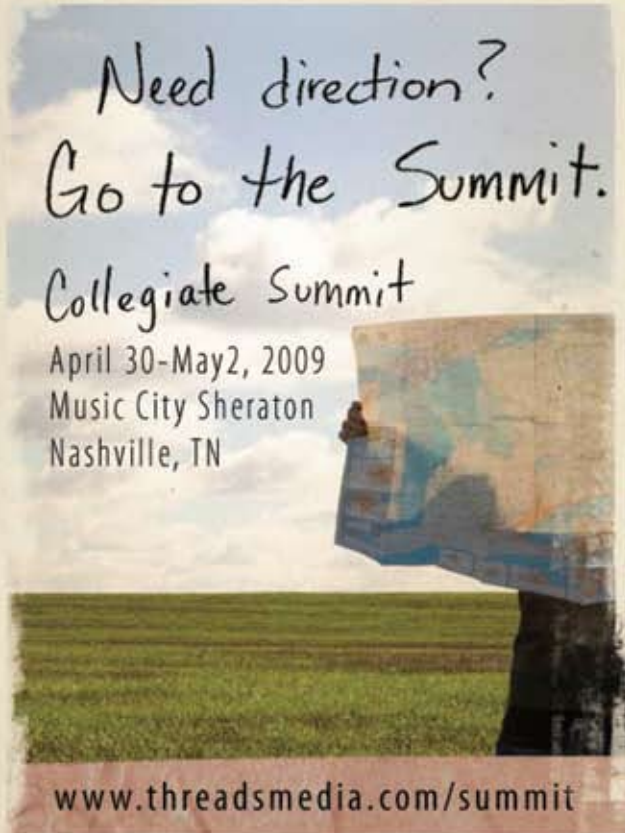


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MARCH 2009

## TEACHING PLANS

THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH AND MICAH

### LASTING TRUTH

Life as a prophet must have been pretty rough at times. Often people didn't want to hear what they had to say — and the rest of the time? No one believed them. Such was the life of Isaiah and Micah, messengers of God, who spoke both difficult and life-saving truth to the people of Israel and Judah. And much of the truth they spoke of is still being revealed today.

### WHAT'S INSIDE ...

The goal of the *Collegiate* online features is to bring you a structured teaching plan with additional helps and relevant questions to equip you to lead a strong discussion-based lesson. Here's a breakdown of what's inside: *Getting Started* helps introduce the topic and get your students engaged in the lesson. *Need to Knows* highlights the main characters, historical context, and key verses of each lesson. *Explore the Bible* leads your students through the Scripture passages of the lesson, helping them understand the text, its historical and cultural context, and what it means to them today. *Apply to Life* gives you ideas for furthering the application of the Scripture, so students can take active steps to process what they're learning and how it impacts their lives. Be sure you also utilize the commentary provided ([threadsmedia.com/collegiate](http://threadsmedia.com/collegiate)) to help with your preparation and personal study of the lessons.

As always, we're here for you. Please send us your questions, thoughts, and suggestions. Let us know what we could do better and how these teaching plans could be even more relevant to your students and your ministry.

Need more ideas for leading college students? Check out the Collegiate Summit in Nashville, from April 30 — May 2, 2009. Go to [threadsmedia.com/summit](http://threadsmedia.com/summit) to sign up.

The *Collegiate* staff is looking forward to meeting you!

Lindsey Bush  
editor, *Collegiate*  
[lindsey.bush@threadsmedia.com](mailto:lindsey.bush@threadsmedia.com)

## → THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 30 OF THE SPRING ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "EXPECTATIONS" BY CAEDMON'S CALL, FROM THE ALBUM *OVERDRESSED*, TO PLAY FOR THE CLASS AS THEY ARRIVE.

## NEED TO KNOWS

### LESSON OVERVIEW

THIS LESSON COVERS ISAIAH'S SONG OF THE VINEYARD, A PARABLE ABOUT THE LORD'S PEOPLE'S FAILURE TO LIVE UP TO DIVINE EXPECTATIONS. THE EMPHASIS IS ON MEETING THE LORD'S EXPECTATIONS.

