

God Reveals Himself to Isaiah

Summary and Goal

The prophet Isaiah had a vision of God high and lifted up—holy and glorious in His temple. In light of God’s piercing holiness, Isaiah received a proper vision of his own sin and unworthiness. But God, in His grace, restored Isaiah to service and gave the prophet a message for the people. Like Isaiah, we too are undone by the vision of God’s glory, but through His grace, God deals with our sin and then commissions us to deliver His message of love to the world.

Main Passage

Isaiah 6:1-8

Session Outline

1. We see the living God as holy and glorious (Isa. 6:1-4).
2. We see ourselves as sinful and unworthy (Isa. 6:5).
3. We receive God’s grace and a mission (Isa. 6:6-8).

Theological Theme

God is holy and glorious beyond compare.

Christ Connection

Isaiah had a vision of a throne room with a divine King. Jesus later claimed that Isaiah had seen His glory and thus the prophet’s words were about Him (John 12:32,41). Like Isaiah, when we see ourselves in light of God’s holiness, we recognize our sinful state and need for salvation.

Missional Application

God calls us to live in light of our salvation by willingly delivering His message to the world, no matter how unpopular it may be.

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Introduction Option

Form three groups to identify the similarities and differences between one set of the following pairs (have physical examples available for the groups):

- A book/an audiobook
- Bag of flour/loaf of bread
- Apples/applesauce

After a moment, ask the groups to then discuss the similarities and differences between humanity made in God's image and God Himself. Allow a couple of minutes for this discussion; then invite groups to share their conclusions. Record these on a board or large sheet of paper for all to see, and refer to them as possible throughout this session on God's holiness—His distinction from humanity.

Point 1 Option

Ask groups of 3-4 to take a minute and compile a list of prominent positions in our culture and the places associated with them (ex. the president in the Oval Office).

Then have the groups contrast the positions/ places on their lists with the revelation of the Lord on His throne in Isaiah 6:1-4. After a couple of moments, allow groups to share one example from their list and how it contrasts with the Lord's revelation of Himself.

Introduction

Begin by pointing out how holiness is not only a difficult concept to grasp but also to put into practice (leader p. 46; personal study guide [PSG] p. 37).

- ❓ What comes to mind when you think of the word *holy*?
- ❓ Why do you think God is so serious about His holiness?

Then summarize the session (leader p. 46; PSG p. 37).

1. We see the living God as holy and glorious (Isa. 6:1-4).

Use **Pack Item 10: The Divided Kingdom** and the leader content to set Isaiah's vision of God in its historical context—the death of King Uzziah (leader p. 47). Then ask a volunteer to read Isaiah 6:1-4. *Ask group members to pair up and answer the questions in the table in the PSG. After a couple of moments, call for some responses for the whole group* (leader p. 47; PSG p. 38).

Emphasize that repeating the word “holy” three times expresses the great difference between God and His creation. Call attention to the awesome and terrifying nature of God's self-revelation (leader p. 48; PSG pp. 38-39).

- ❓ What does this vision of the Lord convey about the nature of God?
- ❓ What have you witnessed that reflects the power, majesty, beauty, and transcendence of God?

Impress upon the group how culture can distract us from seeing God's glory and holiness. We need a vision of His terrifying goodness so we are led to ruin and redemption (leader pp. 48-49; PSG pp. 39-40).

Make the connection between the Lord's glory in this passage and Jesus using

Pack Item 3: Seeing Jesus in the Divided Kingdom.

- ❓ Why do you suppose that we as a society lack awe and wonder?

2. We see ourselves as sinful and unworthy (Isa. 6:5).

Read Isaiah 6:5. Explain the reason for Isaiah’s reverent terror—an understanding we should all have in light of our sin (leader pp. 49-50; PSG p. 40).

- ❓ What is the difference between keeping a list of moral rules and being conformed to the character of Christ?
- ❓ What is the difference between asking for forgiveness of certain things we have done wrong and recognizing our utter ruin before the goodness of God?

Articulate how the difference between rule-keeping and being conformed to the character of Christ is foreign to the broader culture (leader p. 50). Tell how Isaiah’s vision prepares us for the gospel (leader p. 51; PSG p. 41).

- ❓ If a person has difficulty accepting the doctrine of sin, how would that difficulty affect the person’s reading of Isaiah’s vision?

3. We receive God’s grace and a mission (Isa. 6:6-8).

Read Isaiah 6:6-8. Emphasize the truth that Isaiah’s atonement was an act of sheer grace, not the result of a negotiation (leader pp. 51-52; PSG p. 42).

