

# Our Holy God

Isaiah and the “Holy One of Israel”



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## Introduction

He shall be our God and we shall be His people! God continually says that He wants us to be like Him. “Be holy for I am Holy!” Isaiah says more about the holiness of God than any other biblical book. If one turns to a random page in Isaiah, he will not have to read long before he finds a passage about sin and its judgment. God’s holiness is seen most clearly in His response to sin.

The main title for God in Isaiah is “The Holy One of Israel.” The seraphim sing “Holy Holy Holy.” Isaiah was terrified to be in God’s presence because of his sin. It is the people’s sin that have separated them from God. God begs, pleads with, and yearns for His people to live in righteousness – set apart. Sadly, they lived just like the nations around them. God removed the Canaanites from the land because of their wickedness. Now Israel and Judah were just as bad. Maybe worse because they were to be the people of God, living by His laws.

It was not just Israel and Judah who would be judged. The Day of the Lord would come upon all. Yahweh is God over all nations. He was not limited to the plains of Sharon or the hills of Judea as so commonly believed among the pagans. He is God of the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in and beneath. As Nebuchadnezzar had to learn in the book of Daniel, “The most high rules the kingdoms of men.” So, Babylon would be judged. And Assyria. And Moab, Edom, Philistia, Egypt, and anyone else who in their arrogance rebelled against “the holy one of Israel.”

In my opinion, Isaiah is a difficult book. It is the Romans of the Old Testament. You know it is important. Everyone talks about it. But it is difficult and daunting. And so long! It is often difficult to tell who is speaking. Is Isaiah talking about Israel, Judah, or the nations? A quick look at the schedule of classes will show that we will cover the book in fairly large chunks. This will help us get a better feel for the flow and organization of the book without getting bogged down. This is like my approach to Revelation. But you will also see that the classes are not balanced. Sometimes we will cover many chapters and sometimes we will only cover one. I hope this will allow us to move through some of the more tedious sections quickly while digging deeper into others areas.

If we are going to be like God, we must become more holy. What better way to achieve that than studying **Isaiah and the Holy One of Israel?**

*Jonathan Caldwell*

# Our Holy God

## Isaiah and the “Holy One of Israel”

Date	Topic
Sunday, July 2	1. Introduction
Wednesday, July 5	2. Judah: A Sinful Nation (Isaiah 1)
Sunday, July 9	3. The Day of the Lord (Isaiah 2-4)
Wednesday, July 12	4. The Song of the Vineyard and Isaiah’s Call (Isaiah 5-6)
Sunday, July 16	~ <b>Workshop with Nathan Ward</b> ~
Wednesday, July 19	5. The Coming Messiah and the Present Political Crisis (Isaiah 7-9)
Sunday, July 23	6. The Coming Messiah and the Present Political Crisis (Isaiah 10-12)
Wednesday, July 26	7. Oracle against Babylon (Isaiah 13-14)
Sunday, July 30	8. Oracles against the Nations (Isaiah 15-18)
Wednesday, August 2	9. Oracles against the Nations (Isaiah 19-23)
Sunday, August 6	10. The Day of the Lord and the Triumph of the Kingdom (Isaiah 24-27)
Wednesday, August 9	11. Six Woes against Those Who Do Not Trust the Lord (Isaiah 28-33)
Sunday, August 13	12. The Destruction of the Nations VS the Glory of the Kingdom (Isaiah 34-35)
Wednesday, August 16	13. Hezekiah Trusts the Lord (Isaiah 36-39)
Sunday, August 20	14. The Folly of Idolatry (Isaiah 40-48)
Wednesday, August 23	15. Comfort (Isaiah 40-44)
Sunday, August 27	16. Comfort (Isaiah 45-48)
Wednesday, August 30	17. The Lord’s Servant (Isaiah 49-53)
Sunday, September 3	18. The Lord’s Servant (Isaiah 54-57)
Wednesday, September 6	19. Hypocrisy, True Worship, and Sin (Isaiah 58-59)
Sunday, September 10	20. The Future Glory of Zion (Isaiah 60-62)
Wednesday, September 13	21. The People’s Prayer and God’s Response (Isaiah 63-65)
Sunday, September 17	22. Jerusalem and the Glory of the Lord (Isaiah 66)
Wednesday, September 20	23. Isaiah in the New Testament
Sunday, September 24	24. Review
Wednesday, September 27	25. Make-up Class

# Lesson 1

## Introduction to Isaiah

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1. During the reign of which kings did Isaiah prophesy? To what years would this translate?
2. Who were Isaiah's contemporaries?
3. Who is the dominant world power at this time?
4. What are the major sections of the book?
5. Who is the "Holy One of Israel"?
6. What Messianic prophecies are made in Isaiah?
7. What passages/subjects in Isaiah do you know well?