### CHARACTERS

**ISAIAH**—Isaiah was an eighth-century Israelite prophet from Judah.

### FOCAL PASSAGES

ISAIAH 5:1-14

### KEY VERSE

ISAIAH 5:4



## LIVING CLOSE TO GOD'S EXPECTATIONS

### GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Expectations" by Caedmon's Call playing in the background as students arrive.

Ask the group to think of songs — both Christian and secular — that have a strong message. One example is the song "Where Is the Love?" by the Black Eyed Peas. You can find the music video on *YouTube.com* if you want to play it for the group.

- What was the song trying to convey?
- What were some of the themes that came through as you watched the video?
- How did the song speak to you personally?

### Alternative:

Ask the group to choose an issue that's significant to them. Examples include: world hunger, social injustice, homelessness, holiness, self-worth, etc. Discuss their expectations of how individuals, communities, and government should be involved in the various issues chosen. (This can be done as a whole or in groups of 2-3.) Encourage students to discuss the root of the problem and possible solutions.

After one or both of the above activities, explain that the passage we're looking at today is a song from the Book of Isaiah called the "Song of the Vineyard." Woven into the song is a parable and a message of where God's people Israel are and where God desires them to be.

- Do you ever wonder why people place expectations on you in the first place?
- Why not set a standard that you're sure to surpass?

### DIG DEEPER

The vine is a common symbol throughout Scripture for the people of God. Check out:

- Deuteronomy 32:32
- Psalm 80:14
- Jeremiah 2:21; 8:13
- Ezekiel 17:8
- Hosea 10:1
- Malachi 3:11
- John 15

### John 15:5

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me."*

# EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## 1). ACKNOWLEDGE GOD'S EXPECTATIONS (ISAIAH 5:1-2)

### READ ISAIAH 5:1-2.

*<sup>1</sup>I will sing about the one I love,  
a song about my loved one's vineyard:  
The one I love had a vineyard  
on a very fertile hill.*

*<sup>2</sup>He broke up the soil, cleared it of stones,  
and planted it with the finest vines.  
He built a tower in the middle of it  
and even hewed out a winepress there.  
He expected it to yield good grapes,  
but it yielded worthless grapes.*

- How have people's expectations of their life's purpose changed over the last generation?

These initial verses set up the song and give us an overview of the passage. They are comparable to the chorus of a song.

- What did God do to show His love and care for Israel?
- How did Israel respond to God lovingly "planting" them in fertile land?
- Discuss the significance of the Gardener doing all He can do for the fruit, yet the fruit still turning out bad. How can this be?
- How do you, as a Christian, reconcile the pressure of expectations with the understanding that God has expectations of His children that seem unattainable?
- What kinds of things do you see God doing for us to prepare the soil of our hearts or our spiritual lives?
- What role do we play in producing good or bad fruit?

- What kinds of things do we do or not do to continue the process of bearing good fruit?

To explore more about what spiritual fruit may be, see Galatians 5:22. In today's passage the Lord is referring specifically to the fruits of justice and righteousness (Isaiah 5:7).

- What can you begin (or continue) this week to foster healthy spiritual fruit — individually and as a community?
- How does it feel to know that your purpose is the same as that of the Israelites — to glorify God with your life?

## 2). ANTICIPATE GOD'S RESPONSE (ISAIAH 5:3-6)

### READ ISAIAH 5:3-6.

*<sup>3</sup>So now, residents of Jerusalem  
and men of Judah,  
please judge between Me  
and My vineyard.*

*<sup>4</sup>What more could I have done for My vineyard  
than I did?*

*Why, when I expected a yield of good grapes,  
did it yield worthless grapes?*

*<sup>5</sup>Now I will tell you  
what I am about to do to My vineyard:*

*I will remove its hedge,  
and it will be consumed;  
I will tear down its wall,  
and it will be trampled.*

*<sup>6</sup>I will make it a wasteland.  
It will not be pruned or weeded;  
thorns and briars will grow up.  
I will also give orders to the clouds  
that rain should not fall on it.*

In this passage we see God's justice in metaphorical action.

