



Study Guide: Isaiah – Chapter 6

Study Guide: Isaiah – Chapter 6

This study guide provides an educational overview of Isaiah Chapter 6 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Isaiah Chapter 6 serves as a pivotal moment in the book of Isaiah, marking the prophet's divine commissioning and revealing the holiness of God in a profound vision. This chapter transitions the narrative from judgment announcements to the prophetic mission, emphasizing Isaiah's encounter with God's glory and his response. Readers should watch for the vivid imagery of God's throne room, the seraphim's worship, and the purification of Isaiah's lips, which collectively underscore themes of divine holiness, human sinfulness, and the call to prophetic service.

Context

Isaiah 6 is situated early in the book, following the introductory chapters that address Judah's political and spiritual crisis. The chapter's immediate literary context is Isaiah's prophetic call, which sets the stage for the messages of judgment and hope that follow. Historically, this occurs during the reign of King Uzziah, a period marked by relative stability but spiritual decline. The key speaker is Isaiah himself, recounting a theophany—a direct encounter with God. The setting is a heavenly throne room vision, emphasizing the covenantal relationship between God and His people and highlighting the seriousness of Israel's sin in light of God's holiness.

Outline

The chapter unfolds in a clear narrative sequence beginning with Isaiah's vision of the Lord seated on a high and exalted throne, surrounded by seraphim. This is followed by Isaiah's recognition of his own sinfulness and the sinfulness of his people. The narrative then moves to the cleansing of Isaiah's lips by a burning coal, symbolizing purification. Finally, God issues a commissioning command to Isaiah, who accepts the mission despite the forewarning of Israel's hardening hearts. The chapter closes with a description of the judgment that will come upon the nation as a consequence of their rejection of the



prophetic message.

Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1-3: Isaiah begins by recounting his vision of the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, with the train of His robe filling the temple. The seraphim call out “Holy, holy, holy,” emphasizing God’s absolute holiness and glory. The shaking of the temple and the filling of the house with smoke symbolize God’s overwhelming presence.

Verses 4-5: Isaiah reacts with a profound awareness of his own sinfulness, crying out that he is a man of unclean lips living among a people of unclean lips. This confession highlights the gulf between the holy God and sinful humanity.

Verses 6-7: One of the seraphim flies to Isaiah with a live coal taken from the altar, touching his lips and declaring that his guilt is taken away and his sin atoned for. This act symbolizes purification and readiness for service.

Verses 8-10: God calls out, “Whom shall I send?” and Isaiah responds, “Here am I; send me.” God then commissions Isaiah to deliver a message to a people who will hear but not understand, see but not perceive, indicating the hardness of their hearts and the coming judgment.

Verses 11-13: Isaiah asks how long this condition will last, and God replies until cities lie waste and the land is deserted. Despite the devastation, a remnant—a “stump”—will remain, symbolizing hope and future restoration.

Key Themes

The holiness of God stands at the center of this chapter, portrayed through the vision of the exalted Lord and the triple declaration of “holy.” This holiness exposes human sinfulness and unworthiness, prompting Isaiah’s confession and need for cleansing. The theme of purification is crucial, showing that divine service requires sanctification. Another key theme is the prophetic commission, highlighting obedience and willingness to serve despite anticipated rejection. Finally, the tension between judgment and hope emerges, with the hardening of Israel’s heart balanced by the promise of a faithful remnant.

Cross-References



Isaiah's vision parallels Ezekiel's temple visions (Ezekiel 1 and 10), where God's glory is also revealed in a heavenly context, emphasizing divine holiness. The seraphim's proclamation "Holy, holy, holy" echoes the heavenly worship scene in Revelation 4, underscoring God's transcendence. The cleansing with a coal recalls the purification rituals in Leviticus, connecting Isaiah's personal sanctification to covenantal purity. The commissioning language ("Whom shall I send?") finds resonance in the call of Moses (Exodus 3) and the New Testament calling of the disciples, illustrating the continuity of God's call to serve. The theme of a remnant is developed further in Romans 11, showing God's faithfulness to preserve His people.

Application

Modern disciples can learn from Isaiah's encounter the importance of recognizing God's holiness and their own need for cleansing before undertaking service. This calls for humility and openness to God's sanctifying work. The chapter challenges believers to respond willingly to God's call, even when the mission involves hardship or rejection. It also encourages perseverance, trusting that God preserves a faithful remnant and works through apparent judgment to bring about restoration. Worship that acknowledges God's holiness and our dependence on His grace is foundational for effective ministry today.

Summary

Isaiah Chapter 6 presents a profound vision of God's holiness that confronts human sinfulness and initiates the prophet's commissioning. The chapter moves from a majestic depiction of divine glory to a personal encounter marked by confession, cleansing, and acceptance of a challenging mission. The tension between judgment and hope is established through the portrayal of a hardened people and a preserved remnant. This chapter sets the theological and narrative foundation for Isaiah's prophetic ministry, emphasizing the necessity of holiness, purification, and faithful obedience in the face of divine judgment and redemptive promise.