

Aim of lesson

To consider the prophecies in Isaiah which tell us of the coming kingdom.

Bible background

Isaiah 2:1-5; 11:1-12; 32:1-8 and 15-20; 35; 65:17-25.

Outline of lesson

This lesson is designed to encourage the class to look at the details of Isaiah's prophecies about the future age of God's kingdom on earth. The previous lesson considered prophecies which have almost all been fulfilled in the life and work of the Lord Jesus. This lesson is looking at prophecies which are yet to be fulfilled at his return.

The workbook

In considering each passage in the Bible Background section, the condition of the world as it is now and as it will be in the kingdom, should be contrasted. The words in the workbook which form this contrast can be noted by the class. The crosswords are formed from these words in such a way that the spaces on the two crosswords with the same number are filled by a pair of contrasting words as follows:

1 Across	Now	Then
2 Down	War	Peace
3 Across	Swords	Ploughshares
3 Down	Spears	Pruninghooks
4 Across	Destruction	Protection
5 Down	Blind	Seeing
6 Down	Uncleanness	Holiness
7 Across	Lame	Leaping
8 Across	Injustice	Justice
9 Down	Cruelty	Kindness
10 Down	Deaf	Hearing
11 Across	Desert	Water
12 Across	Feeble	Strong
13 Down	Weeping	Rejoicing

Today's problems

The class could think about the issues which are considered the world's greatest problems at the moment. Issues such as pollution, famine, oppression, injustice, war, greed and changes in climate could be included. The class could do a survey of friends or family during the week to see which issues rate as the most serious in the minds of people. As each of the five passages from Isaiah are considered by the class, the solution to each problem can be looked for. You may also like to refer to Revelation 11:18 in this context which refers to God.

Israel

Some reference to the place of a restored nation of Israel is made in the passages given. You may like to discuss this here, though it would be inappropriate to make it a major part of the lesson as the subject will recur in the lessons on Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In discussing Isaiah's prophecies about the restoration of Israel you may like to include Isaiah 27:2-6 since it refers again to the land as God's vineyard and speaks of Israel filling the world with fruit. As your class will probably have seen fruit from Israel, it is a good introduction to the nearness of the fulfilment of all other prophecies. As your class may not know of the ancient and recent history of Israel, you will have to tell them that Israel ceased to be a nation about one hundred years after the time of Isaiah and that for over 2,500 years there was no nation of Israel. The land was ruled by other distant nations. In 1948 the State of Israel was declared, and in 1967 the Jews again owned Jerusalem.

Digging deeper

The steadfast love of the Lord

By looking at some of the later chapters of Isaiah we can see God's unfailing love, even though we don't always want it.

The students can also discover that Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah were prophesying at the same time as Isaiah – and learn the names of these books in order.

Relevance to our lives

It would be a good idea for the class to consider the expression 'Thy kingdom come' in the Lord's prayer. When they pray for God's kingdom to come, what aspects do they think of particularly? You may like to have them each choose the three aspects of change which most appeal to them. Alternatively, you could consider the following: Often when we talk about praying for Jesus' return we are not aware that some people do not really want it, either through fear or wanting to do other things first. This might be an opportunity to discuss this with them and encourage them to be honest in their prayers, e.g. 'Please God help me to see that the world will be a better place when Jesus returns and help me to want this to happen.'

Prayer

The class could write a prayer based on the ideas from the section 'Relevance to our lives' which begins 'Thy kingdom come because then...'

Other suggestions for activities

- The class could continue their newspaper of the time of Isaiah. They could include articles on Isaiah's statements about the future and the people's reactions to them.
- The class could design a questionnaire to ask others about which changes they would like to see in the future age.
- Isaiah 25:1-5 is a lovely poem of praise. The class could decide to read it at the end of Sunday School and choose a hymn or song with similar sentiments.