EBS11 Isa 60-62

**Lesson 11: Isaiah 60-62**

**New Jerusalem**

**Objectives:**

1. Students will understand the dream God had for the new Jerusalem.
2. Students will understand the theology behind the new Jerusalem.
3. Students will reflect on the implications of the new Jerusalem on their own lives.

**Preparation:**

1. Review the larger issues at work in Isa 56-66.
2. Read Isa 60-62 several times at one sitting keeping in mind that the three chapters describe the new Jerusalem.
3. Plan the lesson to keep the focus on the larger issue of the new Jerusalem and not the detailed description of particular aspects of the new Jerusalem which may be beyond our comprehension.

**Theme:** The God high and holy sends a preacher.

**Background:**

1. The book of Isaiah as a whole takes up several core theological issues:
   1. God’s word is sure.
   2. God brings salvation to his people in Jerusalem.
   3. God is able to deliver what he promises.
   4. God cares enough about Jerusalem to keep his promises.
2. The book of Isaiah is a multi-century look at those core theological issues:
   1. God shows how oppression threatens God’s plans for Jerusalem in the 8th century—Isa 1-12.
   2. God shows how other nations threaten God’s plans for Jerusalem in all centuries—Isa 13-23.
   3. God shows how the Assyrian threat in the late 8th century BC threatens Jerusalem—Isa 24-39.
   4. God deals with how the reluctance of the exiles to return threatens his plans to restore Jerusalem—Isa 40-55.
   5. Although injustice and idolatry in post-exilic Jerusalem threaten God’s plans, God remains steadfast in his intent to deliver of Jerusalem—Isa 56-66.
3. So far in Isa 56-66 God has:
   1. Set up righteousness and justice as the standard for post-exilic Jerusalem—Isa 56:1-2.
   2. Shown how his people are no longer the physical descendants of Abraham, but the spiritual descendants even to the point of including the faithful eunuch and foreigner—Isa 56:3-8.
   3. In response to God’s plan:
      1. The leaders disappoint God—Isa 56:9-57:2.
      2. The people turn to idolatry—Isa 57:3-13.
      3. The people resort to oppression—Isa 58:1-14.
   4. The situation calls for spiritual reflection about God’s response to human sin—Isa 57:14-21; 59:1-21.
      1. God is high and holy yet dwells among the contrite and humble.
      2. God is angry at sin but will restore the backsliders.
      3. God can forgive all sin but the people do not seek forgiveness.
      4. God meets such resistance that he comes as a warrior meeting the enemy.
4. In the remaining section of Isaiah (60-66) God renews his vision for his community.
   1. The vision at first takes on a this worldly, here and now Jerusalem, as if God were saying “this is how it can be right now if you will turn to me and let me provide for you.”
   2. Yet the resistance of the people—chronicled from Isa 1-66—pushes God away, but God is not deterred but insists that he will create the new Jerusalem, some day and some place.
   3. The new Jerusalem is pushed beyond Isaiah’s time, beyond the days of the Old Testament, and in light of New Testament interpretation of these themes, human resistance throughout history finally pushes the new Jerusalem into a time beyond time, although it is clear that there are moments when God creates a new earth and a new Jerusalem on this side of the eschaton.
5. Isa 60-62 provides a detailed look at the new Jerusalem including details of all God has planned. The look unfolds in three different ways:
   1. Isa 60:1-22—The new Jerusalem: international issues.
   2. Isa 61:1-9—The new Jerusalem: personal issues.
   3. Isa 61:10-62:12—The new Jerusalem: theological issues.