- ❓ Why is it important to note that our confession of sin is not a bargaining tool with God?
- ❓ What purpose does the confession of sin serve in relationship to our salvation in God?

Connect Isaiah’s powerful experience with the living God with our own necessary experience with God. Though not the same *type* of experience, we should have the same desire to serve the holy God (leader pp. 52-53; PSG p. 43).

- ❓ What is the relationship between Isaiah’s experience of forgiveness and his willingness to volunteer to be God’s messenger?

Conclusion

Instruct your group to spend the week reflecting on God’s holiness in light of our sinfulness, but not to stop there. We must take that knowledge all the way to the cross, where holiness and love meet (leader p. 53; PSG p. 44). *Apply the truths of this session with “His Mission, Your Mission” (PSG p. 45).*

Pass out cards from Pack Item 5: God Is Holy to help group members recall the nature of our God and how we should live in light of His holiness.

❓ For Further Discussion

Considering the storyline of the Bible that we’ve covered so far, how would you explain what it means to fear the Lord?

How can we rest in the grace of God while simultaneously fearing Him?

Conclusion Option

Consider concluding this session by singing the hymn “Holy, Holy, Holy” together as a group.

(A printable PDF of this hymn is available on the DVD in *The Gospel Project for Adults: Leader Pack*. Make as many copies as needed.)

Christ Connection: Isaiah had a vision of a throne room with a divine King. Jesus later claimed that Isaiah had seen His glory and thus the prophet’s words were about Him (John 12:32,41). Like Isaiah, when we see ourselves in light of God’s holiness, we recognize our sinful state and need for salvation.

Missional Application: God calls us to live in light of our salvation by willingly delivering His message to the world, no matter how unpopular it may be.

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Voices from the Church

“Our God is a consuming fire. He is satisfied only when His love totally consumes us...We should not resent the fact that God wants to guard our relationship with Him. It should bring us comfort.”¹



—Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby

Introduction

Holiness is a difficult concept for many Christians to grasp, and holy living is difficult to put into practice. But there is no backing away from this character trait—holiness is essential to the Christian life. We are to be holy, just as our God is holy.

In previous sessions, we have seen how God reveals Himself—through spectacular miracles and quiet whispers, through encouraging words and challenging commands. Today we are introduced to the prophet Isaiah, a man who had a magnificent vision of God that altered his life forever.

As I approach this passage about Isaiah’s vision of God, I feel a sense of trepidation in considering the holiness of God. I wonder, “What do I know of holiness?” Like Isaiah, I feel like the whole of my existence has been mixed with a lot that is “not holy.” I struggle to comprehend Isaiah’s vision and the awe that it should produce in me. The vision of God was terrifying to Isaiah, and yet, as we will see, God’s purpose was not for destruction but for redemption.

-  What comes to mind when you think of the word *holy*?
-  Why do you think God is so serious about His holiness?

Session Summary

In this session, the prophet Isaiah has a vision of God high and lifted up—holy and glorious in His temple. In light of God’s piercing holiness, Isaiah received a proper vision of his own sin and unworthiness. But God, in His grace, restored Isaiah to service and gave the prophet a message for the people. Like Isaiah, we too are undone by the vision of God’s glory, but through His grace, God deals with our sin and then commissions us to deliver His message of love to the world.

1. We see the living God as holy and glorious (Isa. 6:1-4).

Isaiah’s vision took place in the year that King Uzziah, the ruler of Judah, died. Uzziah was set upon the throne of Judah at age 16 after the people conspired against and killed his father, King Amaziah (2 Chron. 25). Uzziah was a king who did what was right in God’s eyes. He became a famous and powerful king throughout the land (2 Chron. 26).

Though God made him a strong ruler, over time Uzziah grew arrogant and unfaithful. Enraged at the priests who warned him, Uzziah entered into the holy of holies to burn incense on the altar of sacrifice himself. In that moment, the Lord struck him with leprosy, a disease that remained with him until his death. In all, Uzziah reigned for 52 years.

In 2 Chronicles 26, we read that Isaiah chronicled Uzziah’s reign. It is likely that Isaiah was greatly affected by the death of the king. Within that context, we see how Isaiah’s vision of God shows the massive difference between kings of earthly power and the Holy One of heavenly reign. Here is Isaiah’s testimony of what took place on the day of his vision:

¹ In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

List the different words and phrases Isaiah used to describe his vision of the Lord.	What do these words and phrases communicate? What kind of atmosphere is created by them?

