

## 90 Days through the Bible

### *Isaiah & Jeremiah*

### Unveiling the Gospel

#### Opening Thoughts

Why don't some people ever change?

- getting stuck in the devastation of the past?
- hot buttons that are so easily pushed?
- sounding like broken records always replaying the hurt of the past?
- setting the wounds of the past dictate behavior and attitudes?

Discovering the answers to these questions will lead us to a victorious & functional life & authentic Christianity.

Isaiah and Jeremiah take us on a journey from devastation to victory as they tell the story of Israel's devastation – to a promise of the messianic answer – to a future of victory.

Paul spoke of his journey in Philippians 3

- He had everything – intelligence, education, DNA – A Hebrew of Hebrews
- He had done horrible things – even persecuted and executed Christians.

Philippians 3 (NIV)

*12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

- Paul was forward looks – He saw no advantage on dwelling on the past.

#### Starting point of Isaiah - Israel in a state of despair & hopelessness

**Isaiah 1 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup> These visions concerning Judah and Jerusalem came to Isaiah son of Amoz during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah--all kings of Judah. <sup>2</sup>Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! This is what the LORD says: "The children I raised and cared for have turned against me. <sup>3</sup>Even the animals--the donkey and the ox--know their owner and appreciate his care, but not my people Israel. No matter what I do for them, they still do not understand." <sup>4</sup>Oh, what a sinful nation they are! They are loaded down with a burden of guilt. They are evil and corrupt children who have turned away from the LORD. They have despised the Holy One of Israel, cutting themselves off from his help. <sup>5</sup>Why do you continue to invite punishment? Must you rebel forever? Your head is injured,

and your heart is sick. 6You are sick from head to foot--covered with bruises, welts, and infected wounds--without any ointments or bandages.....  
14I hate all your festivals and sacrifices. I cannot stand the sight of them! 15From now on, when you lift up your hands in prayer, I will refuse to look. Even though you offer many prayers, I will not listen. For your hands are covered with the blood of your innocent victims. 16Wash yourselves and be clean! Let me no longer see your evil deeds. Give up your wicked ways. 17Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the orphan. Fight for the rights of widows. 18"Come now, let us argue this out," says the LORD. "No matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can remove it. I can make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you as white as wool. 19If you will only obey me and let me help you, then you will have plenty to eat. 20But if you keep turning away and refusing to listen, you will be destroyed by your enemies. I, the LORD, have spoken!" 21See how Jerusalem, once so faithful, has become a prostitute.....

## Ending point - The promise for restoration and a future of hope

### Jeremiah 29 (NLT)

10"The truth is that you will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. 11For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. 12In those days when you pray, I will listen. 13If you look for me in earnest, you will find me when you seek me. 14I will be found by you," says the LORD. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and bring you home again to your own land."

## Central to the journey is the promise & work of the messiah – Jesus.

Description & profile of the messiah - Jesus & the work of the cross:

### Isaiah 53 (NLT)

1 Who has believed our message? To whom will the LORD reveal his saving power? 2My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, sprouting from a root in dry and sterile ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him. 3He was despised and rejected--a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way when he went by. He was despised, and we did not care.

4Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God for his own sins! 5But he was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed! 6All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the guilt and sins of us all.

7He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. 8From prison and trial they led him away to his death. But who among the people realized that he was dying for their sins--that he was suffering their punishment? 9He had done no wrong, and he never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.

Prophetic job description of the messiah – Jesus:

### **Isaiah 61 (NLT)**

1The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, because the LORD has appointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to announce that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. 2He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the LORD's favor has come, and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies. 3To all who mourn in Israel, he will give beauty for ashes, joy instead of mourning, praise instead of despair. For the LORD has planted them like strong and graceful oaks for his own glory. 4They will rebuild the ancient ruins, repairing cities long ago destroyed. They will revive them, though they have been empty for many generations.

