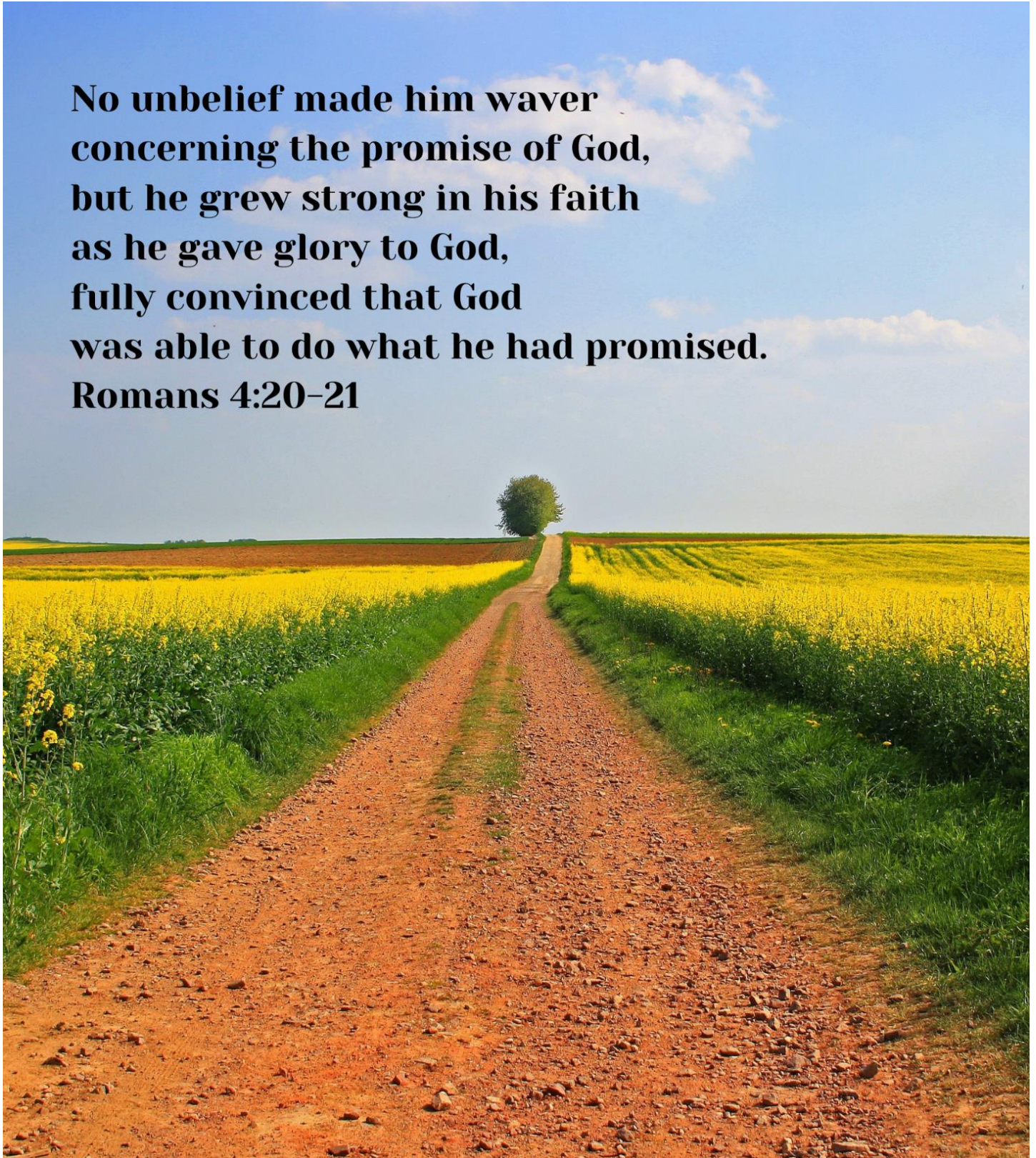


August 2023
Memory Verse and Bible Reading Plan

**No unbelief made him waver
concerning the promise of God,
but he grew strong in his faith
as he gave glory to God,
fully convinced that God
was able to do what he had promised.
Romans 4:20-21**



Reading II Kings and II Chronicles – See the introductions in the May and June Bible Reading Plans.

