

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this series about sharing from our quiet times you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. We are two teachers and every day during the past week we had a quiet time from 7 selected chapters from ISAIAH in the Old Testament. Once a week we come together to share what we have learned from our quiet times. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's topic is A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM ISAIAH - part 2.

(S) **SHARING FROM SELECTED CHAPTERS FROM ISAIAH**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from Isaiah chapters 9, 11, 40, 41, 42, 45 and 46. We will use our notes to share important truths and lessons from these chapters and discuss some difficult passages.

Sharing quiet times from Isaiah chapter 9.

A prophecy about the Coming Messiah, especially his divine nature. This prophecy begins with “nevertheless” and shows that it stands in contrast to Isaiah’s preaching of God’s judgement to the godless and wicked majority in Israel. His preaching is also directed to the righteous *remnant* in Israel (1:9; 4:2; 6:13; 37:31-32). According to Isaiah 8:18-20 this remnant consisted of the people whom God gathered around the prophet Isaiah, who were signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord Almighty and who spoke according to God’s law and God’s testimony. They were what we today call *the believers in Christ*. To them the prophet Isaiah prophesied this wonderful prophecy about their Coming Saviour.

(T) **First. The Coming Messiah will be the Great Light of the whole world.** During the time of Joshua, the tribes of Israel did not conquer many of the original Gentile nations living there. Especially the northern part of Naphtali remained occupied by the Gentiles and was called Galeel, which simply means *the region* (Josh 20:7). The tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun on the west side of the sea (“by the way of the sea”) of Galilee occupied what we now call Galilee. Especially Galilee and the Trans-Jordan region suffered much during the wars with Syria and the invasion of Assyria. In 734 B.C., the emperor of Assyria, called Tiglath-Pileser, had invaded this region of Galilee and had plundered it and had taken many people into exile (8:4; 2 Ki 15:29). These people were literally sitting in darkness.

Just after this event, Isaiah prophesied his wonderful prophecy about the Coming Messiah. Isaiah regarded not only the people of Galilee, but all the people of Israel as sitting in darkness. In the future they will see a great light. This prophecy was literally fulfilled when Jesus Christ was raised as a child in Nazareth, a town in Galilee, and when Jesus in the beginning had his ministry in Galilee, what we now call his *Great Galilean Ministry*, which is recorded in Matthew 4:12 to 15:20 and lasted from December A.D. 27 to April A.D. 29. That is also why Jesus Christ said in John 8:12, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

(S) **Second. The Coming Messiah will be born as a wonderful child.** The Messiah will not simply descend from heaven, but will be born as *a child* among people. Isaiah says that the government will be on his shoulders and pictures his royal robe, which symbolises his authority, as hanging over his shoulders. The way in which he is described rules out that this could be a reference to any future king of Judah, for example Hezekiah. In the Hebrew original, his *five names* show that this is a reference to the Coming Messiah:

One. He is called “Wonder”, just as the name of the angel of the Lord in Judges 13:18. The name “Wonder” means that his name is beyond understanding. The Coming Messiah will transcend the boundaries and limitations of ordinary human existence.

Two. He is also called “Counsellor”, because according to Isaiah 11:2-4, he will have the wisdom, understanding and counsel of the Holy Spirit.

Three. He is called “Mighty God”, which refers to his courage and power to execute his decrees and wise decisions. A wise Counsellor without power to execute his decisions or a powerful God without wisdom will both be fruitless. His name “God” shows even more than his name “Wonder” that the Messiah will not only be super-human, but that he will be completely divine. The name “Mighty God” is also used of the LORD (JHWH), the Almighty God in Isaiah 10:20-23 and thus proves that the Almighty God is one with the Messiah and reveals himself in and through the Messiah to people on earth (Heb 1:3).

Four. He is also called “Everlasting Father” and this name refers to his relationship to his people. As a Father, the Messiah King will love and care for his children (22:21). His fatherhood will endure forever, because there will be no end to his kingship.

Five. Finally, he is called “Prince of Peace”, because he will rule over his people, bringing them peace. The word *peace* in the Bible does not simply refer to the absence of war or fighting, but also includes salvation from all evil and enemies, healing of all brokenness, sharing in complete human welfare, divine blessing and eternal joy. That this kingdom of peace will include also God’s people from all the other nations is said in Isaiah 2:4 and Zechariah 9:10. Zechariah 9:10 says, “He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth”. In the future, God’s people from among all the nations on earth will experience God’s peace in a restored and renewed earth!

(T) **Third. The Coming Messiah will be the King of God’s kingdom of peace forever.** The Prophet Isaiah prophesied that this child born in Israel will *increase* his government and peace. Isaiah 11:10 says that in the future all the nations will rally to him. And Daniel 2:44 says, “The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed ... It will crush all other kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.” In this kingdom, the Messiah King will rule with justice and righteousness. Because evil will forever be conquered, there will also be peace forever!

