

# THE MAJOR LESSONS OF THE MAJOR PROPHETS

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## CONNECT BREAK THE ICE AND GET PEOPLE TALKING

- What is your favorite city you have visited?
- Growing up, what was discipline like in your family?
- Have you ever read the Old Testament Prophets, and if so, what was your experience like?

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## TRUTH UNDERSTAND AND DISCUSS THE SCRIPTURE'S MEANING

In this short series, we will be exploring the four Major Prophets of the Old Testament, and the timelessness of their teachings. The lessons they sought to impart to the people of God from generations past are, in so many ways, still so relevant for us today. In order to understand the ministry of Jesus in his time, and our own time, we must understand that we are all a part of the same story, nearing a climactic end when Christ returns. This week we will be studying two key sections in the book of Isaiah in order to help us better understand the entirety of his works. For more background on the book of Isaiah, we recommend watching the videos provided on the Bible Project website.

### GOD'S JUDGMENT...

**READ:** Isaiah 1:21-28, 2:2-5

**DISCUSS:** How does Isaiah contrast the unfaithful and the faithful cities?

Isaiah uses the images of two cities throughout his writings, and contrasts them as rebellious, idolatrous, and wicked, or as the image of a perfect city to which all people come to learn of God and serve him. In these verses, while Isaiah is speaking directly about contemporary Jerusalem and its future holy version, the image of the unfaithful city is expanded later in the book into a metaphor for all cities, and the sinfulness of humanity. The future vision of the New Jerusalem, however, is speaking directly to the same future city of God to which the Bible constantly looks forward in hope and anticipation.

### ...IS THE SEEDBED OF HIS SALVATION.

**READ:** Isaiah 53

**DISCUSS:** How does this passage describe the suffering servant, and how he becomes offering for sin?

Beginning in chapter 49, the servant of God depicted in Isaiah's writings is the means by which God brings about his justice. The servant of God is the seed discussed in earlier chapters who delivers Israel from exile, and enacts

the coming of the New Jerusalem. The rebellion, sin, and idolatry of the people of God and the nations demands judgment be exacted. God cannot simply ignore sin, and as such, payment is necessary. However, paradoxically, it is the suffering servant who pays this price on behalf of God's people, and the idolatrous nations of the world. He becomes an offering to God for sin, and the transgressions of all are remedied.

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## GRACE SEE HOW THE PASSAGE CONNECTS TO JESUS

*Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. (Matthew 4:17)*

It is imperative to understand that Isaiah is speaking not only to his contemporary audience, and prophetically to an audience two hundred years later coming out of exile in Babylon, but very much to future generations as well. The suffering servant of God—the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world—is indeed Jesus Christ. When he announces in Matthew chapter 4 that the “kingdom of heaven is at hand,” he is fulfilling what Isaiah spoke of 700 years prior about the coming faithful city. He takes on the judgment and wrath of all humanity's sins, and therefore, God's judgment does indeed become the seedbed of his salvation.

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## CHANGE APPLY THE PASSAGE TO OUR THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS

- Can you think of a time recently when you've been convicted of sin? What has repentance looked like?
  - Does it change your perspective to know that Jesus' sacrifice, not your good works, is what brings salvation?
  - What are some practical steps you can take to see real life change come through repentance?
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## PRAYER RESPOND TO THE PASSAGE IN PRAYER

- Pray that God would humble our hearts in matters of our faithlessness.
- Pray that we might all embrace repentance before God in hope and in joy.