Reading Isaiah

For as much as we love the Bible, some of it can be intimidating. That is true of Isaiah. It is long, complicated, and seems far removed from us. But persevere, there is much here for us.

Isaiah was one of Israel's greatest prophets. He was married and had at least two sons. He lived in Jerusalem and prophesied from 740 to 680 BC during the reigns of four kings in Israel, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (1:1). He prophesied during times of tumultuous change, the decline and fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the spiritual decline of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Isaiah pleaded again and again for Judah to wake up.

He makes incredible, huge and sweeping prophesies of things in the future, the exile of Judah under Babylon; the return from exile under Cyrus, the pagan king of Persia; the promise of a coming Messiah who would die for His people.

Why read Isaiah?

Read Isaiah because it is like a mini-Bible.

Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury in the 13th century AD, the man who established our chapter divisions in our Bibles, maybe was having a little fun making Isaiah 66 chapters equaling the 66 books of the Bible. The first 39 chapters are like the OT and the second 27 chapters are like the NT (matching the 39 books of OT and 27 books of NT). Isaiah 1-39 is about God's judgment on Israel and 40-66 is about God's deliverance.

Read Isaiah because it's important in understanding the NT, only Psalms is quoted more often in the NT.

Perhaps more than any other OT book, writers and believers in the NT looked back at Isaiah and saw Jesus as the fulfillment of the foretold Messiah, the suffering servant who saves us from our sin.

Read Isaiah because it exposes idolatry and idolatry is deadly.

Worshipping blind, deaf, and dumb idols makes us blind, deaf, and dumb. Israel flirted with idols which led to her destruction, which all idols do.

We need to hear Isaiah's profound, sustained attack on idolatry because we're all in a sustained war against our own idols. It's easy for us to see that the totems of ancient cultures were lifeless, but we're much more easily deceived when it comes to contemporary promises of power, wealth, pleasure and security. We cry out to these gods, but they don't answer or save us (Isaiah 46:7).

Read Isaiah to see the Gospel according to Isaiah.

Isaiah contains one of the clearest expressions of the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the Old Testament. It includes the full scope of His life: the announcement of His coming (Isaiah 40:3-5), His virgin birth (7:14), His proclamation of the good news (61:1), His sacrificial death (52:13-53:12), and His return to claim His own (60:2-3). This is not just the point of Isaiah, but the point of the entire Bible.

As you read the first 39 chapters with the strong theme of judgment remember the knowledge of judgment is necessary to show us our great need for salvation. When we turn our backs on God in rebellion, we must be called back to Him.

Read Isaiah to see the magnificent glory of God and the greatness of His mercy and grace.

In Isaiah 6 His glory is revealed, pure, exalted, terrifying, yet atoning, forgiving. Throughout the book we see God's glory revealed in his sovereignty, and his wisdom as Creator and Judge and redeemer.

Isaiah 12:2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; or the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.

Outline: Isaiah 1-5, summary of the sins of Judah.
Isaiah 6, the call of Isaiah as a prophet of God.
Isaiah 7-12, God rules over His people.
Isaiah 13-39, God rules over all nations, including Judah's fall (39).
Isaiah 40-55, prophecy of Israel's future deliverance from exile.
Isaiah 56-66, God's call for the people to prepare to meet God and be restored.

Reading the Minor Prophets

The Major Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, are listed first not because of importance but because of the length of their books. The Minor Prophets are minor only because their books are shorter, and it may be that these twelve all fit on one manuscript or papyrus scroll (sort of like how they all fit on our reading schedule in the month of December).

Through the themes of sin, judgment, and restoration, they detail Israel's spiritual unfaithfulness and the eschatological promise of divine faithfulness. Clearly God is up to something here and He deems it very important.

The Prophets saw everything in relation to God, everything. The rise and fall of kings and nations, the plagues of locust in Joel and whoring after idols in Hosea and the storm that got Jonah tossed overboard, and the rise of wicked nations that defeated the people of God.

The Prophets call us out of superficiality. The Prophets call us out of secularism and materialism. The Prophets call us out of the incipient atheism that dominates our culture and our media and our education.