- Why is this part of God's character so important to grasp the complete picture of who He is?
- Think of a time when you desired justice. What were the circumstances? (Leader: Share an experience from your own life.)
- Why is it that when it comes to our own lives, we tend to disregard justice, but when someone else has wronged us, we expect them to pay?
- In verses 3-4, God asks the Israelites to judge for themselves whether or not what is happening is just. Could He (the Gardener) have done any more?
- Why did God do so much for His vineyard? (grace)
- In preparing so much for us, what kind of expectations does God have for those who follow Him?
- Do you view expectations as a hindrance or as a motivator?
- What similarities and differences are there between God's expectations for your life and that of your parents, friends, or even yourself?

God cares for you. He has meticulously laid out plans and expectations for your life — both for your good and for His glory. It's only natural to assume that if we wander beyond His plans, He'll be disappointed.

- What can you do to encourage yourself to stay on target?





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- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 31 OF THE SPRING ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "SEND ME" BY LECRAE, FROM THE ALBUM *AFTER THE MUSIC STOPS*, TO PLAY FOR THE CLASS AS THEY ARRIVE.

## NEED TO KNOWS

### LESSON OVERVIEW

This lesson is about Isaiah's vision of the Lord in the temple, Isaiah's cleansing, his call to service, his response, and his assignment. The emphasis is on being open to God's call and honoring Him with our service.

### CHARACTERS

**KING UZZIAH** — aka Azariah. Son and successor of King Amaziah of Judah. Declared king at 16 years old. Reigned during a time of great material prosperity. Known as the "leper king."

### FOCAL PASSAGES

ISAIAH 6:1-13

### KEY VERSE

ISAIAH 6:8

## CONTINUING FROM LAST WEEK

If you chose Option 2 last week under "Apply to Life," let the group know the final plans for helping an elderly person with yard work.



## HONORING GOD THROUGH SERVING HIM

### GETTING STARTED

Have the song "Send Me" by Lecrae playing in the background as students arrive.

Watch the scene from *Bruce Almighty* when Jim Carrey's character hears everyone's prayers and begins to organize them into sticky notes, files, and e-mail. His character begins to take on the role of God, and decides to answer yes to everyone's prayers.

- Do we see God primarily as a wish granter?
- How does this happen in our own lives at times?
- How can we resist approaching God in this way?
- Talk about the ultimate result of everyone's prayers being answered yes.
- What's the problem with thinking God is there to give us what we want?

God has called us to love, follow, and serve Him, which requires our giving and sacrificing for Him. This is a drastically different mind-set from seeing God as "Santa Clause."

**Alternative:** Ask students to think of a time when they have asked God for something and did not get the answer (or thing) they wanted.

- How did you feel when you didn't get what you desired?
- How did it affect your view of God?
- If time has elapsed, as you look back, how do you feel about it now?

- Sometimes we get frustrated with God when He doesn't give us what we want. How does that describe our theology of how we relate to God?
- Do we really believe that He knows what's best, or do we expect Him to answer our prayers with "You're right, that would be best for you!"

Sometimes we follow God out of the motivation of what He can do for us. Unfortunately this theology leads to disappointment and a great misunderstanding of what it means to walk in the abundant life of following Jesus. Today we'll explore what it means to follow God as the Holy Lord of all who merits people's worship, honor, and love. He has called us to serve and to give ourselves to His mission and call.

### DIG DEEPER

*Get Involved* — Too often we, as Christians, try to separate ourselves from the culture of the world. In the Threads study *Sent*, author Ed Stetzer inverts this thinking by challenging the church to fulfill its missional calling of being sent out into the world with the gospel message.

Wondering what to do after you say "send me"? Knowing your spiritual gifts helps narrow how you should be serving. Visit [spiritualgiftstest.com](http://spiritualgiftstest.com) and click on "Adult Test" to discover gifts you may not know you have.

# EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## 1). GOD IS HOLY (ISAIAH 6:1-4)

READ ISAIAH 6:1-4.

<sup>1</sup>In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and His robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Seraphim were standing above Him; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup>And one called to another:

*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Hosts; His glory fills the whole earth.*

<sup>4</sup>The foundations of the doorways shook at the sound of their voices, and the temple was filled with smoke.

