

Tim Chester

Isaiah

Here Is Your God



 8-Session Bible Study

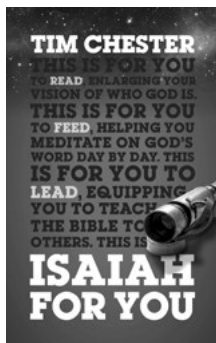
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✔ **8-Session Bible Study**



Isaiah For You

These studies are adapted from *Isaiah For You*. If you are reading *Isaiah For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *Isaiah For You*:

Study 1 > Ch 1	Study 5 > Ch 7
Study 2 > Ch 2	Study 6 > Ch 8
Study 3 > Ch 5	Study 7 > Ch 11
Study 4 > Ch 6	Study 8 > Ch 12

Find out more about *Isaiah For You* at:
www.thegoodbook.com/for-you

Isaiah: Here Is Your God

A Good Book Guide

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Introduction

One of the Bible writers described God’s word as “a lamp for my feet, a light on my path” (Psalm 119:105, NIV). God gave us the Bible to tell us about who he is and what he wants for us. He speaks through it by his Spirit and lights our way through life.

That means that we need to look carefully at the Bible and uncover its meaning—but we also need to apply what we’ve discovered to our lives.

Good Book Guides are designed to help you do just that. The sessions in this book are interactive and easy to lead. They’re perfect for use in groups or for personal study.

Let’s take a look at what is included in each session.

Talkabout: Every session starts with an ice-breaker question, designed to get people talking around a subject that links to the Bible study.

Investigate: These questions help you explore what the passage is about.

Apply: These questions are designed to get you thinking practically: what does this Bible teaching mean for you and your church?

Explore More: These optional sections help you to go deeper or to explore another part of the Bible which connects with the main passage.

Getting Personal: These sections are a chance for personal reflection. Some groups may feel comfortable discussing these, but you may prefer to look at them quietly as individuals instead—or leave them out.

Pray: Here, you’re invited to pray in the light of the truths and challenges you’ve seen in the study.

Each session is also designed to be easily split into two! Watch out for the **Apply** section that comes halfway through, and stop there if you haven’t got time to do the whole thing in one go.

In the back of the book, you’ll find a **Leader’s Guide**, which provides helpful notes on every question, along with everything else that group leaders need in order to facilitate a great session and help the group uncover the riches of God’s light-giving word.

Why Study Isaiah?

Isaiah can seem somewhat intimidating. For one thing it's a big book covering an extended timescale. Sometimes we're immersed in the politics of Isaiah's day; sometimes he's responding to events 100 or so years in the future. It's full of unfamiliar names and places, all set in a very different culture. Large sections may feel like alien territory.

But the book of Isaiah is full of good news, and it's news worth shouting about.

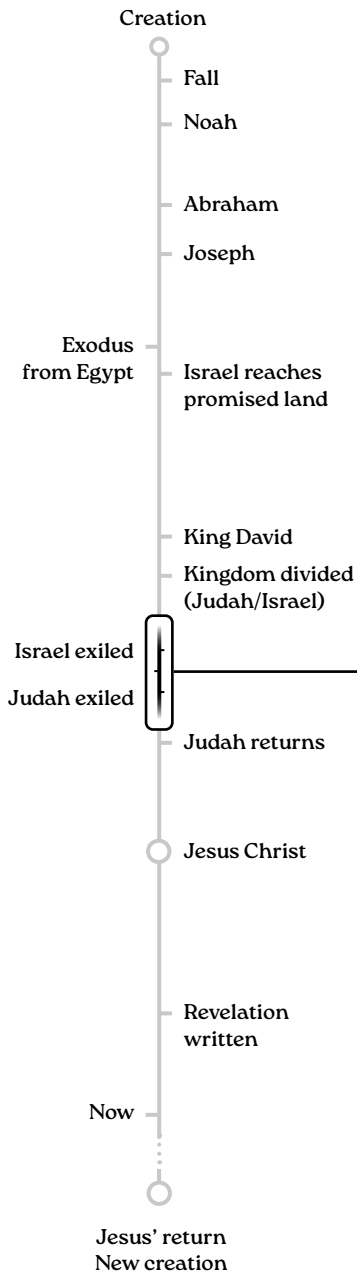
Isaiah's ministry begins around 739 BC, "the year that King Uzziah died" (6:1). After an initial "overture" in chapters 1 – 6, we see Isaiah addressing King Ahaz of Judah (the southern kingdom that had split from Israel), inviting him to trust God rather than form an alliance with Assyria (7 – 12). Chapters 13 – 27 contain a series of addresses to various nations, reminding us that the Lord reigns and one day he will restore his reign upon the earth. In 28 – 39 we encounter a different political situation: by now the king is Hezekiah, who reigned 729-686 BC, and the Assyrians have become Judah's greatest threat.

Isaiah also looks beyond his own lifetime, especially in chapters 40 – 66. In 587 BC the Babylonians would defeat Judah and destroy Jerusalem, leading many of its people away into captivity. Isaiah addresses these exiles, promising that God will gather his people home. It's a promise fulfilled in Christ, who leads people from all nations home to a new heavens and a new earth.

