



Isaiah was written about seven centuries before Christ, warning the people of Israel that they were on a path leading to God’s judgment. But judgment isn’t the end of the story. There is also comfort in the promise that God will have compassion, and ultimately rescue His people through His Servant. Isaiah also offers us the opportunity to ask the questions: What path are WE on? What is the way forward?

Week Five: A NIGHTMARE AND A DREAM

Text: Isaiah 34-35

Isaiah’s original readers faced a world of political, social, and military crisis and upheaval...like ours. When faced with turmoil and upheaval we ask a universal question: Why doesn’t God intervene? The answer is that He does. But when He does it begins with a nightmare: the nightmare of His Judgement. The good news is that nightmare is followed by the dream come true of His Kingdom.

Discussion Questions: *The following are based on the “My Application” Questions found in the bulletin this week. Leader urge your group members to attend worship—or watch the sermon online—and to spend time considering and answering those questions before coming to the group. This will produce a richer discussion time.*

- As you look at the condition of the world, do you ever wonder why God doesn’t do something? How does Isaiah 34 answer that question? (See also Matthew 24:29, Revelation 6:12-13.)
- In what way does your life belong to you and still belong to God? (Psalm 24:1; Luke 12:16-21.) Does God have the right to take your life?
- Read Isaiah 35:8-10. Who will God allow into His Kingdom? Why doesn’t God just forgive everyone and bring them into His Kingdom?
- Read 2 Peter 3:10-15. How should Christians pattern their lives in light of Jesus’ return? (Tim put it this way, “When the final conflagration comes, will the things I give most of my attention and energy to go up in flames?”)

Memory Verse:

*“...and the ransomed of the Lord will return.
They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them, sorrow and sighing will flee away.”*

Isaiah 35:10

Prayer Time:

Focus on our memory verse.

Joy and gladness are the product of gratitude. What do you have to be thankful for? Spend some time not only thanking God, but allowing your gratitude to sink in to your heart, and lead you to Joy.

Application:

What came to your mind as we discuss that last question? What consumes your attention and energy now that will not last for eternity? (These are not necessarily bad things, they just won't last.) What is one small way you could begin exchanging it for things that matter? Discuss this with your group. Don't settle for saying, merely, "I should stop xyz (or do less of it)." Instead, think of what you will exchange for it.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

Won't last	Will last
Watching Netflix	Spending time alone with God
Social media	Engaging in a spiritual conversation with a friend or family member
Shopping for things you don't need and can't afford	Clearing space in your house so you can practice hospitality
Slaving to make your house or yard look like it belongs on HGTV	Walking across the street to talk to a new neighbor
Checking and worrying about your savings and investments	Investing money in the Kingdom of God