King Uzziah led his people in a time of great prosperity. He was a good king who “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord” (2 Kings 15:3). Learn more about him in 2 Kings 15 and 2 Chronicles 26.

- How do you think the king’s death affected the people of Israel?

It was in the midst of this turmoil of losing their king that Isaiah heard from God! Read Isaiah 6:10 and John 12:40-41.

- Place yourself in Isaiah’s shoes for a moment. Imagine yourself there, and have someone read this section again. What picture of God do you see and hear in these few verses?
- As God reveals Himself through a vision to Isaiah, how does God’s holiness come through? [Note: The word *holy* means “set apart.”]
- How have you personally experienced the holiness of God? What kind of impact has it had on your life?

## 2). PEOPLE ARE IMPERFECT (ISAIAH 6:5)

READ ISAIAH 6:5.

<sup>5</sup>Then I said: Woe is me, for I am ruined, because I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people of unclean lips, and because my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts.

(If you have time) Watch the opening scene of *Hope Floats*.

- If you could make a statement about people based on what you see, what would you say? (i.e. Humanity is ... sinful, self-centered, hurtful, etc.)
- When Isaiah saw the Lord, how did he immediately respond?
- What does Isaiah’s initial reaction to being in God’s presence teach us about God?

Isaiah came to a profound understanding of God when confronted with his own sinfulness.

- Take a moment to contemplate your own sinfulness. How does this affect your perception of God, particularly in light of what we deserve versus what we have received?
- How might persecuted believers in other cultures welcome the sweet relief of God’s justice?

## 3). ATONED PEOPLE SERVE GOD (ISAIAH 6:6-8)

READ ISAIAH 6:6-8.

<sup>6</sup>Then one of the seraphim flew to me, and in his hand was a glowing coal that he had taken from the altar with tongs. <sup>7</sup>He touched my mouth with it and said:

*Now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, and your sin is atoned for.*

<sup>8</sup>Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying: Who should I send? Who will go for Us?

*I said: Here I am. Send me.*

What are seraphim? The word means “burning ones” and describes the supernatural creatures that Isaiah saw at his call. These angelic beings had six wings, a face, hands, and feet.

- What did the seraph do for Isaiah?

What does *atonement* mean? It can be translated “to appease,” “to pacify,” or “to cover.” We see these ideas come through in what Jesus has done for us at the cross. He has appeased our just and holy God, by paying for our sin; He has pacified the wrath of God by taking the punishment for us; and He has covered our sin by His sacrifice.

Today, all people have the opportunity to receive the atonement of God through the sacrifice of Jesus, who died to atone for our sins.

READ ROMANS 3:23-26.

<sup>23</sup> For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. <sup>24</sup>They are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup>God presented Him as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His restraint God passed over the sins previously committed. <sup>26</sup>He presented Him to demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be righteous and declare righteous the one who has faith in Jesus.





## → THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 32 OF THE SPRING ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.
- THE SONG "I NEED THEE EVERY HOUR" BY JARS OF CLAY, FROM THE ALBUM *REDEMPTION SONGS*, TO PLAY FOR THE CLASS AS THEY ARRIVE.

## NEED TO KNOWS

### LESSON OVERVIEW

Today's lesson discusses Ahaz's refusal to accept the Lord's message through Isaiah when Aram and Ephraim threatened Judah. The emphasis is on accepting divinely revealed truth. The lesson encourages us to act on the Lord's truth as we deal with life's challenges.

### FOCAL PASSAGES

ISAIAH 7:1-14,16

### KEY VERSE

ISAIAH 7:16



## ACT ON GOD'S TRUTH IN LIFE'S CHALLENGES

### GETTING STARTED

Have the song "I Need Thee Every Hour" by Jars of Clay playing in the background as students arrive.

Watch the clip from the movie *Miracle*, when the two announcers are about to call the game between the USA and Russia. They begin to paint a bleak picture for the Americans as they encounter the greatest hockey team that had ever played. The scene is toward the end of the film.

