

Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further
International Bible Lessons

Isaiah 40:21-31
Sunday, September 18, 2016
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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class. The *Class Preparation Guide* includes the questions below, and it can be given to students at the end of the previous class so they can pray, read, and think ahead to prepare for the next week’s Bible class.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. How might Isaiah’s words comfort the Jews after they were led into exile and began suffering?

They would know that God cared enough for them to keep His word and punish them for their refusal to repent, along with the promise that their suffering in exile would not last forever because God would keep His word. They would know to worship the true God only in the future. They would know from these lessons that God would also give them the strength to overcome their weaknesses, just as He promised through Isaiah.

2. What effect might these words of Isaiah have had on those who returned to Jerusalem after their exile?

At just the right time, seventy years after their exile began, they would experience another fulfillment of God’s promises through His prophets and return to Jerusalem, so their faith in God would be made stronger. They would have the assurance that when they served the LORD and waited on Him that He would renew their strength and they would experience the joy of serving God more effectively as He empowered them.

3. Compare and contrast the attributes Isaiah mentions with the idols of the Old Testament and the false gods some people worship today?

The true God created the heavens and the earth, the stars, and all people. He knows the names of all the stars and every person. The LORD is mighty and has the concern, power, and willingness to help people, especially those with real needs. Idols are

powerless and peoples' ideas about their abilities are based on lies, so worshiping idols will end in everlasting disappointments though some may think their temporary success is from these idols and the powers they represent: "No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons" (1 Corinthians 10:20, 21).

4. What do you feel comforting about these words from Isaiah? In what ways can you apply this Bible lesson to your needs – mentally, physically, and spiritually?

God created me with a plan in His mind, just as He had a plan when He created the stars, the heavens, and the earth. God knows me and my mental, physical, and spiritual needs. If I serve the LORD as a Christian who believes the Bible and seeks the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit to serve the LORD more effectively each day, the LORD will give me the strength to overcome my weaknesses and the weariness that can come from serving God and others. He will give me all I need on earth until I have fulfilled His plan for me.

5. Pray for someone that may need the comfort and encouragement of these words from Isaiah. Pray about sharing what you have learned from this lesson with someone who needs encouragement.

Lord Jesus, bless the teachers and their students who will be studying the prophet Isaiah this month. May they learn what You want them to learn, may their faith in You be strengthened, may they be encouraged and empowered to keep on growing in their knowledge of You and Your Word so as to better serve You each day and fulfill Your plans for them. Give those who may become weary in well-doing the confidence that You are with them and the power to do all that You desire. Fill each one with the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit Who indwells them as they serve and worship You. Amen.