

The Sovereign Lord of History

Truly it is a beautiful story we find as we begin the book of Isaiah. It is made immortal not because of its literary beauty, but because it is an integral part of the greatest story that's ever been told, the gospel of Jesus Christ. As we prepare to hear the exposition of Isaiah this coming Lord's Day, we must prepare our homes. We are called to lead our families in worship, instructing them in the fear of the Lord. Use this guide to focus your family on the sovereign authority of God, reading the scriptures together, asking the questions, and praying that God would give you open hearts to receive His word. Our memory verse for this week is Isaiah 1:1.

Day 1: The Vision and the Voice of God

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 1:1, 2 Peter 1:21

What do we mean by a vision? The modern world often views a vision as a mere dream or a human aspiration. But a biblical vision is something divinely intended to communicate the truth of God. Isaiah was not a man offering his political opinions to a struggling nation. He was a prophet called by God to declare the words of the Almighty. The text tells us clearly that this is the vision of Isaiah concerning Judah and Jerusalem. God opened the eyes of His servant to see the spiritual reality of the nation and the coming judgment, and then commanded him to speak. The authority of this message does not come from man. If the authority came from man, the people could simply ignore it and move on with their lives. But God placed this word here, making it binding upon every generation that reads it.

And as we consider this, we must recognize our own responsibility to the voice of God. The fool according to the Bible is one who despises instruction and wisdom from God. When God speaks through His prophets, the only right response is humble submission and attentive hearing. Isaiah was sent to a people who had stopped listening to the Lord. They were going through the ceremonial motions, but their hearts were far from their Redeemer and their Provider. We must guard our own homes against this same hardness of heart. As we gather to worship our God and renew our allegiance to our Lord, we must come with open ears. This is the center of the gospel message, that God has spoken to us finally and fully in His Son, and we must heed His voice.

Family Discussion and Application

As we sit down together to discuss these truths, we want to make sure that our children are grasping the foundation of biblical authority. It is vital that we instruct them in the reality that the Bible is not a collection of human stories, but the very word of God. We must ask them questions that anchor their young minds in the text we just read. Reviewing these

simple truths helps them build a framework for understanding how God communicates with His people.

1. Catechism Question: What is a prophet? Answer: A prophet is a man called by God to speak God's words to the people.
2. Recall Question: Whose vision is this book about?
3. Recall Question: Who gave Isaiah the words to say?

And here is the practical application for our obedience today. We must teach our children to listen to the preaching of the Word as unto the Lord. Not as unto men, but as unto the God who has given His ministers authority to preach. When we gather with the church this Lord's Day, we are not gathering to hear a lecture. We are gathering to hear the voice of our Sovereign God through the exposition of His scripture. Let us pray together as a family that God would give us soft hearts and open ears to receive His instruction with joy.

Day 2: Earthly Kings and the Sovereign Lord

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 1:1, Proverbs 21:1

Isaiah roots his prophecy in real, historical time by listing the rulers of his day. He mentions Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. What do we mean by this? Well, men die from various causes, do they not? Old age, sickness, disease, or the sword of an enemy nation. Earthly kings rule for a brief season, they make their decrees, they fight their battles, and then they are buried with their fathers. But the Sovereign Lord of history remains seated upon His throne forever. The rise and fall of these human rulers is not an accident of history. God governs the times and the epochs, and every civil magistrate is ultimately a tool in the hand of the Almighty.

In God's order, in God's way, those who are in authority are not a law unto themselves and they are not accountable only to themselves. They are accountable to the people they govern, but ultimately, they are accountable to the God who placed them in power. Some of these kings, like Hezekiah, sought to honor the Lord and lead the people in righteousness. Others, like Ahaz, plunged the nation into deep idolatry and rebellion. Yet through the reigns of both the righteous and the wicked, God's eternal purposes were never thwarted. His sovereign plan to preserve a remnant and bring forth a Savior marched forward without interruption. We can find immense peace in knowing that our God is never surprised by the shifting politics of men.

Family Discussion and Application

When we look at the world around us, it is easy to become fearful or anxious about the people who hold earthly power. We must deliberately remind our families that human leaders are temporary, but our God is eternal. These questions are designed to help our children recognize that God is the one who truly rules over every nation. Use this time to direct their attention away from the chaos of the world and toward the firm foundation of God's throne.

1. Catechism Question: Who rules over all the kings of the earth? Answer: The Sovereign Lord rules over all things and all people.
2. Recall Question: Can you name one of the four kings mentioned in Isaiah 1:1?
3. Recall Question: Do human kings live forever?

This brings us to a very practical reality for our own homes. I know we can be guilty of criticizing those in authority or complaining about the direction of our nation, but do we pray for them? If their authority came from man, we would pray and plead with men, but God placed them there. We must model for our children a deep trust in God's providence, showing them that our joy is not tied to whoever occupies an earthly throne. Let us pray aloud together, thanking God that He is the ultimate King and asking Him to give us the grace to trust His perfect plan for history.

Day 3: The Tragedy of a Rebellious People

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 1:2-4

The vision of Isaiah quickly moves from historical context to a heartbreaking courtroom scene. God calls the heavens and the earth to serve as witnesses against His own children. He says, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me." Truly it is a beautiful story when a family walks in obedience, but here we see the devastating reality of spiritual rebellion. Israel had been given the law, the covenants, and the promises. God had been their Redeemer and their Provider, yet they turned their backs on the Holy One of Israel. They despised instruction and wisdom from God, proving themselves to be fools according to the biblical definition.

