

HOLY HOLY HOLY

Bible studies

Term 3, 2026



This Bible Study booklet has been produced for our series on the Holiness of God. These are available for Quirindi Anglican Parish bible study groups & individuals. Many of us believe the best way to get the most out of God's word & the preaching of it is to be familiar with Sunday's passage before we arrive at church. So these Bible studies are usually done before the sermon on any given Sunday.

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Topical Series

July 26

ISAIAH 6:1-8

The Weight of Glory

Aug 02

ISAIAH 40:12-31

The Incomparable God

Aug 09

MISSION'S WEEK

CMS - Mark Fairhurst

Aug 16

LUKE 5:1-11

Too Close for Comfort

Aug 23

ROMANS 1:18-25

Holy and Angry

Aug 30

ROMANS 3:21-26

The Judge Who Took Our Place

Sept 06

COLOSSIANS 1:19-23

Drawn Near

Sept 13

1 PETER 1:13-25

Like Father, Like Child

Sept 20

REVELATION 5:1-14

Worthy

*But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;
for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

1 Peter 1:15-16

Holy Holy Holy



This space is for notes, prayer points, or major learning points to meditate on further

Study 1 - Undone

Intro: There are moments that stop you cold. A sudden awareness of your own smallness. Isaiah 6 is that moment, but scaled to infinity. The God Isaiah sees is not a larger, better version of a human being. He is in a category entirely his own. And the effect on the most prepared, most faithful man in Israel is immediate & total: “woe is me.” But the chapter doesn’t end there.

GETTING STARTED

1. Think of a time you were in the presence of someone whose authority, goodness, or reputation made you suddenly very aware of your own shortcomings. What did that feel like, & what did you want to do?

INVESTIGATE

2. What is the historical setting of this vision (v.1)? Why might the timing, “in the year that King Uzziah died”, matter for Isaiah & the people around him?
3. What does Isaiah actually see in this vision? List the specific details, what he sees, hears, & feels (vv.1–4).
4. The seraphim cry “holy, holy, holy”, the only time in Scripture a divine attribute is repeated three times. What do you think the triple repetition communicates about God that a single “holy” wouldn’t?
5. “The whole earth is full of his glory” (v.3). What is the connection between God’s holiness & his glory? Are these the same thing, or two different ideas; & how does the passage itself help you answer that?
6. Isaiah is a prophet, the most religiously prepared person in Israel. His immediate response is not wonder but collapse: “Woe is me” (v.5). What does this tell us about the gap between God’s holiness & even our best religious preparation?

7. A seraph brings a coal from the altar & touches it to Isaiah's lips (vv.6–7). (a) Where does the coal come from, & what does that suggest about where atonement originates? (b) What is the order of events, does atonement come before or after the commission to go? Why does the order matter?

8. Read Revelation 4:8–11. The living creatures around the heavenly throne cry “holy, holy, holy” ceaselessly, day & night. What does this tell us about how central God's holiness is to the life of heaven?

9. Isaiah 6 & Revelation 4 are separated by centuries. What does it tell us that the seraphic cry of Isaiah 6 is still the pulse of heaven in Revelation 4? What does this say about whether God's holiness has diminished?

APPLY

10. Isaiah moves from “woe is me” (v.5) to “here am I, send me” (v.8), but only after the coal is applied. In your own life, what difference does the genuine assurance of forgiveness make to how you respond to what God is calling you to?

11. The coal in Isaiah 6 points forward to a better & final atonement. If someone in your group hasn't yet come to God through Christ, what does this passage say to them about what stands between them & the holy God, & what God has done about it?

12. If the holiness of God is the most fundamental truth about him, not his helpfulness, not his niceness, but his holiness; what should change about how you approach worship, prayer, or daily life? Name one specific thing.

PRAY

Study 2 - Incomparable

Intro: Isaiah 40 arrives at a moment of crisis. God's people are under enormous threat. The great empire of Assyria has already destroyed the northern kingdom. These are people who feel small & powerless, & are beginning to wonder whether God can see them where they are. Isaiah's response is to ask a question: to whom will you compare God? What could possibly stand alongside him? The passage begins with the God who holds oceans in the hollow of his hand, & ends with an exhausted person being given the strength to walk. Both matter.