Further Commentary

“‘King Uzziah’ (called ‘Azariah’ in 2 Kings 15:3) died about 740 B.C. He had been a relatively good king, and ‘did what was right in the LORD’s sight’ (2 Kings 15:3), though he did not remove the high places. God also blessed Uzziah’s reign with prosperity and military success. His death, coupled with the rise of Assyria, created great uncertainty in Judah. Note that God is so great that ‘His robe’ (the Hebrew suggests just the seam of His robe) filled the temple. The ‘seraphim’ were angelic creatures of great power and importance. Their name means ‘burning ones,’ and the implication of fire evokes thoughts of danger and mystery. Covering their eyes shielded them from the brilliance of the divine glory. Covering their feet (possibly used here as a euphemism) may have been a posture of submission. The word ‘holy’ spoken three times is emphatic or superlative and points to God’s otherness. He is completely separated from anything profane or sinful. His sovereignty is underlined by the fact that His glory filled ‘the whole earth.’”²

–Tremper Longman III, *HCSB Study Bible*

Further Commentary

Commentaries disagree on where Isaiah's vision occurs. Some believe Isaiah received the vision in the temple, since temple imagery is utilized. Some believe it was not in the temple, since Isaiah was not a high priest. Due to King Uzziah's attempt to offer incense on the altar of sacrifice and resultant leprosy, it is doubtful Isaiah would make this exact mistake by entering the holy of holies (where this vision seems to occur). Also, we do not know with certainty whether Isaiah was already a prophet or if this is where he received his first commissioning. These considerations aside, what we do know from his vision is that Isaiah was in the presence of the glorious Author of life.

Voices from Church History

"Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee, Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see; Only Thou art holy; There is none beside Thee, Perfect in power, in love, and purity."⁵

—Reginald Heber (1783-1826)

Voices from Church History

"God is sovereign, so live confidently. God is holy, so live reverently."⁶

—Adrian Rogers (1931-2005)

From what Isaiah recounted, we can see that the Lord is exalted above all kings, a truth displayed by God being on "a throne, high and lifted up." His presence exceeds that of any human ruler on earth, for the Lord's royal raiment fills the entire temple and His glory fills the whole earth.

In the presence of God, the seraphim ("fiery" winged creatures) surrounding Him covered themselves in humility and also cried out the truth of God's character: "Holy, holy, holy!" Repeating the word "holy" three times is intended to express the great difference between God and His creation. "God's holiness reveals how very separate, different, totally other he is in comparison to all other aspects of the created world."³ Furthering the awe-inspiring scene in Isaiah's vision, the voices of the seraphim call to one another, rocking the very foundation of the building.

I have never experienced an earthquake, but I do remember what it was like when Mount St. Helens erupted. The blast was described as 1,600 times the size of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.⁴ In the temple, these angelic creatures were proclaiming the holiness of God—the One who made volcanoes such as Mount St. Helens. Just the proclamation of God's holiness was enough to shake the foundations! God's revelation of Himself to Isaiah was awesome and terrifying.


- ❓ What does this vision of the Lord convey about the nature of God?
- ❓ What have you witnessed that reflects the power, majesty, beauty, and transcendence of God?

Some commentators suggest that just reading about God's revelation of His holiness and power is enough to strike awe and wonder into our hearts. I wonder, though, if we are sheltered from being impacted so profoundly by Isaiah's vision because of the society we live in, a culture that does not recognize God's ultimate greatness and power.

We live in a culture that overlooks the glory of God displayed in the heavens because of light pollution. We mute the glory of God's presence because of human-generated noise and busyness. We shortchange true intimacy with God through the perversion of intimate relationships and the sexual objectification of others. We drown out the awe that comes from even the gift of life itself through the destruction of the unborn and daily exposure to violent acts in film, television, and gaming. No wonder people walk away from God; their spiritual sensitivities have been dulled. We have no room for a vision of God's majesty that impacts every aspect of our lives.

When humans have no vision of the revelatory beauty of the holiness of God, we become like zombies, existing in flesh yet dead in spirit. We reject the Giver of life, refusing to see and experience Him in the ways He has clearly revealed Himself. Rather, we roam the surface of the earth, consuming and consuming, trying to make the deadness of our lives more tolerable.

The culture (and for that matter, the church!) needs a vision of the terrifying goodness of God. We need reverence and amazement. When Isaiah received this vision, his realization of God's glorious nature led to ruin and redemption.

