves Sinners**  
*Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr*

Note #2: “Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him” (**verse 11**) is a repeat of **ISAIAH 40:10**. It is repeated one more time in **REVELATION 22:12**. If you can, find out what this phrase means.

### **63:1-6**

In these 6 verses, we have an Old Testament picture of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Glorious One who speaks in righteousness and is mighty to save (**verse 1**). The question was asked as to why is His apparel red, and the answer is because He has trodden the winepress (**verse 3**). What does this mean?

From the rest of the verses, we know that this is an act of judgment upon the sinful people. But how can this act of judgment be reconciled to His declaration that He is “*mighty to save*”? The tension can only be resolved in the New Testament, when we see Jesus Christ the Sinless One being nailed to the cross for the sins of His people. As our six verses emphasized repeatedly, Jesus went to accomplish this work *alone*, for there was no one else who could do it or help Him with it.

So He will tread the winepress alone, and He is both the One who treads and the One who is being trodden, for He takes the place of His people! What happens if Jesus does not take your place? Then you will have to face His righteous fury!

3. In response to the message of these six verses . . .
  - (a) Take time to praise your Savior for treading the winepress alone, and taking your place!
  - (b) Plead with Him to be merciful to you, and be your Substitute!

### **63:7-14**

4. In **verse 10**, God turned to be the enemy of His people and fought against them. Why? (**Verses 7-10b**)
5. In **verses 14c-d**, God will lead His people and make for Himself a glorious name. This forms a sharp contrast to God being the enemy of His people, as we have seen in **verse 10**. How can we account for this change in God’s dealings with His people? (**Verses 11-14**)

6. What have you learnt about God from **verses 7-14**, and how will it lead you to trust in God more deeply?

### **63:15-19**

Using the title provided by our NKJV, these 5 verses is a prayer.

7. (a) The prayer begins with a complaint (**verse 15**). What is it?
- (b) An argument is being used in **verse 16** as a plea for God's mercy. What is the argument?
- (c) How can we understand the complaint in **verse 17a-b**?
- (d) In **verse 17c**, God was asked to return. What does it mean, and what arguments were used in pleading for God's return? (**Verse 18**)
- (e) How can we adapt this prayer for our use today?

### **ISAIAH 64**

**Verses 1-3** recall **EXODUS 19**, and so the call is that God will once again come and do a mighty work of deliverance for His people! Like Israel in Egypt, their condition now is pitiful (**verses 10-11**).

8. What is said about God in **ISAIAH 64:4-5** that will give us hope?



9. In **verses 5c-7**, we have a description of the woeful spiritual condition of the people of Judah. Would these descriptions fit you? If yes, what would be your next step? If no, then how would you describe yourself?
  
10. "*We are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand*" (**verse 8**). What does this mean, and if it is true, how will it change the way you live your life?
  
11. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 62**, **ISAIAH 63** or **ISAIAH 64** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

For this week [[23<sup>rd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2017](#)], you will be reading GOD'S WORD in **ISAIAH 65 & 66**.

You may use Questions 1-10 as an aid in reading and understanding **ISAIAH 65 & 66** or you can go straight to Question 11 after reading the text.

### **65:1-7**

We know from **ROMANS 10:20-21** that **ISAIAH 65:1** is talking about the Gentiles coming to faith in Jesus Christ and being incorporated into the Church (the New Testament people of God), while rebellious Old Testament Israel is in view from **ISAIAH 65:2-7**.

1. God called them (**verse 2**) "*a rebellious people*". How were they rebellious?

### **65:8-16**

2. Who is "*My servants*" and who is "*you*"?

3. What is the message of these 9 verses? (Put it in your own words)

**65:17-25**

4. These 9 verses talk about the new heavens and earth that God will make. What are some distinctive features of this new heavens and earth?

5. After reading these 9 verses . . .

(a) Can you think of any other Old Testament passage(s) that talk(s) about the same thing?

(b) Can you think of any New Testament passages that talk about the same thing?

6. (a) When do you think **ISAIAH 65:17-25** will come to pass?

(b) Do you think you will have a part in this new heavens and earth? Why?

**ISAIAH 66**

7. (a) According to **verses 1-4**, who is the person who catches God's attention?

(b) How is this person being treated by his fellow men? (**Verse 5**)

(c) Who do you think are being referred to in **verses 3-4**?

8. What is the picture portrayed in **verses 7-9**, and what is the message?
9. What is the picture portrayed in **verses 10-14**, and what is the message?
10. For **verses 15-24**, take some time to read Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on these verses:

*Verses 15-24 A prophetic declaration is given of the Lord's vengeance on all enemies of his church, especially that of all antichristian opposers of the gospel in the latter days.*

*These expressions are figurative, and express the plentiful and gracious helps for bringing God's elect home to Christ. All shall be welcome; and nothing shall be wanting for their assistance and encouragement. A gospel ministry shall be set up in the church; they would have solemn worship before the Lord. In the last verse the nature of the punishment of sinners in the world to come is represented. Then shall the righteous and wicked be separated.*

*Our Saviour applies this to the everlasting misery and torment of impenitent sinners in the future state. To the honour of that free grace which thus distinguishes them, let the redeemed of the Lord, with humility, and not without holy trembling, sing triumphant songs. With this affecting representation of the opposite states of the righteous and wicked, characters which include the whole human race, Isaiah concludes his prophecies.*

*May God grant, for Christ's sake, that our portion may be with those who fear and love his name, who cleave to his truths, and persevere in every good work, looking to receive from the Lord Jesus Christ the gracious invitation, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

After reading the commentary above, what have you learnt, and what further questions do you have?

11. Share one lesson you have learnt from **ISAIAH 65** or **ISAIAH 66** during your 10-minutes RTBT Group Discussion. *What will you be sharing?*

### **Acknowledgement**

Whatever the weaknesses of this Read-The-Bible-Together guide, they would have been far greater without the kind help of brother CHEW Theng Sang, sister Debbie LEOW, sister SOH Jyue Theng and sister Wendy CHIA. They gave their time and energy to review the entire guide, asking questions all the way and giving many valuable suggestions. Thank you!

*Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another!* (Proverbs 27:17, ESV)

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Questions or comments concerning this RTBT guide?  
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