# Lesson 2

## Judah: A Sinful Nation

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*Text: Isaiah 1*

1. How does Israel compare to children? Or even an ox?
2. Without a remnant, who would they have ended up like?
3. In Leviticus God commands the people to bring sacrifices. Why does God tell them to quit bringing them now?
4. What was Israel's basic problem (vv 16-17)?
5. How can someone take a garment stained with crimson and make it white again?
6. How had the faithful city become a harlot?
7. In what ways were the people unjust?
8. How would Israel go from the depths of vv 2-23 to the heights of vv 26-27?

# Lesson 3

## The Day of the Lord

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*Text: Isaiah 2-4*

1. Where else do we read vv 2f?
2. What fills the land?
3. To what are the proud and arrogant compared?
4. What is God taking away from Israel?
5. How had Jerusalem stumbled and Judah fallen?
6. What is God taking away from the “daughters of Zion”?
7. Who is Isaiah describing in 4:2-6?
8. Where else do we find discussions about “the branch”?

# **Lesson 4**    **The Song of the Vineyard and Isaiah's Call**

*Text: Isaiah 5-6*

1. Where else do we find "vineyard" language? Why is it such a common metaphor?
2. What had God done for the vineyard and what did He expect?
3. In what ways had Israel produced wild grapes?
4. Why are God's people sent into exile?
5. Consider 5:15-16: Man is \_\_\_\_\_ but the Lord of Hosts is \_\_\_\_\_
6. What will God do with His stretched out hand?
7. In what year did Isaiah receive his prophetic call?
8. What are seraphim?
9. For what message and mission does Isaiah volunteer?

# **Lesson 5** The Coming Messiah and the Present Crisis

*Text: Isaiah 7-9*

1. What was the Syro-Ephraimite war?
2. What did Syria and Israel want to do to Ahaz in Judah?
3. How was the sign of Isaiah 7:14 to be a sign to Ahaz? How does it become a sign to the world?
4. How long would it be until Ephraim was broken?
5. What does the name "Maher-shalal-Hash-baz" mean?
6. Where is 9:1f quoted in the New Testament?
7. What would be the name(s) of the one who would sit on the throne of David?
8. Who is the head and the tail?



# **Lesson 6** **The Coming Messiah and the Present Crisis**

*Text: Isaiah 10-12*

1. Once again, Isaiah condemns the people for their mistreatment of whom?
2. What does Isaiah mean when God calls Assyria the “rod of my anger”?
3. What will God do with Assyria when He is done using them against Israel?
4. How is it fair for God to use Assyria to punish His people and then judge Assyria for punishing His people?
5. What Spirit(s) will rest on the shoot from the stump of Jesse?
6. What will the main characteristic be in God’s perfected kingdom?
7. Who will the Gentiles seek?
8. Where is Isaiah 11:10 quoted in the New Testament?
9. What song do we sing from Isaiah 12?

# Lesson 7

## Oracle against Babylon

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*Text: Isaiah 13-14*

1. What will be the relationship between Babylon and God's people?
2. How would you describe the language of destruction? How is it similar to the description of the destruction of Assyria, Judah, or Rome?
3. Who does God specify as the conqueror of Babylon?
4. When will Babylon be rebuilt?
5. What will dwell in Babylon?
6. What statement/title is often (mis)applied to Satan?
7. What passages in Jeremiah prophesy the fall of Babylon?
8. Who was serving in the royal court when the Medo-Persians conquered Babylon?

# Lesson 8

## Oracles against the Nations (1)

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*Text: Isaiah 14:28 – 18:7*

1. Which nations are addressed in this section?
2. Why is so much space given to these oracles against the nations? Why are they so important?
3. Is the Day of the Lord a good day or a bad day? Is it a day of judgment against Israel or the nations?
4. Identify and read similar oracles in Ezekiel and Amos.
5. What is the origin of Moab?
6. What will the people do in the streets and on their rooftops?
7. What has the relationship among Damascus (Syria), Israel, and Judah been like?
8. Use a map to locate the land of Cush. What has their history with Israel been?

# Lesson 9

## Oracles against the Nations (2)

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*Text: Isaiah 19-23*

1. What nations are addressed in this section?
2. Who in scripture is said to ride on a cloud?
3. What was/is the heart of Egypt?
4. Egypt will join what two nations as “the third”?
5. Why was Isaiah told to walk around naked for three years?
6. Why does Isaiah tell the people not to comfort him?
7. What did God want when He called for weeping, mourning, baldness, and sackcloth? What did the people do instead?
8. Where is Isaiah 22:22 quoted in the New Testament?
9. Do some research on the destruction of Tyre.