 Why do you suppose that we as a society lack awe and wonder?

2. We see ourselves as sinful and unworthy (Isa. 6:5).

Once Isaiah was made aware of the wonder of God's holiness, he came to a greater knowledge of himself and his nation. In short, he saw himself and his people against the glorious standard of God's goodness. Watch how he responded:

⁵ And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

Isaiah was filled with reverent terror. In recognizing the purity and goodness of God, he came to see his own lack of goodness—his uncleanness and sin. Even more importantly, he recognized that he was ruined in light of God's holiness. Destruction is the proper consequence for sin. In Romans 6:23, the apostle Paul taught that the penalty for sin is death. Here we see Isaiah's personal realization of that consequence. It was a devastating realization, leading to a confessional cry to God.

The uncleanness Isaiah experienced was not simply ritual impurity but an uncleanness of character. Jesus taught that what is in the heart of a person is what comes forth from the lips, for it is the heart of a person that defiles (Matt. 15:18-20). Here we see Isaiah's expression of that same teaching. In the presence of absolute goodness—the standard by which we know anything is good at all—our uncleanness is brought to light.

99 Essential Christian Doctrines

15. God Is Holy

God's holiness refers to His uniqueness in being separate from all He has created. The Hebrew word for "holy" means "separate" or "set apart." God's holiness also refers to His absolute purity. God is unstained by the evil of the world. His goodness is perfect, and the moral code we find in the Scriptures is a reflection of His holy nature. As people made in God's image, we are called to holiness.

Further Commentary

According to *Encountering the Book of Isaiah*, the clash of God's holiness with Isaiah's uncleanness brings about a powerful tension point: How can a holy God establish a relationship with Isaiah? "He could not unless He dealt with the problem of Isaiah's sin."⁷ In this vision, we catch a glimpse of the beautiful reality of the salvation of man offered by God. As we shall see, it is not the Author of life's intention to destroy His good gift of human life. Rather, He gives new life through the forgiveness of sin and ultimately through the defeat of the consequence of sin in Jesus' resurrection.

Further Commentary

“‘People of unclean lips’: why does Isaiah extend the admission of sin in this way? Possibly it is a further confession on his part: he so failed to recognize the seriousness of sins of speech that he failed to separate himself (‘live among’) from such a society; but possibly he is laying down a marker for the future: if my sin can be forgiven, so can theirs. Maybe, in retrospect, in his own experience of atonement (vv. 6-7) he already saw the solution to the national darkness of [Isaiah] 5:30 and the dawning of the light of 53:11. ‘The King, the LORD Almighty’: literally ‘of hosts.’ It was not a novel revelation of God that proved Isaiah’s undoing, just a realization of what had always been true, a holy King, an omnipotent Yahweh, ‘the Holy One of Israel,’ to use Isaiah’s special title for him (see 1:4).”¹⁰

—J. Alec Motyer

Voices from the Church

“As long as Isaiah could compare himself to other mortals, he was able to sustain a lofty opinion of his own character. The instant he measured himself by the ultimate standard, he was destroyed—morally and spiritually annihilated.”¹¹

—R. C. Sproul

In our culture, some people confuse “cleanness” with a list of do’s and don’ts. In this way, a godly life gets reduced to self-righteous rule-keeping. But other folks excuse anything and everything so that nothing is considered unclean or evil. Isaiah’s vision strikes at the self-righteous rule-keeper as well as the moral relativist.

Unless we have a proper vision of our sin, we will fail to understand the essential need for God’s forgiveness and grace in Jesus Christ. We will have no moment of crying out to God, recognizing that we are unclean in the presence of goodness and light.

Isaiah realized he was going to die because of what he was, because of his character. He did not think he would die because he forgot to keep the laundry list of rules. No, he recognized that his character was so far away from the goodness of the character of God, of the Life-Giver, that he and his people were ruined. He cried out from the terror of his realization that he would indeed die.

- ❓ What is the difference between keeping a list of moral rules and being conformed to the character of Christ?
- ❓ What is the difference between asking for forgiveness of certain things we have done wrong and recognizing our utter ruin before the goodness of God?


The difference between rule-keeping, or doing a list of good things, and being conformed to the character of Christ is foreign to the broader culture. We live in a culture that promotes individualism and relativism. We have been taught that whatever is in our hearts is what is true. (I think of many children’s and princess movies and their promotion of “following your heart” as the purpose of life.)