GETTING STARTED

1. What's the most enormous thing you've encountered, a storm rolling across the plains, the night sky from the paddock, the ocean? What did it do to your sense of your own size?

INVESTIGATE

2. Read Isaiah 40:12–26. Isaiah fires a series of rhetorical questions in vv.12–14: "Who has measured the waters? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket?" What is he establishing with these questions? What is he trying to get you to feel?

3. How does Isaiah describe the nations in vv.15–17? What is his point about the scale of God compared to human power & achievement?

4. Isaiah turns to idols in vv.18–20: "To whom will you compare God? What image will you compare him to?" What is the fundamental absurdity of idolatry that he is exposing here?

5. Read Exodus 15:1–11, especially verse 11. Israel has just watched God part the Red Sea & destroy Pharaoh's army. Their song breaks into: "Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glory?" How does this song help you see that holiness & incomparability are not two separate ideas but the same idea?

6. Read Isaiah 40:25–31. Verse 26: God calls each star by name, & not one is missing. What does that tell us about both the scale of his power & the specificity of his personal knowledge?

7. Having established God's incomparability, Isaiah turns to God's personal care for the weary in vv.28–31. Why do these two things, immensity & personal care, belong in the same passage? What would it mean if God were immeasurably great but completely indifferent to you?

8. Verse 27 quotes people saying: "My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God." When are you most tempted to feel that? What does the passage say directly to that feeling?

Series connection: You encountered holiness in one setting last week, the temple, the throne, the seraphim. This week you encounter it in the cosmos. What is the same about both encounters? What new dimension does Isaiah 40 add?

APPLY

9. What are the modern equivalents of the idols Isaiah describes, the things we treat as if they could take God's place in our lives? Be specific about what they are in your own life.

10. If someone in your group is not yet sure about God, what does this passage say about whether the God of the Bible is the kind of God worth trusting with everything?

11. "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength" (v.31). What does it mean in practice to "hope in" or "wait on" the Lord; & what makes that genuinely difficult in the circumstances of your life right now?

12. What surprised you most in this passage; & what do you want to carry into the rest of this week?

Study 3 - Encountered

Intro: Isaiah 6 was in the temple. Job 42 was in the whirlwind. Luke 5 is in a fishing boat. Each time, the pattern is the same: a human being encounters the holiness of God & collapses. But Luke 5 has a twist the others don't quite have. Because in He's sitting in the boat, asking to borrow it.

GETTING STARTED

1. If you could spend a full day with Jesus, just the two of you, do you think you'd find it comfortable? What is your gut answer, & why?

INVESTIGATE

2. Read Luke 5:1–11. Set the scene (vv.1–3): where are we, what has just been happening, & who is present?

3. Peter has fished all night & caught nothing. Jesus tells him to put out into deep water & let down the nets. What does Peter's response in v.5 tell us about what his obedience is like at this point?

4. Peter has just witnessed an overwhelming & inexplicable catch of fish. His first response is not excitement or gratitude, it is dread (v.8). What exactly does he say, & to whom? Why is this a surprising response given what just happened?

5. Read Job 42:1–6 Job has just encountered God speaking out of the whirlwind. How does he describe the effect? What does "my ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you" (v.5) suggest about the difference between knowing about God & actually encountering him?

6. Read Luke 5:8 again, alongside Isaiah 6:5. Compare Peter's words in Luke 5:8 with Isaiah 6:5. What do these two moments have in common, even though they are completely different settings? What does the repeated pattern tell us?

7. Jesus responds to Peter's "depart from me" not by leaving but by saying "don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people" (v.10). He does not deny Peter's sinfulness or tell him he's fine. What makes the calling possible, given that Peter's self-assessment is accurate?

8. "They left everything and followed him" (v.11). What does "everything" suggest about the seriousness with which they took this encounter?