- Based on what the commentators are saying, what can you conclude is their expectation for the coming game?
- How would you rate the odds of them winning this game?
- How do you respond when the odds are not in your favor?
- Do you think God likes to operate when the odds are not in His people's favor? Why?

Alternative:

- What are ways people choose to escape the reality of their day-to-day lives?
- How do you see people living "virtual reality" lives? Think about getting lost in things like video games, movies, or the Internet.
- What are the most interesting relationships people carry on in the online world? (dating, church, friendships ...)
- What do these virtual relationships look like? How are they carried out?
- What are some of the enjoyable aspects of these things?
- What are some drawbacks of living too deep in a virtual reality world?

- What do you think happens when people's virtual world and real world collide?
- How is this similar to the collision of God's revealed truth and worldly wisdom?

### DIG DEEPER

Found on page 32 of *Collegiate* magazine:

Recommended Read

Read the Book of Job to experience one man's struggle to maintain faith in God despite overwhelming suffering.

Study On

Read the article "A Voice for God" on pages 36-38 of your *Collegiate* magazine to learn more about Isaiah's messianic prophecies, like the virgin birth in Isaiah 7:14, and how Jesus fulfilled them all.

# EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## 1). CHECK FOR MISPLACED FOCUS (ISAIAH 7:1-2)

### READ ISAIAH 7:1-2.

<sup>1</sup>This took place during the reign of Ahaz, son of Jotham, son of Uzziah king of Judah: Rezin king of Aram, along with Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel, waged war against Jerusalem, but he could not succeed. <sup>2</sup>When it became known to the house of David that Aram had occupied Ephraim, the heart of Ahaz and the hearts of his people trembled like trees of a forest shaking in a wind.

Ahaz had become king of Judah, and the armies of the north — Israel and Aram — joined forces against Ahaz.

- When circumstances look bleak, how do you respond?
- Have you ever “trembled like trees of a forest shaking in a wind”? [Leader: If you feel comfortable, share with the group what led you to feel this way.]
- How did you face it?
- How does your relationship with Jesus impact how you respond to overwhelming situations?
- What did Ahaz focus on here?

## 2). CHECK FOR MISPLACED CONFIDENCE (ISAIAH 7:3-9)

### READ ISAIAH 7:3-9.

<sup>3</sup>Then the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out with your son Shear-jashub to meet Ahaz at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, by the road to the Fuller’s Field. <sup>4</sup>Say to him: Calm down and be quiet. Don’t be afraid or fainthearted because of these two smoldering stubs of firebrands, Rezin of Aram, and the son of Remaliah. <sup>5</sup>For Aram, along with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has plotted harm against you. They say: <sup>6</sup>Let us go up against Judah, terrorize it, and conquer it for ourselves. Then we can install Tabeel’s son as king in it.”

<sup>7</sup>This is what the Lord God says: It will not happen; it will not occur. <sup>8</sup>The head of Aram is Damascus, the head of Damascus is Rezin (within 65 years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people), <sup>9</sup>the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. If you do not stand firm in your faith, then you will not stand at all.

- According to these verses, how does God have ultimate authority over the events of the end times?

In 2 Kings 16:7-8 we discover that Ahaz has decided to join forces with Assyria for protection from the coming invasion rather than the Lord. It’s at this point that Isaiah is called to go out to meet Ahaz with his (Isaiah’s) son Sheer-Jashub. Sheer-Jashub means “a remnant will return,” which gives prophetic voice to the coming judgment and salvation. They give Ahaz a message of hope and warning. Ahaz had a decision to make, and he decided to lean on Assyria instead of the Lord.

- As Ahaz is weighing his decision to walk with the Lord or choose to align himself with Assyria, what kinds of things do you imagine went through his mind?
- If you were to be honest, what kinds of things go through your mind as you weigh whether you will follow God’s leading or your own logic (desires, will, and so forth)?
- How do you keep perspective and walk in God’s truth?
- What appears to be Ahaz’s problem in his decision making process?

Ahaz was more focused on probabilities or stability than the power of God. He was relying on his own wisdom instead of God’s leading.

