

4. The God of all History (Is. 13-23)

Introduction

Chapters 13-35 are challenging for us to read today. They are concerned with God's anger & judgement. Most of us know our God as loving, and merciful - which he is. However, if we simply avoid difficult passages we end up with a distorted view of God himself, and lose some of the significance of what Jesus did on the cross. This study looks at some of those difficult passages. Brace yourself!

To start with (10 min)

- **Make a list of as many historical empires as you can.**
- As far as you know, what happened to each of them?
- Who/ What would you say are the most powerful human forces/empires today? (They might be economic rather than political)

Judgement on the Nations

1. **Divide the passages in the table (overleaf) between you - take one each / in pairs and work out:**
 - a. Who is being judged?
 - b. Any clarity on why, or how that judgement will come about?

Apart from Chapter 22, feedback briefly to the group (You might want to give people a copy of the chart)

2. Given that in the ancient world people believed that gods were geographically located, and that wars on earth reflected wars in the heavens between those gods,
 - a. Why do you think God would give these prophecies to Isaiah, for the ears of the people of Judah?

- b. How do you imagine they would react to hearing God pronounce judgement on their enemies?

Now feedback Chapter 22

3.
 - a. What is the significance of this section being included amongst these judgements on other nations?
 - b. What does it tell us about how God responds to human sin - even among his own people?
 - c. How do you think people must have reacted to it at the time?
4. What do all these prophecies teach us about where power ultimately lies, despite appearances? How might that effect the way we view powerful forces, institutions, and individuals today?
5. How do you think, as God's people, this should influence our attitudes & responses to current situations & events?

Jesus' death on the cross achieved many things, but the new Testament tells us that eventually everyone will stand before God and be judged.

6. How does what you have read about God's judgement effect the way you view the cross - for yourself & others?

Reflect and Pray - Suggestions

- Thank Jesus for what he did, in taking the punishment we deserved & allowing us to stand before God with confidence knowing we are forgiven.
- Pray for those you know who need to know that they can be forgiven for their past.
- Pray for those situations/ institutions/ systems that seem so big that nothing can be done - ask God to intervene and bring justice in them.

Isaiah Chapter	Who? (Which Nation? Any Individuals?)	What & Why?
13 -14.23		
14.24 -28		
14.29 -32		
15.1-9		
17		
18		
19		
22		
23		