**Learning Experiences:**

1. Isa 60:1-22—The new Jerusalem: international issues.
   1. This chapter gathers up themes from throughout the book of Isaiah.
      1. God claims sovereignty over all the nations (see Isa 13-23).
      2. Sometimes those nations work on God’s behalf (Isa 10:5) even though they abuse the opportunities God gives them (Isa 47:6).
      3. Israel’s experience with the nations has been treacherous and has included invasion and exile.
      4. Now God shows his sovereignty by using the nations to build the new Jerusalem.
   2. This chapter emphasizes what will happen if the people turn to God.
      1. Isa 2, 4, 11 and shorter passages throughout the book promise wonderful experiences for an obedient Jerusalem.
      2. In a sense Isa 60 is a detailed commentary on Isa 2:1-4.
   3. This chapter is repetitive for a purpose. God through the repetition stresses the extravagance, the abundance, the delight of what he is willing to provide. However, the repetitive poetry is hard to follow. Consider these interpretative clues.
      1. In the RSV of Isa 60 the second person pronouns (you, yours) appear 57 times. Highlight each occurrence. God speaks to Zion (mentioned only in Isa 60:14). Zion refers to the vision God has for his people and city. Substitute Zion (with that meaning) each time the pronoun appears.
      2. There are 29 references to the nations with 7 nations mentioned by name. Highlight each occurrence and make a list of the named nations. Consult a Bible dictionary for specific information about those nations. The point is that the envisioned Zion will be built by all these nations. If God’s people are obedient, the entire world will come to Jerusalem to bring what they have in order to bask in the light of God’s blessings with Israel.
      3. There are at least 31 references to items being brought to Jerusalem. List them. Consult a Bible dictionary about specific items of interest to the class. The point is that all available resources will be used to build God’s envisioned Zion.
         1. The items include physical resources such as precious metals and valuable livestock.
         2. The items include people. Sons of kings who oppressed Israel will travel to Jerusalem to serve the city. Sons of Israel exiled into distant spots will arrive home to participate.
         3. God and his glory will cover Jerusalem. Glory is the OT way of speaking of God’s visible presence.
         4. The items also include the otherworldly aspects of the new Jerusalem. Repeatedly it will be a place where God provides the light. In a world without electricity, this was a remarkable statement showing the dependence of the new Jerusalem on God, but also God’s unrestricted blessing on the new city.
         5. As a result the city will experience the most valuable of items including peace, righteousness, salvation and praise.
   4. The new Jerusalem is not the result of human work (although God will use humans from every nation in the work), but it is from God: “I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it” (Isa 60:22).
2. Isa 61:1-9—The new Jerusalem: personal issues.
   1. Isa 60 spoke in corporate terms of the nations serving Zion while Isa 61 speaks in personal terms of the anointed one addressing individuals. However, the story is the same. God envisions a new Jerusalem for an obedient people.
      1. The anointed one speaks in Isa 61:1-7.
         1. The book of Isaiah cites three images for a person who represents God in a faithful way during the time period being discussed:
            1. The messianic king is mentioned in Isa 1-12.
            2. The servant teacher highlights Isa 40-55.
            3. The anointed preacher plays a role in Isa 56-66.
         2. The specific person Isaiah has in mind is never named, likely because his identity was not important to the theological message and that God would raise up a series of people who represent him in a faithful way.
         3. Ultimately the one who perfectly fills the expectations of these roles is Jesus.
            1. Jesus is the ultimate messianic king.
            2. Jesus is the perfect servant.
            3. Jesus cites this passage as being his program for ministry and his work as its ultimate fulfillment—Luke 4:18f.
      2. God speaks in Isa 61:8-9.
      3. The anointed one will continue speaking about the theological issues in new Jerusalem in Isa 61:10-62:12.
   2. The mission:
      1. In response to God’s desire to change the hearts of the people by sending his spirit (Isa 59:21), now God anoints this spirit with a mission to the people—Isa 61:1.
      2. The mission is personal and includes:
         1. Preaching good tidings to the afflicted—v1.
            1. Good tidings have been mentioned previously in Isa 40:9; 52:7.
            2. The theme of Isa 56-66 is justice and righteousness. The full implementation of a society of that nature would be good news to the most vulnerable in the community.
         2. Binding up the brokenhearted—v 1.
         3. Proclaiming liberty to the captives—v 1.
            1. Wars produced captives who were either imprisoned or moved far away from their homes.
            2. Cyrus permitted those in captivity to return home.
         4. Opening of the prison to those who are bound—v 1.
            1. Although contemporary prisons are for law breakers, ancient prisons tended to hold debtors and those in political disfavor.
            2. Kings in the ancient Near East often began their reign by releasing the debtors and politically oppressed to give the beginning of their reign a sense of a new start.
         5. Proclaiming the year of God’s favor—v 2.
            1. This reference is likely to Lev 25 and the Year of Jubilee when debts were forgiven.
            2. The economic system of ancient Israel was built on opportunities to begin again (Deut 15; Lev 25). Their economic system was substantially different than the free enterprise system in current use.
         6. Announcing the vengeance of God—v 2.