- What did God warn Ahaz the results would be if he did not follow?
- How does God give us fair warning for the consequences of not walking with Him?

Standing firm in faith is not a natural struggle, and it requires you to trust God and admit dependency, putting aside pride and confidence in your abilities.

## 3). CHECK FOR MISSING INTEGRITY (ISAIAH 7:10-12)

### READ ISAIAH 7:10-12.

<sup>10</sup>Then the LORD spoke again to Ahaz: <sup>11</sup>“Ask for a sign from the LORD your God—from the depths of Sheol to the heights of heaven.” <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz replied, “I will not ask. I will not test the LORD.”

- What does *integrity* mean to you?

There’s a familiar ring to what Ahaz says here. It has the sound of that which is right and good. Jesus uses similar words in Matthew 4 when tempted by the devil to jump off the top of the temple.

- What strikes you as being different between Jesus’ desire to not test the Father and Ahaz’s unwillingness to test the Lord?

Ahaz responded out of pompous piety, but Jesus was humble. Ahaz was prompted by the Lord to ask for a sign, whereas with Jesus the devil sought to coerce a sign.

- Which is worse — to openly oppose the Lord or to fake righteousness while seeking your own gain?

Consider this: In Revelation 3:15-16, Jesus calls us to be hot or cold because the in-between (the fence-riders or pretenders) will be spit out of His mouth. Now that’s a pretty picture.





## → THIS WEEK YOU'LL NEED

- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 33 OF THE SPRING ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.

## NEED TO KNOWS

### LESSON OVERVIEW

THE PEOPLE OF JERUSALEM AND JUDAH REAPED THE LORD'S JUDGMENT FOR THEIR EMPTY WORSHIP AND ARROGANCE IN IGNORING GOD'S WILL. HOW CAN WE FOLLOW GOD'S WILL IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES?

### FOCAL PASSAGES

ISAIAH 29:13-16; 30:1-3,15-18

### KEY VERSE

ISAIAH 30:15



## HOW DO I LET GOD'S WILL GUIDE MY LIFE?

### GETTING STARTED

Do you remember the computer game "The Oregon Trail"? Some of us probably spent hours playing it as children, pretending to be miniature Lewis and Clarke explorers. But even as two of the greatest explorers our world has known, Lewis and Clarke could not have made it without the help of one of their most important guides – a young girl named Sacagawea. Without her knowledge of the terrain and her ability to translate while interacting with the various tribes along the way, their expedition would have stalled.

- If you were to go on an expedition across your state or city, where would you take a newcomer to "discover" your area?
- Who do you know that would be a good guide for such a journey? Why?

### DIG DEEPER

Found on page 33 of *Collegiate* magazine:

#### 2 Timothy 2:13

*"If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."*

Watch the movie *Chariots of Fire*, which illustrates how one man uses his talent for running as a way to worship God.

*"I believe God made me for a purpose, but He also made me fast, and when I run, I feel His pleasure."*

– Eric Liddell (played by Ian Charleson) in *Chariots of Fire*

# EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## 1). WHAT IS WORSHIP? (ISAIAH 29:13-14)

READ ISAIAH 29:13-14.

<sup>13</sup>The Lord said: Because these people approach Me with their mouths to honor Me with lip-service—yet their hearts are far from Me, and their worship consists of man-made rules learned by rote—  
<sup>14</sup>therefore I will again confound these people with wonder after wonder. The wisdom of their wise men will vanish, and the understanding of the perceptive will be hidden.

- Paul asks for prayer concerning the gospel before he asks for prayer about his own safety. What does that reveal about his character?

In chapter 29, God has chosen to judge Israel for their disobedience as well as judge their enemies. As He pronounces their coming judgment, He ends with a promise of hope for their redemption.

In verses 13-14, God speaks to the duplicity of their hearts. They worship and, to an extent, still follow God's laws, but their hearts are far from God. Their hypocrisy is exposed.

- In what ways do you see hypocrisy creep into the church?
- Why do we get so caught up in being concerned with what other people think of us, even as we worship God?
- What makes walking the walk so difficult on a daily basis?
- How do you find yourself and those in your circles susceptible to “honor [God] with lip-service” even though your hearts may be far from Him?
- When God speaks of wanting us to be near to Him in our hearts, what does this word picture mean?