Because some people might think that this prophecy is too wonderful to be true, Isaiah adds, “The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this”. God’s *zeal* is his burning love for the cause of his kingdom and for the salvation of his people. It is not anything people on earth will do that will accomplish God’s kingdom, but only the burning zeal of God. But because it is God himself who will do all this, it will certainly be accomplished!

(S) **Sharing quiet times from Isaiah chapter 11.**

A prophecy about the Coming Messiah, especially his human nature. After describing *the humiliation of the kingdom of the world*, represented by the Assyrian Empire in chapter 10, Isaiah describes *the exaltation of the kingdom of God* in chapter 11. This passage emphasises the kingship or rule of the Messiah-King on earth. While Isaiah 9:5 emphasises his divine nature, Isaiah 11:2-4 emphasises more his human nature. Nevertheless, at the same time he possesses the fullness of the gifts of the Spirit, which no human has ever had. The description of this King surpasses every human limitation and can only be a description of the Coming Messiah-King, Jesus Christ.

(T) **First. The Coming Messiah will have very humble origins.** Isaiah 10:33-34 ends with the prophecy that God will humiliate the kingdom of the world. This humiliation is symbolised by God cutting down the mighty forest of trees. In contrast, Isaiah 11:1 begins with the prophecy that God will begin the exaltation of the kingdom of the Messiah-King in a very humble way. This beginning of exaltation is symbolised by a shoot that comes out of an old tree stump and begins to bear fruit. This tree stump symbolises the house of Jesse, who was king David’s father. Isaiah no longer speaks of David, because by that time the royal house of David will no longer exist. Nevertheless, one descendant from the family of Jesse and David will be the Messiah-King. The contrast is great. While the whole forest of great cedar trees, symbolising the mighty empires of the world, lies cut down without glory or remembrance, the dry old tree stump shoots up with new life! The Messiah-King will be born under humble circumstances somewhere in Israel at a time when the great world empires like the Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Greek Empires will already have declined and lie cut down on earth.

(S) **Second. The Coming Messiah will be equipped with spiritual gifts.** Isaiah 10:13 says that the Assyrian king of the kingdom of the world glories in his own strength and wisdom. But the Messiah-King will draw his strength and wisdom from no single human source, but from the Spirit of God. His kingdom will be characterised by spiritual characteristics. The Messiah-King will be one with the Holy Spirit. And according to Revelation 5:6, he will have the complete and divine fullness of the Holy Spirit. All these spiritual characteristics serve to equip the Messiah-King for his royal task. “The Spirit of wisdom and understanding” will rest on him.

One. “Wisdom” is the spiritual gift which fathoms the essence and purpose of things and finds the best means to attain the highest goals. It is knowing *when* and *how* to do *what*.

Two. “Understanding” or “insight” is the ability that judges with distinction all the circumstances, relationships and consequences of events.

Three. “Counsel” is the ability that uses wisdom and understanding to make the right decisions.

Four. “Power” is the ability that executes these decisions.

Five. “Knowledge of the Lord” is knowledge based on a genuine fellowship of trust and love with the Lord, a knowledge of the Lord’s being and attributes, and especially a knowledge of the Lord’s will and ways. It is especially a knowledge of how the Lord wants his people to be governed. This knowledge belongs as much to the heart as to the mind. It goes together with “the fear of the Lord”, which induces him to carry out the Lord’s will completely. The fear of the Lord is that deep sense of awe concerning the glory and majesty of God in heaven, a deep respect to revere and

honour him on earth, a solid trust to depend on him for everything and a healthy fear to disobey him. This fear of the Lord is also the beginning of wisdom, and therefore these spiritual gifts are inseparably connected to one another (2). Jesus in his human nature on earth manifested all these spiritual characteristics.

(T) **Third. The task of the Coming Messiah will be to judge.** He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears (3). In the New Testament John 2:24-25 says that Jesus did not rely on other counsellors and officials to tell him what is going on in his kingdom or what is inside people, because he knew all people and he knew what was inside people. Therefore no outward appearance or pretence can mislead him, he sees through the most secret and hidden things and knows everything that happens. Many judges on earth are characterised as people who love to accept bribes and thus pervert justice and show partiality. But the Messiah-King will accurately weigh the issues of guilt and innocence and judge people with absolute justice and fairness. King David had Uriah murdered in order to possess his wife and king Ahab had Naboth murdered in order to possess his vineyard. But the Messiah-King will judge the needy with righteousness and the poor with justice (4). *The needy* are the small people, those who feel miserable and worry due to the oppression of the wicked. *The poor* are the meek people, those who bear with this injustice in the right way, because they do not seek to revenge themselves, but rather hope in God's righteous judgement (1 Pet 2:23). While many wicked and violent oppressors on earth think that they can get away with their unrighteousness and oppression, the Messiah-King will strike them with the rod of his mouth and slay them (4). He will not need outward means to punish the wicked, but he will strike them with the words coming out of his mouth and spoken in the power of the Holy Spirit (Rev 1:16; Cp. 2 Ki 1:1-f; Act 5:5). He will be clothed with a belt of righteousness, which symbolises his preparedness and power to act, and a sash of faithfulness, which symbolises that all these biblical expectations concerning him will certainly be fulfilled (Rev 1:5; 3:14)! This task of judging does not mean that there will still be evil people in the kingdom of peace when all the animals already live in peace with one another. While Isaiah 11:1-2 refers especially to the First Coming of Jesus Christ, verse 3-5 refers especially to his Second Coming, when he will judge all people on earth, and verse 6-9 refers to the time of the new earth after his Second Coming and after the Final Judgement.

