

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

LIFE GROUPS STUDY GUIDE



Overview:

The book of Isaiah is traditionally considered one of the most significant books of the Old Testament, due to its varied style in poetic language, Messianic themes and consistent message. Scholars are divided on whether Isaiah is the product of one author, or multiple authors. The latter view would mean that the prophet Isaiah composed the first thirty-nine chapters, while the last sections were composed by disciples of Isaiah, carrying on his message. Regardless of this question of authorship, the book is a vision of what life under God's universal reign should look like, and will look like when the Messiah comes, suffers, rises and ultimately brings about the arrival of the New Heavens and New Earth. The prophet Isaiah speaks as God's voice-box, reminding Judah to return to their calling: showing everyone, everywhere, what life under God's reign looks like.

This is significant for us in the 21st century, because we have an even greater vision into the unfolding of God's reign than Isaiah ever did. We have seen and believed Christ as the One through whom God's reign is most clearly realised in the world. Our calling is the same as Judah's and Isaiah's: to alert everyone, everywhere to the universal reign of God through Christ.

WEEK 1: ISAIAH AND THE ALTER

WARMING UP...

1. Can you think of an experience that you had with God that really left you quiet speechless? Maybe it was experiencing God in creation or the birth of a child.
2. Reflect on the time when the Lord called you to himself. Maybe when you first began to follow Jesus or maybe you received a call to serve God in a specific way. Take some time to encourage each other with stories of when God called.

GOING DEEPER...

In Sunday's message I quoted John Piper, *God's holiness, His incomparable perfections, His intrinsic infinite worth, when that goes public, when that goes on display, its called the glory of God.*

3. God's glory means that his holiness has gone public. With all the unrest in the world today, where do you see God's glory today?

We have started a new series in Isaiah, THE LARYNX OF GOD. Here is some quick context;

Isaiah was reared in an aristocratic home, married to a prophetess (Isaiah 8:3) and began his 64-year ministry very well liked. Like most prophets, he soon became unpopular as he confronted Israel with their sin, warned of God's judgement and punishment to come. In around 700BC Isaiah preached his message to the tribe of Judah in the south where Jerusalem and the temple is situated.

4. Read Isaiah 6:1-13, what are your initial impressions of this passage?

We spent most of our time on verses 1-4 reflecting on five glimpses of God;

Glimpse 1: God is Alive: *in the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord.*

Glimpse 2: God is Authoritative: *I saw the Lord sitting upon the throne.*

Glimpse 3: God has Unlimited power: *I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and exalted.*

Glimpse 4: God is Resplendent (*attractive and impressive through being richly colourful*). *I saw the Lord seated on the throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.*

Glimpse 5: God is Revered: *Above him were seraphs, each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.*

5. Take some extended time to discuss each of these glimpses. How does this shape your understanding of God? Read Ephesians 3:12 to aid your discussion.

BRINGING IT HOME...

God responded to Isaiah's woe is me moment with **cleansing** (of his sin) and a **call** to be the larynx of God.

6. **Personal**: take some time this week to kneel and repent of our sin before our living, authoritative creator who has unlimited power and is gloriously resplendent in the heavenly realm.
7. **Call**: how we cultivate a, *here I am send me attitude* before our Holy God?