## 2). WHO'S IN CHARGE? (ISAIAH 29:15-16)

READ ISAIAH 29:15-16.

<sup>15</sup>Woe to those who go to great lengths to hide their plans from the LORD. They do their works in darkness, and say, “Who sees us? Who knows us?”  
<sup>16</sup>You have turned things around, as if the potter were the same as the clay. How can what is made say about its maker, “He didn't make me”? How can what is formed say about the one who formed it, “He doesn't understand what he's doing”?

Keeping with the theme of “walking down childhood memory lane,” pass out some play dough or clay to everyone in the group. Allow time for everyone to create whatever they want.

- If this play dough creation could talk, how ridiculous would it be for it to deny you made it? Or to claim you, its creator, know nothing?
  - Often in Scripture the important things are repeated over and over again. What things are repeated in today's passages?
  - Do you remember playing hide and seek? What was your logic in hiding? [If I can't see them, they can't see me!]
  - How do we try to “hide” things from God?
- [Possible answers include: rationalize them, make up for them by doing something good, hide them from God's people, ignore the nagging thought in our minds, etc.]
- How is this similar to our “hiding” as a kid?
  - When you're aware of the consequences in advance, how does doing something you know you shouldn't affect your attitude regarding receiving the discipline?

It's hard to complain about the consequences having decided to act and knowing what could happen. So what's the point, right? God gives us the freedom to make our own decisions, but He expects us to remember that He is our Creator, and He knows the plan for our lives.

## 3). WHO KNOWS BEST? (ISAIAH 30:1-3)

READ ISAIAH 30:1-3.

<sup>1</sup>Woe to the rebellious children! This is the LORD's declaration. They carry out a plan, but not Mine, They make an alliance, but against My will, piling sin on top of sin. <sup>2</sup>They set out to go down to Egypt without asking My advice, in order to seek shelter under Pharaoh's protection and take refuge in Egypt's shadow. <sup>3</sup>But Pharaoh's protection will become your shame, and refuge in Egypt's shadow your disgrace.

Kings, often in times of trouble, will seek the aid of another nation. Ten years earlier, King Hezekiah had sought the aid of Egypt when being threatened by Assyria. The Lord warns them here not to look for help from anyone outside of Himself.

- Have you ever been given a piece of advice that you didn't follow, but then wish you had? What was the advice? Why do you wish you had acted differently?
- Why do you think we forge ahead for our own hopes and wishes even in the face of wise advice?
- Why do you think God gives us boundaries, principles, and laws to follow?

[Possible answers include: because He loves us; He knows best; He sees the potential for problems down the road we don't see; etc.]







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- A COPY OF THIS LEADER GUIDE
- THIS WEEK'S LESSON IS ON PAGE 34 OF THE SPRING ISSUE OF *COLLEGIATE*.

## NEED TO KNOW

### LESSON OVERVIEW

THIS LESSON IS ABOUT HEZEKIAH'S ILLNESS, RECOVERY, AND HIS FOLLY IN BEING SO OPEN WITH BABYLONIAN ENVOYS. THE EMPHASIS IS ON OUR NEED FOR SPIRITUAL ALERTNESS.

### FOCAL PASSAGES

ISAIAH 38:1-6; 39:1-2,5-8

### KEY VERSES

ISAIAH 39:1-2



## STAYING SPIRITUALLY ALERT AT ALL TIMES

### GETTING STARTED

Pick up your university's newspaper (or a local newspaper if there's not a university in your area) and ask the students to look through it and see what kind of spiritual issues are at the forefront of their campus.

- Were you aware of these issues before looking through the newspaper?
- How often do you look at your school's newspaper with spiritual eyes?
- How do you know what the spiritual needs are in the lives of the students around you?

Alternative: Show the scene from the *Bourne Identity* when Jason Bourne is talking to the girl who is driving him around. They are in a café and he begins to describe to her all the things he has noticed in the short time since they arrived.