# **Lesson 10** Day of the Lord/Triumph of the Kingdom

*Text: Isaiah 24-27*

1. What will the earth do when judgment comes?
2. Why is there such a shift in emotion at Isaiah 24:14?
3. What does it mean to have a personal relationship with God (cf. Isaiah 25:1)?
4. For whom does God provide safety, shelter, and strength?
5. Isaiah 25:6 introduces the idea of the Messianic banquet. What other passages add to this picture?
6. Whom does God keep in peace? Why or how?
7. Consider Isaiah 26:14. What are the “shades” mentioned in the ESV?
8. In that day, who will come and worship in Jerusalem?

# Lesson 11

## Six Woes against the Faithless

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*Text: Isaiah 28-33*

1. For some reason, the ESV translates some of these “woes” as “ah.” Which passages contain these six woes?
2. What is the repeated language of 28:10 saying?
3. What did God pour out on the people? Why is this appropriate?
4. Why does Jesus quote 29:13-14?
5. What type of people are most drawn to the Holy One of Israel? What will He do for them?
6. Why did Israel always want to go back to Egypt?
7. How did the people despise God’s word?
8. What will God do on that violent and bright day?
9. When the Assyrians are destroyed by the sword, who will have devoured them?
10. What does it mean that the women were “at ease” and “complacent”?

# **Lesson 12** Destruction of the Nations VS Glory of the Kingdom

*Text: Isaiah 34-35*

1. What kind of language do we see in Isaiah 34?
2. What is implied when Isaiah says that wild animals will inhabit the land?
3. What is the contrast made between Isaiah 34 and Isaiah 35?
4. How are hands strengthened and knees made firm?
5. What does Isaiah 35:5-6 bring to mind?
6. Who will and who will not walk in the highway called “the Way of Holiness”?
7. What does it mean to be ransomed? What other Biblical word is often associated with being ransomed?

# Lesson 13

## Hezekiah Trusts the Lord

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*Text: Isaiah 36-39*

1. This section is frequently referred to as a historical interlude. What section of Kings/Chronicles does it parallel?
2. When did Sennacherib come against Hezekiah?
3. How did the Rabshakeh try to dishearten the people of Judah?
4. What great thing had Hezekiah done that the Rabshakeh tries to use against him?
5. What is Hezekiah's response to these threats?
6. What does Hezekiah do with the letter?
7. What did God promise concerning the Assyrians? How did God deliver this?
8. Other than a fear of dying, why do you think Hezekiah was so emotional about the prophecy of his death?
9. What foolish thing did Hezekiah do with the Babylonians?



# Lesson 14

## The Folly of Idolatry

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*Text: Isaiah 40-48 - This class will focus on a specific theme through these chapters. The chapters will be covered in the following lessons.*

1. Why is the statement of 40:19 so outrageous?
2. In 41:6-7, who all has to be strengthened?
3. In 42:17, why will the people be embarrassed and shamed?
4. What happens to the maker of idols in 44:12?
5. According to Isaiah 44:15-20, why is idolatry so foolish?
6. Of what Old Testament story does Isaiah 45:20 remind you?
7. Consider Isaiah 46:1-7. Why is Isaiah mocking them? What are they having to do with their gods?
8. According to Isaiah 48:3-5, God prophesied things beforehand so the people couldn't do what?

# Lesson 15

Comfort (1)

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*Text: Isaiah 40-44*

1. What does the voice in the wilderness cry?
2. How does the word of God compare to a flower?
3. Whom does God consult for wisdom and advice?
4. What will give strength to the people?
5. In what do the people glory and rejoice?
6. How many “servant songs” are there?
7. Where is the song of Isaiah 42 quoted?
8. Why does Isaiah talk so much about the reversal of fortunes?
9. God claims to be the first and the last. To whom else is that designation given?

# Lesson 16

Comfort (2)

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*Text: Isaiah 45-48*

1. Who is Cyrus and how long did Isaiah prophesy before Cyrus's decree?
2. How is God's ability to call Cyrus by name a sign against the gods?
3. Compare Isaiah 46:4 and 46:7.
4. At her height, what did Babylon say of herself?
5. What two things will come upon Babylon?
6. What is wrong with Israel's swearing by Yahweh?
7. How did God refine Israel?
8. Throughout this section God has asked, "Who is like me?" What is the answer?

# Lesson 17

## The Lord's Servant (1)

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*Text: Isaiah 49-53*

1. Who is the Lord's servant? Does this title shift throughout the servant songs?
2. Why do the heavens and the earth sing for joy and exult?
3. What did God do to His "wife" and "children"?
4. We know the prominent place Isaiah 53 has in the Passion of Christ, but specific lines start back in 50:6. Where else?
5. Who or what is Rahab and when was it cut to pieces?
6. What two things happened to the people?
7. What is the cup of trembling or staggering?
8. What is the good news of Isaiah 52:7?
9. Isaiah 53 really begins in 52:10. How so?