            1. God’s vengeance is discussed at length in Isaiah including Isa 13-27 and especially Isa 34-35.
            2. See the “additional study sections” of previous lessons.
         7. Comforting those who mourn—v 2.
         8. Giving out garlands instead of ashes—v 3.
         9. Giving out the oil of gladness—v 3.
         10. Giving out praise to the faint—v 3.
         11. Transforming the afflicted and brokenhearted into oaks of righteousness—v 3.
             1. Isaiah may refer to the removal of the thong and yoke of Isa 58.
             2. Those who were treated as the lowest quality twigs and sticks and were kept in their poverty by those in power would be released and grow to their full oak-like potential.
         12. Insuring that the planting of God grows—v 3. See additional study below for this metaphor.
   3. Isa 61:4-7—The result of the anointed one’s mission will be the exact scenario anticipated in Isa 60:
      1. The ancient ruins will be rebuilt—Isa 49:16f; 51:3; 52:9; 54:1f; 60:10; 61:4.
      2. Foreigners will provide needed services—Isa 60:10, 16; 61:5.
      3. The formerly oppressed will be priests and ministers—Ex 19:6; Isa 61:6.
      4. Jerusalem will be filled with the wealth of the nations—Isa 60:10, 16; 61:6.
      5. The passage anticipates the theological explanation to come (in Isa 62) when there will be transformation in the community.
         1. Double portion instead of shame—Deut 21:7; Isa 61:7.
         2. Rejoicing instead of dishonor—Isa 61:7.
         3. Ownership of the land instead of exile—Isa 61:7.
         4. Joy instead of broken heartedness—Isa 61:7.
   4. The new Jerusalem will
      1. Have an international dimension—Isa 60.
      2. Have a personal dimension—Isa 61.
      3. Have a theological explanation—Isa 61:8-62: 12.
3. Isa 61:10-62:12—the new Jerusalem: theological issues.
   1. There are two voices which explain the new Jerusalem theologically:
      1. God speaks in Isa 61:8-9.
      2. The anointed one speaks in Isa 61:10-62:12.
   2. God speaks in Isa 61:8-9. He presents the theological aspects of his dream for the new Jerusalem.
      1. It is to be a place of justice where each person shares in the good of life. See Isa 58 for the opposite kind of community.
      2. It is to be a place where God’s faithfulness lasts forever. God desires a permanent new Jerusalem.
      3. It is to be a place that the entire world will know about and where everybody will want to live. When God blesses a faithful people there is no better reward.
   3. The anointed one speaks in Isa 61:10-62:12. He uses three dominant images
      1. Wedding—Isa 61:10-62:5.
         1. The anointed one compares the theological implications of the new Jerusalem to a formerly forsaken woman who now dresses for her wedding. God has married Jerusalem and her days of rejection are past.
         2. The wedding dress represents salvation (the theological reality that the new Jerusalem depends on God) and righteousness (the theological reality that God and Jerusalem are in a mutually beneficial relationship).
         3. The bride’s crown refers to God’s hand in the city of Jerusalem.
         4. The clothing imagery appeared in Isa 59 where God dressed as a warrior to attack Jerusalem’s indifference.
         5. The Hebrew root for righteousness (Isa 61:10, 11) and vindication (Isa 62:1) is the same as the word used to describe the theme of Isa 56-66 in Isa 56:1.
         6. The anointed one takes several actions to explain the theological implications of the new Jerusalem:
            1. Rejoices—Isa 61:10.
            2. Prays for Zion—Isa 62:1.
         7. Using the wedding image, Jerusalem has a new name (Isa 62:2, 4, 12) and new status (Isa 62:3, 5).
         8. The theological point of the wedding metaphor is to underline God’s willingness to take the city back and to raise it to new heights.
      2. Watchman—Isa 62:5-9.
         1. The anointed one compares the theological implications of the new Jerusalem to a watchman on the wall. Such figures warned of invading armies, but also announced good tidings (Isa 52:5-12). Here the watchman reminds the entire community of God’s promise and announces the deliverance to come.
         2. The watchman is diligent day and night just as God can be depended upon to deliver the city.
         3. The watchman reminds God to keep his promise and when God hears the call from faithful Jerusalem he will respond.
         4. In response to the anointed one speaking as a watchman, God responds with a speech in vv 8-9 built around food and wine. In the past God took away their food and wine as discipline, but he promises never to make such a decision again. God swears an oath to that effect.
         5. The theological point of the watchman metaphor is to underline God’s role in and his complete commitment to the new Jerusalem.
      3. Reward—Isa 62:10-12.
         1. Isa 62:10-12 indicates that the new Jerusalem will be the reward of God’s visit to the earth.
         2. Isa 62:10 draws on the image of Isa 40:3; 57:14 to call for advance preparations in light of God’s arrival.
         3. Isa 62:11 draws on Isa 42:9; 43:12; 44:8; 45:21 and repeats the words of Isa 40:11b to announce to the entire world what God is about to do. God’s interest in all humankind is rooted in creation (blessing all people in Gen 1:28), the call of Abram (Gen 12:1-3), the exodus (Ex 19:6) and the work of the servant (Isa 42:6; 49:6) and comes to splendid execution in the commission of Jesus (Matt 28:18-20).
         4. Isa 62:12 seems to drop all images and uses direct theological language.
            1. The new Jerusalem will be filled with God’s holy people.
            2. The new Jerusalem will be redeemed from its sin and oppression and exiles.
            3. The new Jerusalem will be given a hitherto unused name of “Sought out” to verify that the city is no longer forsaken (Isa 62:4).
         5. Isa 62:10-12 is filled with quotations from Isa 40-55.