- What kind of training do you think it took to become that alert?
- Do you feel you are pretty alert to your surroundings, or do you feel somewhat oblivious?

One way to test the alertness of people in your group is to add something new to the room before anyone comes in and see if anyone notices it.

- What does it mean to be alert to your spiritual surroundings?
- How alert to your spiritual surroundings are you?
- Are you aware of the major spiritual needs on your campus?

### DIG DEEPER

**ALERT** (verb) — to be fully aware and attentive; wide-awake. This word shows up 18 times in the New Testament, and 13 of those times it's used by Jesus as a command to "be alert." (Matthew 24:42,43; 25:13; Mark 13:33-37; Luke 12:37-38; 21:36; Revelation 3:2-3; 16:15)

Study On: Read 2 Chronicles 29-31 for evidence of Hezekiah's faithful leadership and devotion to God.

# EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## 1). PRACTICE FERVENT PRAYER (ISAIAH 38:1-6)

READ ISAIAH 38:1-6.

<sup>1</sup>In those days Hezekiah became terminally ill. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came and said to him, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Put your affairs in order, for you are about to die; you will not recover.’”<sup>2</sup>Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD. <sup>3</sup>He said, “Please, LORD, remember how I have walked before You faithfully and wholeheartedly, and have done what is good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

<sup>4</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: <sup>5</sup>“Go and tell Hezekiah that this is what the LORD God of your ancestor David says: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Look, I am going to add 15 years to your life. <sup>6</sup>And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; I will defend this city.

- Why did Hezekiah cry out to God?
- How did God respond?
- Scripture teaches we simply don’t have because we fail to ask (Matthew 21:22; John 16:24; James 4:3). How do we reconcile this with the times we’ve asked (sometimes weeping bitterly) and God doesn’t answer how we wanted, even when we feel like we’re acting in His will?

READ JAMES 5:16.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The intense prayer of the righteous is very powerful.

- What does this teach us about prayer?
- Why bother praying fervently if God may or may not answer your prayer the way you think He should?
- How can you develop a fervent prayer life?

## 2). GUARD AGAINST PRIDE (ISAIAH 39:1-2)

READ ISAIAH 39:1-2.

<sup>1</sup>At that time Merodach-baladan son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah since he heard that he had been sick and had recovered.

<sup>2</sup>Hezekiah was pleased with them, and showed them his treasure house—the silver, the gold, the spices, and the precious oil—and all his armory, and everything that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing in his palace and in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them.

- What did Hezekiah set himself up for here?
- What led Hezekiah to show every treasure he had to the Babylonian envoys? (Pride)

Hezekiah had an obligation as king to protect God’s people. The Babylonian envoys might have had one of two hidden agendas:

- To evaluate Judah’s military capacity as a possible ally against Assyria, or
- To see Judah’s wealth as a possible later target for conquest.
- How easy is it for us to receive blessings from God and then become proud in the blessings themselves?

After receiving healing from God and being flattered by the envoys, Hezekiah became self-confident and proudly showed all his treasures.

- Have you felt vulnerable before after a spiritual high?
- What leads us to that place?

## 3). CONSIDER LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES (ISAIAH 39:5-8)

READ ISAIAH 39:5-8.

<sup>5</sup>Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of Hosts: <sup>6</sup>‘The time will certainly come when everything in your palace and all that your fathers have stored up until this day will be carried off to Babylon; nothing will be left,’ says the LORD. <sup>7</sup>‘Some of your descendants who come from you will be taken away, and they will be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’”

<sup>8</sup>Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD that you have spoken is good.” For he thought: There will be peace and security during my lifetime.

- What seems to be wrong with Hezekiah’s response to Isaiah in verse 8?
- What’s really wrong with inconsistency, besides the obvious answer?

Hezekiah appears to acknowledge that he deserved Isaiah’s rebuke, but seems to take selfish solace in knowing the consequences would not be seen in his lifetime.

- How do we keep ourselves from being so blinded by pride that we cannot see the results of our actions?
- What is the “preventative medicine” we can take for this? [Things like humility and servanthood can be built into life to prevent pride.]