The tragedy of their apostasy is magnified when God contrasts them with the beasts of the field. The ox knows its owner and the donkey knows its master's crib, but Israel does not know their Lord. What do we mean by this? It means that even the dumb animals possess enough instinct to recognize the hand that feeds them. But the people of God, blinded by their sin and their idolatry, failed to recognize the God who had sustained them. This is the bitter fruit of rejecting God's law. When a nation or a family abandons the authority of God's

word, they do not find freedom. They find themselves weighed down with iniquity, alienated from their Creator, and walking in deep darkness.

Family Discussion and Application

It is crucial that we do not gloss over the reality of sin when we are teaching our children about God. They need to understand the gravity of rebellion so that they can properly understand the glory of salvation. Use these questions to help your family reflect on what it means to break God's law. We must use these moments to gently point out our own daily need for a Savior.

1. Catechism Question: What is sin? Answer: Sin is disobeying or not conforming to the law of God.
2. Recall Question: In our reading, what two animals know their master?
3. Recall Question: Did the people of Israel obey God or rebel against Him?

And here is the problem when we criticize the Israelites for their rebellion, we are not nearly so critical of ourselves. We must look at our own hearts and ask if we have taken God's provision for granted this week. Have we been like the ox that knows where its food comes from, or have we forgotten to thank our Provider? Let us take a moment to pray together, confessing our sins to the Lord, and asking Him to keep our family faithful to His covenant rather than wandering into the foolishness of rebellion.

Day 4: The Promise of the Coming Redeemer

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 1:18, Isaiah 9:6

While the opening of Isaiah contains severe warnings of judgment, it does not leave us without hope. This is an integral part of the greatest story that's ever been told, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even as God exposes the deep sin of Judah, He immediately offers a path of cleansing and redemption. He issues a profound invitation: "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord, Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." God in His absolute sovereignty did not simply ordain judgment for sin. He also ordained the exact method by which His rebellious people would be saved.

A type is something that was divinely intended to be a picture of Christ, and throughout the Old Testament, the sacrifices and the feasts were a picture of Christ. But Isaiah looks forward to the actual fulfillment of these promises. He prophesies about the coming Messiah, the Son who would be given, the one whose name is Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate provision for our scarlet sins. He is truly the Messiah, the Son of God, who took the

judgment we deserved so that we could be clothed in His righteousness. This is the center of the gospel message, and it is the only reason we have hope today.

Family Discussion and Application

The transition from the bad news of our sin to the good news of the gospel is the most important conversation we will ever have with our children. We want them to clearly see that God did not leave us in our rebellion. These questions are designed to help your family focus on the incredible mercy of God. Guide them to see that Jesus is the perfect Savior promised by the prophets.

1. Catechism Question: Who is the Redeemer of God's elect? Answer: The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Recall Question: What color does God say our sins are like?
3. Recall Question: What color will God make our sins if we are forgiven?

As we consider the cross, we must remember that our faith is not based on our own ability to be good. Our faith rests entirely on the finished work of Jesus Christ. Let us lead our families in a prayer of deep thanksgiving today. Pray aloud, thanking the Father for sending His Son to wash away our sins, and asking Him to give each of our children the gift of true faith and repentance. We rejoice not because we are perfect, but because our Savior is mighty to save.

Day 5: Preparing Our Hearts to Hear

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 1:19-20

As we approach the end of our week, we must turn our attention to the Lord's Day gathering. The book of Isaiah stands as far more than a historical document to be studied. It remains a living word that demands a response from every person who hears it. God presents a clear choice to His people: "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword." There

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Day 5: Preparing Our Hearts to Hear (Continued)

There is no neutral ground when it comes to the Word of the Lord. We cannot hear the preaching of God's truth and remain unchanged. We either respond with a willing and obedient heart, submitting to God's design, or we harden our hearts in rebellion. The spirit that the disciples of Jesus had was one of eager submission to their Master's voice. That is the same spirit we must cultivate in our own homes as we prepare for worship.

When we gather with the church this Sunday, we are stepping into the presence of the Sovereign Lord of history. The same God who gave this vision to Isaiah is the God who speaks to us today through the faithful exposition of Scripture. In God's order, in God's way, He uses the preaching of His Word to shape His people, to convict us of our sin, and to conform us to the image of His Son. Therefore, our preparation matters. We do not want to arrive on Sunday morning distracted, exhausted, or harboring unconfessed sin. We want to arrive ready to listen, ready to worship, and ready to be transformed by the greatest story that's ever been told.

Family Discussion and Application

The goal of this final day is to practically ready our families for church. We want our children to understand that Sunday morning is not just another event on the calendar, but the highlight of our week as we gather with God's people. Use these questions to review what we have learned and to focus their minds on the importance of obedience.

1. Catechism Question: How does God speak to us today? Answer: God speaks to us today through His written Word, the Bible.
2. Recall Question: According to our reading, what happens if we are willing and obedient?
3. Recall Question: What should our attitude be when we go to church to hear the Bible preached?

The practical application for our obedience today begins with Saturday evening. Let us make sure our home is in order, our Bibles are ready, and our hearts are prepared to rest and worship. Take time right now to pray together as a family for your pastor. He is God's minister, called to serve Him and to feed the flock. Pray aloud, asking God to give him clarity and boldness as he preaches from Isaiah, and ask God to give your family open hearts to receive the Word with joy and submission.