(S) **Fourth. The result of the Coming Messiah's task will be the renewal of all things on earth.** The result of the reign of the Messiah-King in the power of the Holy Spirit and according to God's justice will result in the kingdom of peace (cp. 2:4; 9:7). In contrast to *the kingdom of the world*, symbolised by the Assyrian Empire which filled the earth with its tumult of war in chapter 10, *the kingdom of God* will finally be a kingdom of complete peace. This is pictured first by how the animals live at peace with one another (6-8) and secondly by how the people live at peace with one another (9-10). Not only will the situation of Paradise be restored, but it will be surpassed by the fact that it will no longer be possible to sin and destroy and by the fact that God will live visibly among his people on earth. The ultimate future of Christians is not simply to go to heaven, but is to dwell in the new heaven *on the new earth*, as Revelation chapter 21-22 teach! Already in Matthew 5:5, Jesus promises that the meek will *inherit the earth* and in Romans 8:18-25, Paul teaches that *the whole creation will be liberated* from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God! The dwelling place of this people living at peace with one another is pictured as Mount Zion. But this cannot be taken literally, because Mount Zion will be far too small. Isaiah could describe the glorious future of all God's people only in terms of what Israel could understand. Mount Zion is mentioned because the temple stood on it and it symbolises that all the people in the world will live in the presence of the living God and thus in fellowship with the living God (Ps 27:4). Because the knowledge of God will fill the earth (9), the new Zion will spread out across the whole new earth (2:3)! Because every human being on the new earth will know God personally, there will also be everlasting peace. The Messiah-King will spread this knowledge of God over the whole world, because he will be like a banner on a high mountain drawing all the people in the world to himself (10). People from all over the world will seek the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and turn to him. People from all nations will rally towards him. They will seek his will, his ways and his counsel. The place where the Messiah-King rests or dwells will be glorious. This is because Revelation 21:22-26 says that the nations of the earth will bring the glory and honour of their nations into the new earth.

(T) **Sharing quiet times from Isaiah chapter 40.**

The incomparable greatness of God. In Isaiah 40:25-26 we read, "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing".

First. The creation of the stars.

How many stars are there in the universe? Our galaxy, called the Milky Way, has about 100 000 000 000 stars. Scientists estimate that there are about 200 000 000 000 000 000 stars in the universe!

How far are the stars from us? The stars are so far away that scientists measure the distance in light-years. One light-year is the distance light travels in one year and that is 9 454 000 000 000 kilometres. The closest star is 4.3 light-years from the earth and the furthest stars are billions of light-years away!

How big are the stars? Some stars are so big that the sun with its planets Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars can rotate inside one star. Our God created an unimaginable great number of stars; he created the vast distances of all the stars; and he created the enormous sizes of the stars. Therefore God says, "To whom will you compare me?" God is incomparable!

Second. The creation of the human body.

How wonderful is God's creation? God's creation consists of an uncountable great variety of rocks and elements, trees and plants, birds and animals, human beings, colours, forms, etc. No two things are exactly alike! Every leaf of a tree is different from all the other leaves in creation! The earwig is a small insect, which folds its wings in 40 layers under small wing-shields! The fingerprint of every human being is different! The human body grows from *one cell* into a great variety of cells, each with its specialised function. Each cell is connected to the other cells so that it is a miracle that the complex human being functions as a unity and is usually healthy!

How wonderful has God made the cells of our body? The human body consists of uncountable cells. 1 Kilogram of body weight can contain up to 2 000 000 000 000 cells! Each single cell contains tens of small power stations that produce all the energy in the human body.

How wonderful has God made the lungs of our body? The human lungs consist of many tubes that end in air sacks. Scientists estimate that there are more than 600 000 000 such air sacks in our lungs. The wall of each air sack contains many tiny blood vessels that absorb the oxygen we need to live. These walls are so artfully folded together that they form a surface as big as a football field! In Psalm 139:14 the Psalmist says, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well". Our God created all our human bodies. Therefore God says, "To whom will you compare me?" The answer is, "God is incomparable"!

(S) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Every day have a quiet time from one chapter from Isaiah. The selected chapters are Isaiah 48, 52, 53, 55, 58, 59 and 61. Record the meditations of all your quiet times in a notebook. Once a week meet with a friend or with a house fellowship or discipleship group and share your discoveries, lessons and blessings.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and preach God's kingdom" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".