## **Back to Paul**

1. What does it mean to put all your energies to bear on forgetting the past
2. Telltale signs of people who haven't done it:
  - o Old recordings & constant instant replays buttons get pushed every time a problem arises.
  - o Phrases like - You always... You never...
  - o Regrets – We should have.... Why didn't we...? If only we had...
  - o Shame & guilt won't lose its sting.
  - o Can't see to let go of bitterness – forgiveness doesn't seem to last.
3. One way to forget is get Alzheimer's – Nancy's dad (Example)
4. Another way is denial but neither will help.

Transitioning from the past to the future? (Like star-gate)

5. Billy Graham crusades diagram – We span the great chasm on the cross; but how? How does it really work?
6. Paul speaks of a transformation that is supposed to take place at salvation:

### **Romans 12:2**

2Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

7. Paul also spoke of a veil that had to be removed so that we will be able to see past the superficial.

### **2 Cor. 3:12-16 (NIV)**

12Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. 13We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. 14But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. 15Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

8. Isaiah spoke of the same in a more descriptive way.

#### **Isaiah 44 (NLT)**

6"This is what the LORD, Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty, says: I am the First and the Last; there is no other God. 7Who else can tell you what is going to happen in the days ahead? Let them tell you if they can and thus prove their power. Let them do as I have done since ancient times. 8Do not tremble; do not be afraid. Have I not proclaimed from ages past what my purposes are for you? You are my witnesses--is there any other God? No! There is no other Rock--not one!"

#### **The absurdity of idol worship**

13Then the wood-carver measures and marks out a block of wood, takes the tool, and carves the figure of a man. Now he has a wonderful idol that cannot even move from where it is placed! 14He cuts down cedars; he selects the cypress and the oak; he plants the cedar in the forest to be nourished by the rain. 15And after his care, he uses part of the wood to make a fire to warm himself and bake his bread. Then--yes, it's true--he takes the rest of it and makes himself a god for people to worship! He makes an idol and bows down and praises it! 16He burns part of the tree to roast his meat and to keep himself warm. 17Then he takes what's left and makes his god: a carved idol! He falls down in front of it, worshiping and praying to it. "Rescue me!" he says. "You are my god!"

18Such stupidity and ignorance! Their eyes are closed, and they cannot see. (*This is the veil Paul spoke of.*) Their minds are shut, and they cannot think. 19The person who made the idol never stops to reflect, "Why, it's just a block of wood! I burned half of it for heat and used it to bake my bread and roast my meat. How can the rest of it be a god? Should I bow down to worship a chunk of wood?" 20The poor, deluded fool feeds on ashes. He is trusting something that can give him no help at all. Yet he cannot bring himself to ask, "Is this thing, this idol that I'm holding in my hand, a lie?"

21"Pay attention, O Israel, for you are my servant. I, the LORD, made you, and I will not forget to help you. 22I have swept away your sins like the morning mists. I have scattered your offenses like the clouds. Oh, return to me, for I have paid the price to set you free."

### **How can this veil that keeps us living in the past be removed?**

1. Turn to the Lord and stop looking to artificial surface answers.
2. Allow the Spirit to indwell your life and empower you to do what you can't do on your own power.
3. Let your life reflect Christ - allow the transformation to happen.
4. Confession & repentance
5. Don't make the Bible become what you want it to be – but rather conform your life to it.
6. Ask God to continually deliver you from evil. Know that the enemy is alive and well.
7. Let your light shine – be proactive - let your life make a difference.

## 2 Cor. 3

16But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. [1] **Turn to the Lord and stop looking to artificial surface answers.**

17Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. [2] 18And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. [3]

## 2 Cor. 4

1Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. [4] On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. [5] 3And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. [6] 5For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. [7]

8. Confession, repentance and embracing the promise – not naming and claiming but authentically moving beyond the veil and living there – no longer cleaning to the past, but the future.)
9. Live in the grace of being forgiven and receive the grace to forgive those who sinned against you.

**Conclusion: The Lords prayer might now have more meaning.**