Series connection: In week 1, Isaiah fell flat before God's holiness in the temple. This week, Peter falls flat before Jesus' holiness in a fishing boat. What theological claim is Luke making here about who Jesus is?

APPLY

9. Peter knew his sinfulness & Jesus' holiness were incompatible, but Jesus didn't leave the boat. What does that tell you about how Jesus relates to sinful people, then & now?

10. Is your relationship with Jesus shaped more by his helpfulness (what he can do for you) or his holiness (who he actually is)? Be honest. What would it look like for the latter to shape the former?

11. If someone in your group hasn't yet responded to Jesus, what does Peter's story say to them about what Jesus does with people who know they don't deserve to have him near?

12. What would costly, genuine following look like in your own life right now, not as an ideal but as a practical question?

13. You have now sat with Isaiah 6, Isaiah 40, & Luke 5. If someone asked you what holiness means, what would you say? Don't reach for a textbook answer, use what you've actually seen in these three passages.

PRAY

Study 4 - Judged

Intro: Here is a simple way of putting into words what you've been experiencing so far.

God is holy means He is completely set apart, glorious beyond anything He made, and pure from everything He hates.

We are called to be holy means we are set apart from everything He hates, and set apart for everything He loves, becoming more like Him.

These definitions carry us through the rest of the series. Keep them.

GETTING STARTED

1. What would you think of a judge who felt nothing when a guilty person walked free, who showed no emotion through serious crimes? Why do we actually want judges to feel the weight of injustice?

INVESTIGATE

2. Read Romans 1:18–25. Paul says God's wrath "is being revealed from heaven", present tense, ongoing now (v.18). What is it directed against? What is the specific charge Paul makes?

3. What does Paul say people know about God (vv.19–20)? How do they know it? What phrase does he use to describe their resulting situation?

4. Trace the steps in the 'exchange' Paul describes in vv.21–25. What did people know (v.21)? What did they do with that knowledge? What was the progression from v.21 to v.23? What was finally traded away, & for what?

5. "God gave them over" (v.24) — this phrase appears three times in the passage (vv.24, 26, 28). What kind of judgment is this? Is it more or less serious than a direct act of divine destruction; & why?

6. Read Nahum 1:2–8. How does Nahum describe God & his wrath in vv.2–3? What does it look like in action (vv.3–6)? How does Nahum’s portrait help us understand wrath as a holy attribute rather than a character flaw?

7. Paul says people are “without excuse” (v.20) because creation itself is a sufficient witness to God. Is that fair? What does it tell us about whether the human problem is ignorance or something else?

8. Paul says people “claimed to be wise” while becoming “fools” (v.22). What is the connection between the suppression of truth about God & the darkening of human thinking?

Series connection: Paul says in v.23 that people exchanged “the glory of the immortal God” for images. Connect this to our definition: God is pure from everything he hates. What exactly was exchanged; & why does our definition say his holiness makes that exchange so serious?

APPLY

9. Many Christians feel uncomfortable talking about God’s wrath. How does understanding wrath as the settled response of a perfectly holy God, rather than a god who is moody or cruel, change the way you think about it?

10. Paul’s “exchange” is not just ancient paganism. What are the modern forms of it in your own life? Be specific.

11. If someone in your group doesn’t yet know Christ, what does the reality of God’s wrath say to them directly? How would you say that truthfully but without cruelty?

12. What should the reality of God’s wrath do to our urgency in praying for & speaking to people around us who don’t know Christ?

PRAY

Study 5 - Forgiven

Intro: This is the centre of the series, & the centre of the gospel. For four weeks we have been building a case: God is holy (weeks 1–2), holiness confronts our sin (week 3), & because he is pure from everything he hates, that holiness produces righteous wrath (week 4). Now the question Paul has been building toward must be answered: how does a holy God forgive sin without becoming unjust? Romans 3:21–26 is the answer.

GETTING STARTED

1. If a judge lets a guilty person go free simply because he feels sorry for them, is that a good judge? Why not? And if God can't do that either, how does He forgive anyone?