The book of Isaiah comforts our fears and sorrows by pointing us to the rest and peace that come from entrusting ourselves to God. It excites us about the church by giving a vision of God's people as a community of justice which brings light to the world. And it fuels our commitment to mission by painting a compelling picture of God gathering people from the four corners of the world.

Most importantly, Isaiah points forward all the time to the coming of Jesus. More than any other Old Testament book, Isaiah forms a bridge between the Old Testament and New.

These eight studies do not look at every part of the book of Isaiah. They are more like a highlights tour—they will help you to understand the shape of the book and see how its main themes work together. As you read it, Isaiah will enlarge your view of God, enrich your love for Christ and sharpen your understanding of salvation. It will provide you with what Isaiah promises in 33:6: a sure foundation for our times.



Isaiah 739-587 BC

- 739 | Isaiah begins his ministry
- 734 | Israel and Aram threaten Judah
- 701 | Assyrians besiege Jerusalem
- 587 | Judah exiled into Babylon



1

Holy, Holy, Holy

Isaiah 6

Talkabout

1. The American theologian A.W. Tozer once said, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us”. Do you think that’s true? Why, or why not?

Investigate

 Read Isaiah 6:1-5

DICTIONARY

Seraphim (v 2): angels.

Woe (v 5): sorrow.

Thresholds (v 4): entrances.

Isaiah 1 – 5 previews some of the key themes in the book, with warnings of God’s judgment on the people’s wickedness balanced by expressions of God’s love and visions of a glorious future. But Isaiah 6 is the chapter which really defines Isaiah’s ministry—which is why we are starting here.

The chapter begins by locating this vision at a particular moment in history. King Uzziah’s reign was a golden age of peace and prosperity, but

now the winds of change were blowing. Uzziah had died, and the Assyrian Empire was like a dark cloud on the horizon.

2. What does Isaiah see in verse 1? What word would you use to sum up this description of God?

3. What else does Isaiah see and hear, in verses 2-4?

- What does this tell us about God?

Explore More | OPTIONAL

Read Exodus 19:16-22

- This is another encounter with God. What similarities are there to Isaiah's encounter?
- How do you think it felt to encounter God like this?

God's holiness is not so much an attribute of God as it is the perfection and intensity of all his other attributes: his love, power, purity, wisdom and justice. Our God is a consuming fire, burning with the intensity of his holiness like the burning centre of a star. Anything tainted by sin is consumed in the presence of his powerful purity and perfect love. This explains why Isaiah reacts as he does in Isaiah 6:5.

 **Read Isaiah 5:8-30**

DICTIONARY

Desolate (v 8): abandoned.

Bath (v 10): about 22 litres or 5 gallons.

Homer (v 10): about 160 kg or 350 lb.

Ephah (v 10): about 16 kg or 35 lb.

Pasture (v 17): field where sheep graze.

Acquit (v 23): declare innocent.

Flint (v 28): a very hard stone.

4. Before chapter 6, who has Isaiah already declared woe to, and why?

5. But who does he now declare woe to, and why (6:5)?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

“That’ll do” may be fine for household chores. But the one area where “that’ll do” will certainly not do is holiness. When it comes to obeying God, there is no room for half-measures—not when you see the holiness of God.

Is there any area in which you are saying, “That’ll do” about sin?

How will you respond to God’s holiness?

Apply

6. How does this passage challenge our assumptions about what God is like and what it is like to come into his presence?

Investigate

 Read Isaiah 6:6-13

DICTIONARY

Live (v 6): burning.

Atoned for (v 7): resolved, forgiven.

Calloused (v 10): rough and hard.

Forsaken (v 12): abandoned.

Terebinth (v 13): a type of tree.

The coal which the angel touches to Isaiah's lips symbolises the altar—the place of sacrifice, where an animal symbolically took on a person's guilt and died in their place.

7. What happens when the coal touches Isaiah's lips?

- What links can you spot between this and the way Christ has atoned for his followers' sin?

8. What do you think is going through Isaiah's head as he says, "Here am I. Send me!"?

9. What is Isaiah's job going to be (v 9-10)?

- How will his hearers respond?

10. What is the bad news in verses 11-13?

But there is good news too. The people are not hardened for ever. A “holy seed” will remain; there is the possibility of new growth. It’s a theme that re-emerges in Isaiah 11:1, where a shoot will come from the stump of Jesse—the father of King David, Israel’s greatest king.

So a chapter that began with the death of one king ends with the promise of another. Out of the wastes of the impending judgment, the promised messianic King will come. Isaiah’s ministry is part of this promise. He looks forward to the ultimate coming of Christ.

 **Read Isaiah 52:13-15**

DICTIONARY

Disfigured, marred (v 14): damaged.

they had been cleansed or become holy.

Sprinkle (v 15): when blood was sprinkled on things, it was a sign that

11. Isaiah 52 describes the coming of Jesus. How does verse 15 resolve the problem in Isaiah 6:9-10?

- What does this tell us about how people come to saving faith?

Apply

12. What things can hold you back from being as willing as Isaiah to obey God's call? How could Isaiah's experience spur you on?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

What specific thing might God be calling you to do?

What would it look like to say, "Here am I. Send me!"?

Pray

Use the angels' song and Isaiah's responses as a framework for your prayers.