# Lesson 18

## The Lord's Servant (2)

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*Text: Isaiah 54-57*

1. God was angry for a moment. What is He now?
2. Even the poor are invited to come, eat, and drink. How will they pay for it? What had they been spending their money on?
3. God's ways and thoughts are above ours in all aspects. But what is the context of chapter 55?
4. What will God's word do?
5. Keep justice and do righteousness. What other prophet preached this message?
6. Who are the foreigners who will join themselves to the Lord?
7. Of what is the righteous man who dies spared?
8. God says they have become sons and offspring of what?

# Lesson 19

## Hypocrisy, True Worship, and Sin

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*Text: Isaiah 58-59*

1. Who is talking in Isaiah 58:3? Who responds and how?
2. What kind of “fast” does God want?
3. Consider Isaiah 58:10. Does this remind you of anything Jesus taught?
4. How did the people treat the Sabbath?
5. It might look like God is not coming to help in times of need. But what is the reason?
6. Where in Proverbs do we read Isaiah 59:7?
7. Where did David write something similar to Isaiah 59:12?
8. Consider Isaiah 59:13. Does this remind you of anything Jesus taught?
9. What is the Armor of God?
10. How does Isaiah 59:21 parallel Jeremiah 31?

# Lesson 20

## The Future Glory of Zion

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*Text: Isaiah 60-62*

1. What will shine out of the darkness? How?
2. What gifts will the nations bring? Does this sound familiar?
3. What is conducted while the city gates are open? What is implied by saying they will be open continually?
4. What is the meaning of all the “upgrades” in 60:17?
5. If we do not need the sun and moon, how are we getting light? Does this sound familiar?
6. Where else do we read Isaiah 61:1ff?
7. Consider Isaiah 61:6-7. Instead of the firstborn, whom did God take in exchange? And what were the firstborn to receive?
8. What is the new name(s) by which the people will be called?

# **Lesson 21** The People's Prayer and God's Response

*Text: Isaiah 63-65*

1. Compare the lyrics of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* with the first part of Isaiah 63.
2. Why did God remember Moses and the Exodus?
3. What is the prayer of Isaiah 63:15 – 64:12 asking?
4. What does the earth do in the presence of God?
5. Why are their good deeds considered “polluted garments”?
6. What is meant by saying God is the potter and we are the clay?
7. Why will God destroy all but a remnant?
8. What is meant by “a new heavens and a new earth”?
9. Consider Isaiah 65:21. How are these statements usually presented?
10. What will be a defining characteristic of Zion?



# **Lesson 22** Jerusalem and the Glory of the Lord

*Text: Isaiah 66*

1. Why did the Israelites need to be reminded of the truths of Isaiah 66:1?
2. What is the repeating characteristic of those who have a relationship with and please God?
3. What song borrows the language of Isaiah 66:12?
4. How does Isaiah 66:15-16 compare with 2 Thessalonians 1?
5. What will all the gathered nations see?
6. What does Isaiah mean by the phrase “new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath”?
7. What is the general tone of the final verse of Isaiah?
8. But what does that mean for those who “go out and look on the dead bodies”?

# Lesson 23

## Isaiah in the New Testament

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1. What passage does Matthew use to discuss Jesus being born of a virgin?
2. What passage does Simeon quote when he meets baby Jesus in the temple?
3. What passage is closely connected to John the Baptist?
4. What passage does Jesus read at the Synagogue in Nazareth?
5. When Peter realizes who Jesus is in Luke 5, what does Peter say? How is this parallel to Isaiah 6?
6. What passage is fulfilled by Jesus in front of John's messengers?
7. Compare Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12 to the Passion accounts in the gospels.
8. What passage(s) does Romans 9 quote from Isaiah?
9. Where else is the phrase "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news" used?
10. What passage from Isaiah did Jesus use to condemn the rules and traditions of the scribes and Pharisees?

# Lesson 24

## Review

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1. Who is Isaiah and when did he prophesy?
2. Why did Isaiah have so much to say about all the other nations?
3. Who is the “holy one of Israel”? Who is the “rod of God’s anger?”
4. What is the Day of the Lord? Is Isaiah the only prophet to talk about the Day of the Lord?
5. How is Isaiah 36-39 different from the rest of the book?
6. Why does Isaiah spend so much time mocking idolatry in Isaiah 40-48?
7. How many “servant songs” are there? Where are they? And who is the servant?
8. Many liberal/critical scholars argue that Isaiah could not have been written during the time of Hezekiah. Further they argue that a different person had to write chapters 40-66. Why would they argue this?
9. What are the parallels between Israel in the time of Isaiah and Israel in the time of Jesus that make the prophecy such a rich vein of material for use in the New Testament?