INVESTIGATE

2. Read Romans 3:21–26. “But now” (v.21), Paul has spent almost 3 chapters establishing the universal problem of human sin & divine wrath. What makes these two words the hinge of the whole argument? What would be different if Paul had written ‘and so’ instead, as if the story simply continued on, instead of turning a corner?

3. What two things does Paul say this righteousness is “apart from” & yet “attested by” (v.21)? What does this tell us about the relationship between the Old Testament & the gospel?

4. Verse 23: “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” The word “glory” connects directly to what we’ve seen across this series. What does it mean to fall short of God’s glory; & how does that phrase tie together the concerns of weeks 1 through 4?

5. “Justified freely by his grace” (v.24). The word translated “freely” means without cost to the recipient. Does that mean the cross cost nothing? Who paid, & what did it cost?

6. Paul uses the word “propitiation” or “sacrifice of atonement” (v.25). Break it down: (a) What is being turned away or dealt with? (b) How was it dealt with? (c) Who started this; us or God?”

7. Read Isaiah 53:4–12. How does Isaiah’s portrait of the suffering servant illuminate what Paul says in Romans 3 about propitiation? What specific connections do you notice between the two passages, particularly Isaiah 53:5–6 & Romans 3:25?

8. Verse 26: God is “just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.” How can he be both simultaneously? Why does it matter enormously that he is both, rather than choosing one over the other?

Series connection: In week 1, the coal from the altar in Isaiah 6 was applied to Isaiah’s lips before he could be sent. Paul says in v.25 that God “passed over” sins committed before the cross. How does Romans 3:21–26 show us what the coal in Isaiah 6 was always pointing toward?

APPLY

9. “Justified freely”, at no cost to us. But Isaiah 53 shows us the cost. How does sitting with both truths at once, free to us, infinitely costly to him, change how you feel about your forgiveness?

109. If your standing before God depends entirely on Christ’s record & not your own, what does that mean for how you come to God on a bad week, when you feel you haven’t been living well?

11. If someone in your group is not yet a Christian, this passage says “all who believe” (v.22). What would it mean for them personally to believe? What specifically are they being invited to trust?

12. This passage is the theological centre of the series. Now that you’ve worked through it, do you agree? Why is this passage the hinge on which everything else turns?

PRAY

Study 6 - Reconciled

Intro: Weeks 1 & 2 established the barrier: God is glorious beyond anything he made, & the distance between his holiness & our sin is not one we can close. Week 3 showed us Peter feeling it: “depart from me.” Weeks 4 & 5 showed us why the barrier exists & how it was removed. Now week 6 asks: what does it mean to be on the other side of that barrier? What does it actually look like when someone who was God’s enemy becomes someone God welcomes?

GETTING STARTED

1. What’s the difference between a formal peace treaty & a genuine reconciliation? Have you experienced the second kind in a broken relationship, & what made the difference?

INVESTIGATE

2. Read Colossians 1:19–23. Verse 19: “God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Christ.” What is Paul claiming about who Jesus is? Why does this matter for everything he says next about reconciliation?

3. Verse 20: peace made “through his blood, shed on the cross.” Paul is specific about the mechanism. Why does the blood matter, why not simply a declaration of peace?

4. Verse 21 describes what we were before Christ: “alienated,” “enemies in your minds,” “doing evil deeds.” How does this sit with the common idea that people are basically good & just need a bit of help?

5. Verse 22: those who trust Christ are now presented “holy, blameless, and above reproach before him.” How is it possible for God to describe us that way, given what v.21 said about what we were?

Read Hebrews 10:19–25

6. Hebrews 10:19–20 says we have “confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way.” How does this directly resolve the problem established in weeks 1 & 2; the barrier, the distance, the “you may not come near”?

7. Compare Hebrews 10:22 (“draw near to God”) with Peter’s response in week 3 (“depart from me, Lord”). What has changed? What specifically made the change possible?