The Prophets remind us that we do not live in a closed universe, but in an open universe. The Prophets reminds us that there is a God and He is here and He is not silent, He has spoken loud and clear.

Finally the Prophets remind us what matters most. That there is a coming Messiah. God has invaded our world and come in the flesh. This matters supremely. This changes everything. This turns our world upside down. This changes how you and think about today and tomorrow and next week and the year ahead. God is moving and He is writing His history through our world and our lives.

There are ***three major historical events around which all the writing prophets prophesied.*** Each of these three events have a group of prophets who addressed these key events.

Hosea, Amos and Jonah are the earliest. ***Hosea and Amos*** are the only two to prophecy to the northern kingdom of Israel before northern Israel was led into exile by the Assyrians (760 to 722 BC).

Jonah was a prophet of Israel who went to Nineveh, which was the capital of the hated nation of Assyria.

All the rest of the Minor Prophets prophesied to Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel. Six prophecy before Judah goes into exile in 587 BC, ***Joel, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk***; and the last three, ***Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*** are prophets in Judah after Judah returns from exile under Ezra and Nehemiah from around 536 to 430 BC.

How are these books relevant to us? Listen to four things going on then and see if it doesn't sound familiar.

First, it was a time of unprecedented economic, social, political and military upheaval. The world was changing dramatically. All of this could describe our nation and our world.

Second, it was a time of enormous religious unfaithfulness and disregard for the Ten Commandments, a time of rebellion, idolatry and rampant disobedience against God and His law. There was a mixing of religions and religious practices and a pursuit of spiritualism. Again this describes our culture and our context. Especially interesting to know is that decline in Israel followed a period of unprecedented prosperity and success and growth.

Third, it was a time of shifting populations and national boundaries. Whole populations were being moved, immigration and migration on huge scales. We see the immigration issue in our own country and the forced movement of populations in the middle east and Africa.

Fourth, the nation of Israel was permanently divided. A nation divided will not stand. Our nation is split just about down the middle into red states and blue states. Other nations today face division, Korea, Sudan, Nigeria, Middle East.

The Minor Prophets stand out as particularly applicable in light of world events. Much of what is written could be tomorrow's headlines: political intrigue, wars and rumors of wars, changes in power structures, old régimes falling and new ones rising.

Where is God in all of this and what is God saying to us today? Somehow these ancient words are still and forever true.

Group	Book	Approximate Dates
Pre-Exilic Prophets of Israel	Jonah (preached to Nineveh) Amos Hosea	780-850 765-750 755-715
Prophets of Judah	Obadiah Joel Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah	840 835-796 740-690 630-612 606-604 625
Post-Exilic Prophets of the Returned Remnant	Haggai Zechariah Malachi	520 515 430

Bible Reading Plan – August

1	2 Kings 9-10	Proverbs 1
2	2 Kings 11-12	Proverbs 2
3	2 Kings 13-14	Proverbs 3
4	Jonah 1-4	Proverbs 4
5	Amos 1-3	Proverbs 5
6	Amos 4-6	Proverbs 6
7	Amos 7-9	Proverbs 7
8	2 Chronicles 23-24	Proverbs 8
9	2 Chronicles 25-26	Proverbs 9
10	Isaiah 1-3	Proverbs 10:1-16
11	Isaiah 4-6	Proverbs 10:17-32
12	2 Chronicles 27-28	Proverbs 11:1-15
13	2 Kings 15-16	Proverbs 11:16-31
14	Isaiah 7-9	Proverbs 12:1-14
15	Isaiah 10-12	Proverbs 12:15-28
16	Isaiah 13-14	Proverbs 13:1-12
17	Isaiah 15-16	Proverbs 13:13-25
18	Isaiah 17-20	Proverbs 14:1-18
19	Isaiah 21-24	Proverbs 14:19-35
20	Isaiah 25-27	Proverbs 15:1-17
21	Isaiah 28-29	Proverbs 15:18-33
22	Isaiah 30-31	Proverbs 16:1-16
23	Isaiah 32-35	Proverbs 16:17-33
24	Isaiah 36-37	Proverbs 17:1-14
25	Isaiah 38-39	Proverbs 17:15-28