



## **Bible Study will focus on Isaiah, Esther and Psalms**

**Dr. Bob Ferrett**, who has been teaching Bible Study for about 11 years, is focusing on the Book of Isaiah through March and April, and then will turn his attention to the Book of Esther and Psalms.

The current series of Bible Study classes started with several sessions on the books of Genesis and Tobit.

“At the end of our Bible Study for 2016-17, I gave our group a list of books of the Bible we hadn't studied for a couple of years and asked them indicate what they would like for us to study for 2017-18,” he said. “As a result, we have spent seven sessions on Genesis, two sessions on Tobit, and we are now spending 12 sessions on the chapters of the Book of Isaiah. In May we will give two sessions to the Book of Esther, and four classes on Psalms.”

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, Catholics began to embrace the idea of Bible Study, and Catholic leaders say it plays an important role in enriching their faith.

“Until the twentieth Century, it was only Protestants who actively embraced Scripture study,” says **Msgr. Daniel Kutys** in an article for the **U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops**. “That changed after 1943 when **Pope Pius XII** issued the encyclical ‘Divino Afflante Spiritu. ‘This not only allowed Catholics to study Scripture, it encouraged them to do so. And with Catholics studying Scripture and teaching other Catholics about what they were studying, familiarity with Scripture grew.”

Dr. Ferrett described **Tobit** as “one of the most delightful books of Hebrew Scripture. The book is a religious novel characterized as a Hebrew Romance and is a captivating narrative.”

**Isaiah**, the focus of study until about mid-April, covers 66 chapters in three parts, and is one of the longest books in the Old Testament.

In **First Isaiah** (Chapters 1-39), the prophet “condemned the social, political and economic system of the kingdom of Judah because it created a two-tiered society made up of the very rich and very poor,” Dr. Ferret says in a handout.

He describes **Second Isaiah** (Chapters 40-55) as “the product of an anonymous prophet whose ministry took place about 150 years after First Isaiah. He is writing to his fellow exiles in Babylon.”

The rise of King Cyrus of Persia convinced the prophet that the Babylonian Exile was about to end.

“The prophet’s exquisite poems helped the exiles to make sense of the disaster they experienced and to see there was a future beyond judgment,” Dr. Ferrett says.

**Third Isaiah** (Chapters 56-66) presupposes that the Jewish community returned to Judea after the Babylonian Exile. Its poems express disillusionment that the hopes expressed in Second Isaiah didn’t materialize.

“Despite the disappointment, the poems of chapters 56-66 expect a full and glorious restoration for Judah,” Dr. Ferrett says in a handout.

Classes are held on Thursdays from 2-3:30 p.m. in the Spirituality Room at the St. Catherine of Alexandria Ministry Center. Dr. Ferrett has developed PowerPoint presentations for each book of the Bible, and said that about 10-15 people usually attend each session.

When study of Isaiah concludes April 19, 2018 participants will focus on **Esther** April 26 and May 3, and then on **Psalms** through the end of May. No class will be held on March 29.

If you have any questions, call Dr. Ferrett at 951-697-7733.

To learn more about Isaiah, check out this short YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpPGiZBwyEs>

To read Msgr. Kutys’s article, visit:

<http://usccb.org/bible/understanding-the-bible/study-materials/articles/changes-in-catholic-attitudes-toward-bible-readings.cfm>