8. Verse 23: “hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.” What would swerving away from that hope look like in practice, what causes people to drift from the confidence this passage describes?

Series connection: Weeks 1 & 2 established the distance. Week 3 showed us Peter feeling it. Now this week says “draw near.” Our definition says we are set apart for everything God loves. How does reconciliation relate to that second clause of the definition?

APPLY

9. “Holy, blameless, and above reproach”, this is how God describes those who trust Christ, right now, not just at the end. Do you actually live as though this is true? What stops you?

10. Hebrews 10:24–25 connects our reconciliation to God directly to our life together as a church; meeting, spurring one another on. Why do these two things belong together? What does it mean for how seriously we take gathering on Sunday & caring for each other during the week?

11. If someone in your group doesn’t yet know Christ, verse 21 says we were “alienated” & “enemies.” Does that description resonate? And what does verse 22 offer to someone in that position right now?

12. Where do you most need to feel the truth of this passage, that the barrier is gone, the distance is closed, & you have been brought near, in your own life right now?

PRAY

Study 7 - Transformed

Intro: We have seen what God's holiness is, what it does to sinners, how Christ dealt with it at the cross, & what it means to be reconciled to God. Now comes the question that follows naturally: if all of that is true, what does it change about how we actually live?

GETTING STARTED

1. When someone says a child is “the spitting image of their dad” they don’t mean the child worked hard at looking that way. It just happened because of who their family is. What if holy living worked more like family resemblance than a to-do list?

INVESTIGATE

2. Read 1 Peter 1:13–25. What three things does Peter tell his readers to do in vv.13–14, & what does he tell them not to do?

3. “Be holy, because I am holy” (vv.15–16, quoting Leviticus 19:2). Notice what immediately precedes the command: “he who called you is holy.” What does this tell us about where this call comes from & what it rests on?

4. Peter calls God both “Father” (v.17) & “one who judges impartially.” How do you hold those two descriptions together without collapsing one into the other? What does healthy “reverent fear” look like inside a genuine Father-child relationship?

5. Verses 18–19: Peter grounds the call to holiness in the cost of redemption, “the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” Why does he anchor the imperative (be holy) in the prior reality (you have been redeemed at this price)? What goes wrong if you reverse the order?

6. Read Psalm 24:1–6 . “Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?” (v.3). What is the answer given in v.4? How does 1 Peter 1:18–19 answer Psalm 24’s question for those who trust Christ?

Series connection: Psalm 24 asks who may stand in God's holy place. Weeks 1–3 showed us that the honest answer is “no one”, Isaiah collapsed, Peter said “depart from me.” How does 1 Peter 1:18–19 change that answer, & on what basis?

7. Peter ends by grounding holy living in “the living and enduring word of God” (vv.22–25). Why is God's word central to holy living? What does it do in us that sheer will-power & good intentions never can?

8. Sinclair Ferguson has pointed out that “mortification is not sanctification”, dealing with sin is necessary but not sufficient, because sanctification is becoming like Jesus, not merely eliminating bad habits. Does Peter's argument here support that distinction? Where do you see it?

APPLY

9. Is holiness for you more about avoiding wrong things (a list to maintain) or becoming like someone (a relationship to grow in)? What would it look like to shift from the first framing to the second?

10. Sit with v.19 for a moment: “the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” When you regularly & deliberately dwell on the cost of your redemption, does it actually change how you live? Why or why not?

11. If someone in your group is not yet a Christian, God calls his people to be holy because he is holy. What would you say to someone who feels they could never meet that standard? What does the passage offer them?

12. What is the most important thing you want to carry from this passage into the coming week, & how will you make sure it doesn't stay as a good intention?

PRAY

Study 8 - Worshipping

Intro: Study 1: Isaiah fell flat on his face before God's holiness & said "woe is me." Study 8: every creature in all of creation stands together & cries "worthy is the Lamb." That is the journey this series has taken us on. The holiness that is glorious beyond anything He made, & pure from everything He hates, has become, through the blood of the slain Lamb, the ground of eternal, unstoppable, joyful worship. This is where the series was always heading.