**Continuities:**

1. How would the various groups in post-exilic Jerusalem have heard the lofty promises of Isa 60-62? How would the eunuch and foreigner of Isa 56 heard them? What would the leaders of Isa 56 say? How would the idol worshippers of Isa 57 respond? What would be the response of the oppressors in Isa 58? How would their response differ from the poor and homeless in Isa 58?
2. Identify different groups of people in contemporary society. How do they respond to the new Jerusalem of Isa 60-62? How would the approximately 425,000 American children in foster care respond? How would the 27 million people who are currently in slavery in today’s world respond to Isaiah’s dream? There are about 10 million people worldwide who have the equivalent of at least one million dollars in assets. How would they respond to Isaiah’s dream? Name another group of people and anticipate their response.
3. How do you evaluate the different responses to Isaiah’s picture of the new Jerusalem? Would the people in your city welcome the new Jerusalem if God announced that he would create such a community? What would be your congregation’s response?
4. Who are the afflicted, brokenhearted, imprisoned, grief-filled people in your community? What kind of good news do they seek? If you asked those people who could help the vulnerable achieve this good news, who would they list?

**Assignment: Read Isa 63-64.**

**Additional Study:**

1. The illustration of Jerusalem being God’s planting or vineyard (Isa 60:21) has a long history in the book of Isaiah. Note these appearances:
   1. Isa 5:1-7—What more could God have done to make the vineyard produce good?
   2. Isa 27:2-6—God will never desert the vineyard.
   3. Isa 60:21—God commits himself to a new planting which will be righteous.
   4. Isa 63:1-6—God is covered with the red stain from trampling the world’s unjust vineyards.
   5. Isa 65:8, 21-23—the coming perfect vineyard.
2. God’s dream for the new Jerusalem can be summarized in one word: blessing.
   1. Blessing is often ill-defined and misused by contemporary Christians who reduce it to good health or intact family or material affluence. Although those items play a role, blessing indicates God’s value of human life and his desire to be in solidarity with us. Blessing comes from God, but is passed on from one human to another. Young people especially need to hear from people in authority that they are valuable and worthwhile.
   2. Blessing appears many times in the Bible from Gen 1 to Rev 22. Consider reading the entry on blessing in a good Bible dictionary or encyclopedia.
