



DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SMALL GROUPS
9 & 10 OCTOBER 2021
ISAIAH 45

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.brnc.org.sg/category/resources/sermons>).**
- **Refer to the [main study guide](#) **Chapter 4** 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 and Egypt

Isaiah 45:14 depicts the image of foreign nations Egypt, Cush and the Sabeans bowing to the God of Israel and acknowledging his holiness. One of the key themes of Isaiah is that of God's holiness and how He judges the foreign nations in their evilness for falling short of God's holiness. As God's chosen covenant people, Israel was supposed to reflect his holiness and be the vessel through whom the nations of the world receive God's blessings (Genesis 12:1-3). Israel was called to be God's witnesses to the nations (Isaiah 43:10).

However, during the time that Isaiah 1-39 was written, the southern kingdom of Judah had gone into an alliance with Egypt. Instead of relying on God for protection from the invading Assyrians, Judah relied on a foreign nation for protection and security. Hence, in Isaiah 31:1, God issues his judgement against Israel for relying on Egypt, saying,

'Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help,
who rely on horses,
who trust in the multitude of their chariots
and in the great strength of their horsemen,
but do not look to the Holy One of Israel,
or seek help from the Lord.'

Conversely, in Isaiah 31:6, God calls Judah to, 'Return, you Israelites, to the One you have so greatly revolted against.' Hence, when Isaiah addresses Judah's future in Isaiah 40-66, he calls them to return to God after they have endured years of suffering during their exile in Babylon. God promises not only to strengthen Israel, but also that all nations and peoples of the world will know that He is God. (Isaiah 45:14-15)

Amidst the uncertainties and anxieties of COVID-19, do we turn to our own idols for our protection and comfort? Or do we turn to God and look to Him, trusting that He will provide guidance and assurance, amidst the uncertainties of the pandemic? How can we reflect God's goodness and holiness to the people around us who also need His love and comfort?

Response, Application, Prayer

1. In Isaiah 45:9-13, God's people "quarrel with their Maker", questioning His methods and plan as they suffer during the exile. Have you ever experienced suffering that made you question God's will in your life? How should we bring our suffering to God?

2. Isaiah 45:22 calls on the whole world to turn to God and to receive salvation. What part do we play in bringing forth God's salvation to the ends of the world? How can we be a light to the people around us and encourage them to turn to God, particularly as we continue to live with the effects of the pandemic?

3. Prayer Suggestions

- a. Pray that we would look to God as our source of comfort in our times of need. Is anyone among you struggling mentally, emotionally or physically? Pray for one another, that we may turn to God who will strengthen in our time of need (v5).
- b. Pray for the faith and continued faithfulness of your fellow small group members. Would you be vulnerable in sharing your struggles with, and supporting, each other, that you would all be united with Christ at His return?
- c. The culmination of God's salvation is that "all the ends of the earth" will be saved to worship Him. Pray that the gospel will continue to go forth even amidst the ongoing pandemic.