GETTING STARTED

1. What's the biggest, most overwhelming celebration you've been part of or witnessed? What made it genuinely worth the noise?

INVESTIGATE

2. Read Revelation 5:1–14. What is the crisis in vv.1–4? Why does John weep, & why does it matter whether anyone can open the scroll?

3. An elder tells John: "Do not weep! See, the Lion of Judah has triumphed." But when John looks, what does he actually see (v.6)? What does the contrast between "Lion" & "Lamb" tell us about how God's victory was won?

4. The Lamb is described as "looking as if it had been slain", bearing the marks of death, yet standing at the centre of the throne. What does this tell us about how the cross relates to eternal life in heaven? Is the crucifixion a past event that has been left behind?

5. The new song in vv.9–10 declares the Lamb worthy "because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation." On what basis is the Lamb declared worthy? Why is that the basis, rather than his power, his creativity, or his wisdom?

6. Read Hebrews 7:26. "Such a high priest truly meets our need, one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens." How does this description of Jesus connect to the holiness of God we have been tracing across the whole series? What does it mean that Jesus himself is holy?

7. Read Revelation 5:11–14. The worship expands outward in concentric circles — four living creatures, twenty-four elders, thousands upon thousands of angels, then every creature in heaven & earth & under the earth & in the sea. What does this expanding circle tell us about the ultimate scope of the Lamb's reign?

8. How does the scene in Revelation 5 fulfil & surpass Isaiah's vision in ch. 6? What is the same, & what has changed?

Series connection: Study 1, Isaiah fell flat before God's holiness saying "woe is me." Study 8, every creature in creation cries "worthy is the Lamb." What has changed between those two moments? And, crucially, what has stayed exactly the same?

APPLY

9. The worship of Revelation 5 is not only a future event, it has already begun, & we get a small taste of it every time we gather on Sunday. How does this vision change the way you think about what we are actually doing when we meet together?

10. If someone in your group is not yet a Christian, this passage says every creature will one day cry "worthy is the Lamb." What does it mean to be on the right side of that moment, & how do you get there?

11. Here is the series Big Idea one final time: "The holiness of God, the very thing that should silence us forever, has become, through the blood of his Son, the ground of our welcome, the shape of our new life, and our song forever." Having worked through eight weeks of Scripture, how would you put that in your own words?

12. What is the most significant thing this series has shifted or deepened in your understanding of God, & what do you want to do with that?

PRAY



HOW TO BE A GOOD BIBLE STUDY MEMBER

BE THERE

1 The power of just turning up to encourage others is phenomenal. We don't think of our groups as events we might go to, but people we do life with. Seek to commit yourself to your small group family weekly. The blessings we give and get from one another are of eternal value!



BE ACTIVE

2 It's true, the more you put in, the more you'll get out of your small group. Look through the study or passage before the group meets. Engage in conversation, answer questions, share opinions, be willing to pray, read, lead, help set-up or pack- up. Jesus wasn't lying when he said "it is more blessed to give than to receive".



BE OPEN

3 Be open about yourself, your joys and your struggles. One of the greatest blessings of a small group is knowing others and being known more personally. So share and listen openly. Similarly, be honest about when you don't understand a question or part of scripture. Chances are, someone else has been through a similar experience and appreciates you sharing it, or had a similar question to you but were too shy to ask it



BE CONCERNED for others

4 Resist the temptation to think "the group must serve my needs" before asking, "how can I serve the needs of others?" It's also not just the leaders' role to care for the needs of the group; Each member plays their part as we all care for one another. Be concerned for how people are travelling. Ask questions about their week and their life and be active in caring for them as they share. Seek to connect with members outside of the meeting.



BE ON ABOUT GOD

5 One of the temptations of a good small group is to get caught up in each other's interests and end up talking about lots of not-so-meaningful things. Be on about God and what He's doing in each other's lives. Share His word with each other, pray for each other, encourage mission and godly living, rebuke, correct and train one another in righteousness.