   3. To stress the biblical importance of this often overlooked theological term, consider how often the various forms of blessing appear in Scripture: Gen. 1:22, 28; 2:3; 5:2; 9:1, 26; 12:2f; 14:19f; 17:16, 20; 18:18; 22:17f; 24:1, 27, 31, 35, 48, 60; 25:11; 26:3f, 12, 24, 29; 27:4, 7, 10, 12, 19, 23, 25, 27, 29ff, 33ff, 38, 41; 28:1, 3f, 6, 14; 30:27, 30; 31:55; 32:26, 29; 35:9; 39:5; 47:7, 10; 48:3, 9, 15f, 20; 49:25f, 28; Exod. 12:32; 18:10; 20:11, 24; 23:25; 32:29; 39:43; Lev. 9:22f; 25:21; Num. 6:23f, 27; 22:6, 12; 23:11, 20, 25; 24:1, 9f; Deut. 1:11; 2:7; 7:13f; 8:10; 10:8; 11:26f, 29; 12:7, 15; 14:24, 29; 15:4, 6, 10, 14, 18; 16:10, 15, 17; 21:5; 23:5, 20; 24:13, 19; 26:15; 27:12; 28:2ff, 8, 12; 29:19; 30:1, 16, 19; 33:1, 11, 13, 20, 23f; Jos. 8:33f; 14:13; 17:14; 22:6f, 33; 24:10; Jdg. 5:2, 9, 24; 13:24; 17:2; Ruth 2:4, 19f; 3:10; 4:14; 1 Sam. 2:20; 9:13; 15:13; 23:21; 25:32f, 39; 26:25; 2 Sam. 2:5; 6:11f, 18, 20; 7:29; 13:25; 14:22; 18:28; 19:39; 21:3; 22:47; 1 Ki. 1:48; 2:45; 5:7; 8:14f, 55f, 66; 10:9; 1 Chr. 4:10; 13:14; 16:2, 36, 43; 17:27; 23:13; 26:5; 29:10, 20; 2 Chr. 2:12; 6:3f; 9:8; 20:26; 30:27; 31:8, 10; Ezr. 7:27; Neh. 8:6; 9:5; 11:2; 13:2; Job 1:10, 21; 29:11, 13; 31:20; 42:12; Ps. 1:1; 2:12; 3:8; 5:12; 16:7; 18:46; 21:3, 6; 24:5; 26:12; 28:6, 9; 29:11; 31:21; 32:1f; 33:12; 34:1; 37:22, 26; 40:4; 41:1f, 13; 45:2; 62:4; 63:4; 65:4, 10; 66:8, 20; 67:1, 6f; 68:19, 26, 35; 72:15, 17ff; 84:4f, 12; 89:15, 52; 94:12; 96:2; 100:4; 103:1f, 20ff; 104:1, 35; 106:3, 48; 107:38; 109:17, 28; 112:1f; 113:2; 115:12f, 15, 18; 118:26; 119:1f, 12, 56; 124:6; 128:1, 4f; 129:8; 132:15; 133:3; 134:1ff; 135:19ff; 144:1, 15; 145:1f, 10, 21; 147:13; Prov. 3:33; 5:18; 10:6f, 22; 11:11, 26; 20:7, 21; 22:9; 24:25; 27:14; 28:14, 20; 29:18; 30:11; 31:28; Isa. 19:24f; 30:18; 44:3; 51:2; 56:2; 61:9; 65:8, 16, 23; 66:3; Jer. 4:2; 17:7; 20:14; 31:23; Ezek. 34:26; 37:26; 44:30; Dan. 2:19f; 3:28; 4:34; 12:12; Joel 2:14; Hag. 2:19; Zech. 8:13; 11:5; Mal. 2:2; 3:10, 12, 15; Matt. 5:3ff; 11:6; 13:16; 14:19; 16:17; 21:9; 23:39; 24:46; 25:34; 26:26; Mk. 6:41; 8:7; 10:16; 11:9f; 14:22, 61; Lk. 1:42, 45, 48, 64, 68; 2:28, 34; 6:20ff, 28; 7:23; 9:16; 10:23; 11:27f; 12:37f, 43; 13:35; 14:14f; 19:38; 23:29; 24:30, 50f, 53; Jn. 12:13; 13:17; 20:29; Acts 3:25f; 13:34; 20:35; Rom. 1:25; 4:6ff; 9:5; 12:14; 15:27, 29; 1 Co. 4:12; 9:23; 10:16; 14:16; 2 Co. 1:3, 11; 9:8; 11:31; Gal. 3:8f, 14; Eph. 1:3; 1 Tim. 1:11; 6:15; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 6:7, 14; 7:1, 6f; 11:20f; 12:17; Jas. 1:12, 25; 3:9f; 1 Pet. 1:3; 3:9, 14; 4:14; Rev. 1:3; 5:12f; 7:12; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14.
   4. See the chapters on blessing in Harold Shank, *Listening to His Heartbeat—What the Bible Says About the Heart of God.* Joplin, Mo: College Press, 2009; or *Children Mean the World to God.* Nashville: 21st Century Christian, 2001.
3. Make a study of God’s glory.
   1. Isa 60:1 Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
   2. God’s glory is majestic: Ex 24:17; 33:22; Num 14:10; 1 Kings 8:11; Ezek 1:28; Isa 4:5; Hab 2:14.
   3. Only God is glorious: Isa 24:33; 40:5; 42:8; 48:11; 58:8; 59:19
   4. Glory belongs to God alone: Isa 2:10.
   5. God shares his glory with his people: Isa 11:10; 43:7.
   6. God does not share his glory with idols: Isa 42:8; 48:11.