For instance, if something can be true for me and not for another person, one might say, “Who are you to judge me? I’m just following my heart. Why are you a hater?” By relativizing goodness and truth, we have come to the point of a growing disdain for guilt and an increasing lack of moral conscience. According to the winds of the culture, these are outdated notions that most likely derive from an oppressive Christian culture of power grabbing and control. No one person can say what is right for another—*not even God*.

With the relativizing of truth and goodness, so goes the idea that people are guilty of sin. As C. S. Lewis described in *The Problem of Pain*, “That we have used our free will to become very bad—is so well known that it hardly needs to be stated. But to bring this doctrine into real life in the minds of modern men, and even modern Christians, is very hard.”⁸ He further states, “Christianity now has to preach the diagnosis—in itself very bad news—before it can win a hearing for the cure.”⁹

“Woe is me! For I am lost.” When Jesus taught us to take up our cross and daily die to self (Luke 9:23), He gave us a vision of the personal ruin that leads us to redemption. There is only one way forward in the Christian life, and it is through an everyday struggle to die to our unclean wants, desires, and the influences of unclean society that have crept into the deepest places of our hearts. It is a struggle because much of the time we do not even stop to discover the death that reigns within us.

Isaiah’s vision gives us the prologue to the gospel—we must realize what we are as sinful human beings in contrast to the glorious nature of God. Only then can we receive the redemption of God that allows us to have relationship with this powerful Giver of life.

 If a person has difficulty accepting the doctrine of sin, how would that difficulty affect the person’s reading of Isaiah’s vision?

3. We receive God’s grace and a mission (Isa. 6:6-8).

So far we have seen how Isaiah’s vision showcased the glory and holiness of the Lord. We’ve also seen how inadequate and unclean Isaiah felt in the presence of such moral purity. Now we see how God responds to Isaiah’s confession of his sin.

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

⁸ And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

In the next scene of Isaiah’s vision, an angel of the Lord took a burning coal from the altar. The imagery of the altar is important. On earth, the priests performed the sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins, but here, the heavenly messengers performed the imagery-laden ritual of the removal of sin.

It is interesting to note that Isaiah never pleaded with God, nor did he beg God to show him mercy.¹² He did not attempt to strike a bargain with the Lord. Rather, the atonement was an act of God’s sheer grace in response to Isaiah’s confession of his sinfulness. There was nothing magical about coal that could deal with the sinful condition of Isaiah’s heart. It was a sign of God’s mercy and forgiveness, of God’s good gift of redemption.

Voices from the Church

“Scripture is clear that our biggest problem is not that we *feel* guilty; it’s that we *are* guilty. It’s not that we have a low view of ourselves; it’s that we have too low a view of *God*.”¹³

—Trevin Wax

Further Commentary

“God’s glory is awesome and somewhat elusive, yet Isaiah is there. He is right in the middle of it all. The Infinite makes Himself present to the finite. It’s like Niagara Falls introducing itself to the leak in your kitchen sink; like Mount Everest making itself known to the stone in your driveway; like the whole of the Sahara Desert visiting the dust under your living room sofa. Despite the incalculable difference, this is how God relates to all of us when we come to meet with Him in prayer or in worship. It is no coincidence that when we meet Him at worship, we respond in the same way that Isaiah did: praise, confession, assurance of our forgiveness, hearing His Word to us, and in the end, being sent out to serve the world in His name. When God asks, ‘Who should I send? Who will go for Us?’ may we be as eager as Isaiah: ‘Here I am. Send me.’”¹⁴



—*The Mission of God Study Bible*

Voices from the Church

“If a church has abandoned holiness, it has abandoned love, and if it has abandoned love, it has abandoned holiness. Holiness and love are mutually implicating and work in concert, not in opposition.”¹⁶

—Jonathan Leeman

The imagery of the altar and the burning coals of the sacrifice would have been familiar to Isaiah. The perfectly good justice of God that would bring His wrath on Isaiah’s sin had been satisfied. Isaiah would not immediately suffer the consequence of his sin—death.

-  Why is it important to note that our confession of sin is not a bargaining tool with God?
-  What purpose does the confession of sin serve in relationship to our salvation in God?

Isaiah’s experience with the living God shows us that to identify sin, we must have a vision or awareness of the holiness of God. We should then respond to God’s holiness with confession as we recognize our sin.¹⁵ Again, notice it is not a laundry list of things I’ve done wrong. It is recognition of who we are as sinful humans in the light of the goodness of God’s holiness. It is recognizing our hopelessness to simply “pull ourselves up.” People who believe themselves to be “good” or “good enough” cannot experience the forgiveness of God because they will not recognize the holiness of God.

