



**DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS**  
**25 & 26 SEPTEMBER 2021**  
**ISAIAH 40**

The main study guide material for the sermon series “Seeing the Light through Isaiah”, is to be purchased at <https://www.ivpress.com/isaiah-40-66-ebook>

The material in this document is intentionally brief. It is intended as a supplement only.

- **Begin by reading the Scripture passage together.**
- **Review the video of the sermon if needed (see <http://www.brmc.org.sg/category/resources/sermons>).**
- **Refer to the [main study guide](#) *Chapter 1* as well as this supplementary material.**
- **Feel free to discuss as few or as many questions as best fits your group’s current context and present stage in life.**
- **Remember to budget some time (15-20 min) to pray with and for one another, before ending your group session.**

## Sidebox: Israel's monarchy and impending exile

### Act 1: instead of acknowledging God as King, the people clamoured for a human king...

In the [sermon titled "Of Judges and Judging"](#), we heard of how *"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."* (Judges 21:25) In the time of the judges, God's people yearned to be like their neighbours (1 Sam. 8:9-10) by having a strong military king, rather than turning to the LORD as their God and true King. 1 and 2 Samuel tell of God's grace and provision in establishing Israel's monarchy. King Saul was a strong and popular leader, but his pride and unrepentant heart caused God to reject Saul and his line (1 Sam. 13, 15). God instead chose an unlikely shepherd (1 Sam. 16). King David's reign was characterised by faith and humility before the LORD, great military successes, but also great sin (murder, adultery, and doubting God – 2 Sam. 11, 24). However, unlike Saul, David's repentance, humility and persevering faith in God reflected a heart after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). God's mercy towards sinful humanity is reflected in his promise of establishing David's house and kingdom forever (2 Sam. 7:16).

### Act 2: ...but these human kings mostly led God's people away from Him...

Israel's subsequent story of her kings reads as a disturbing echo of the downward spiraling cycles of Judges. After the height of peace and prosperity of king Solomon, the kingdom itself was torn in two (Judah in the south, and Israel in the north) due to idolatry, injustice, pride and rebellion. The northern kings were marked by their rejection of the LORD, practicing evil and turning to the pagan gods of Israel's neighbours. God's judgment in the form of military defeat and exiled captivity by Assyria was eventually meted on Israel because of her continued rejection of God. Judah's cycle of kings was chequered; a few (e.g. Uzziah, Hezekiah) doing right like their ancestor David, with most others rejecting the LORD like Israel's kings.

### Act 3: ... and the people's disobedience led to Exile, under foreign kings.

The prophet Isaiah spoke out in Judah during the period before Israel's defeat by the Assyrians. God reveals to Isaiah his impending judgement on Israel and Judah at the hands of Assyria and Babylon, as well as a final judgement on all the nations (i.e. tribes, peoples, kingdoms who are not in covenant relationship with God). In the middle of the pronouncements of judgement against Israel (ch. 1-12) and the nations (ch. 13-27) are proclamations of light, hope and restoration through the future Davidic King and Messiah (7:10-17, 9:1-7, ch. 11). Despite Jerusalem's successful resistance against the Assyrians, Isaiah prophesied Judah's subsequent exile in Babylon (ch. 39). Isaiah's prophecies of judgement did come to pass (2 Chronicles 36, Jeremiah 37-39), leaving God's people exiled and yearning for the LORD's promised restoration.

### Act 4: Yet, God the True King promises a restoration and return from Exile

Isaiah chapter 40 speaks of comfort and of good tidings. The incomparable LORD, the Creator of the universe, will renew His people. Isaiah goes on to acclaim the LORD as King and Redeemer (44:6), and proclaims that the kings of the world will come and worship (ch.60).

## Response and application

- 1) Consider 40:12-31, especially verses 15 & 25. How does Isaiah's declaration of the LORD's incomparable divine nature bring us comfort in the midst of seemingly hopeless times today?

- 2) Consider 40:10-11. Do we see God's light and hope in his Son Jesus Christ? Isaiah envisions God coming with "power and a mighty arm" yet carrying his people "gently, close to his heart". Share about a time when you have experienced God's power through His gentleness?

### **Prayer suggestions**

- 3) Are there any people in your life (family, friends, colleagues, church community) who are in need of comfort and hope? Will you pray that God would open your eyes to their need? Will you pray that God might use you even in a small way to tell of the incomparable hope and good news of Christ in their lives?
  
- 4) Are there areas of life you've placed your hope and worth in (career, money, lifestyle, even vaccinations), instead of hope in our incomparable LORD? Is God prompting you to surrender these idols at the cross of Jesus, and turn towards the light and hope of Christ?