Isaiah’s recognition of hopelessness in the presence of a holy God is another missing concept in our society. Due to the mantra of relativism, we have no standard of goodness, no judge, and no justice; yet we think we have all the hope in the world. Human history is littered with failures of human-contrived hopes, from Nazism to Communism.

As human beings, we are all aware of the problem of human evil. Even if we are ignorant of human history, we all experience varying levels of evil on a daily basis (pain, suffering, injustice, unfairness). It wouldn’t take long to see that it is humans who have created the problem and thus humans are not the answer. Indeed, when asked why God doesn’t rid the world of all the evil right now, I must point out that if God did, there would be no humans left. Yet the Lord did not reveal Himself to us to bring about such destruction, as we can see from verses 6-8.

The Lord did not intend to destroy Isaiah; rather, He intended to redeem Isaiah, to establish relationship with him, and to use him greatly to serve others. In these last verses, the Lord revealed something more of His intention with Isaiah.

He had given Isaiah a vision of His holiness and glory, from which Isaiah experienced self-despair. Isaiah’s despair produced a confession that brought him the forgiveness of God’s grace and mercy. The forgiveness of God provided an opportunity for service. These experiences came together in a final offering of Isaiah’s life in service to God.

Over the years in church, I've been taught this Scripture as a statement on supporting missions and evangelism focusing on Isaiah's response, "Here I am, send me." Yet we never really focused on the experience that preceded Isaiah's commission—an awesome experience with the living Lord.

We must first encounter the Lord in powerful ways in our own lives before we can powerfully testify to the Lord. Now, that doesn't mean that unless we have *Isaiah's type* of experience, we cannot testify. But we should take our faith—and investment into our faith—more seriously than we frequently do. When I train on how to have better conversations on belief in God, I am compelled to teach that unless you have a great vision of the Lord, your conversations will most likely feel contrived and/or forced.

- ❓ What is the relationship between Isaiah's experience of forgiveness and his willingness to volunteer to be God's messenger?

Conclusion

As a response to Isaiah's vision of God's holiness, we should stand in awe of the glory of God, manifested in all His attributes. Once we see ourselves for who we are in light of who God has shown Himself to be, we are undone in our sin and uncleanness. But thankfully, we serve a God who restores and commissions us through the sacrifice of His Son. The holiness and love of God meet at the cross, where Christ laid down His life for us.

Where does that leave us now? With the forgiveness we have in Christ, we lift our hands and say, "Here am I, Lord! Send me." We seek to spread the awe and wonder of God's glory and grace to those around us. We do so, fully acknowledging the risk that people will reject the beauty, power, and goodness of the Lord in favor of a ruined vision of their own making. But we believe that the Author of life will shine His light through us and bring about the salvation of others—people captivated by the beauty and power of the absolute goodness, namely, God, who transcends this present world.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Isaiah had a vision of a throne room with a divine King. Jesus later claimed that Isaiah had seen His glory and thus the prophet's words were about Him (John 12:32,41). Like Isaiah, when we see ourselves in light of God's holiness, we recognize our sinful state and need for salvation.

Voices from Church History

"If you want to follow Jesus, you must follow him to the ends of the earth, for that is where he is going... We cannot think of God without thinking of him as a missionary God."¹⁷

—Robert Speer (1867-1947)

Additional Resources

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18. Steve R. Parr, *Sunday School That Really Works* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010), 121–42.



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Grow with other group leaders at the Group Ministry blog at LifeWay.com/GroupMinistry.

Study Material

- “A Foundational Example of Becoming Like What We Worship”—Chapter 2 from *We Become What We Worship* by G. K. Beale
- “Thoughtful Idols”—Article by Jill Carattini; find a link to this article at GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources
- Previous *Biblical Illustrator* articles, including “Lord of Hosts,” can be purchased, along with other articles for this quarter, at LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator. Look for Bundles: The Gospel Project.

Sermon Podcast

Tom Elliff: “Go Light His World”

Find a link to this at GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources

Tip of the Week

Regularly Engage in Missions/Ministry

What is the last project your group did together outside of the group time? Remember that Jesus led the disciples to minister in the community. Work with your group to plan projects that you can do together in an effort to reach out to the lost and hurting. Your group cannot be “doers of the word” by isolating themselves inside a classroom for one hour each week. Remind your group that Jesus commands believers to “go.”¹⁸