

S T U D Y G U I D E

THE
HOLINESS
OF
GOD



RC SPROUL

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The Holiness of God

R.C. Sproul



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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Introduction

When Isaiah encountered our most holy God, he became terrified and cried out, “Woe is me!” Isaiah’s experience of the holiness of God is not unlike our own. God’s holiness both fascinates and terrifies us. It reveals to us who we are, and that can either drive us away in fear or cause us to cry out for mercy. In *The Holiness of God*, Dr. R.C. Sproul illustrates the majesty of God’s holiness through a biblical and historical study of what people experience when they encounter the Holy One and find ultimate refuge in the righteousness of Christ.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on Ligonier.org, or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind you of what you have already covered and where you are headed.</p>
LEARNING GOALS	<p>The learning goals are the knowledge and skills the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you with as you work through the lecture content.</p> <p>How to use: Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging with its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.</p>
KEY IDEAS	<p>The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge each lecture is communicating.</p>

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	<p>The questions are the guided reflection and/or discussion component of the lesson that are intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning.</p> <p>How to use: Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The timestamps in the right margin indicate where the answers to questions during the video can be found.</p>
PRAYER	<p>The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, which you can learn more about in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at Ligonier.org.</p>
REVIEW QUIZ	<p>The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appears at the end of each lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.</p>
ANSWER KEY	<p>The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz.</p> <p>How to use: Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.</p>

Study Schedules

The following table suggests four plans for working through *The Holiness of God* video teaching series and this companion study guide. Whether you are going through this series on your own or with a group, these schedules should help you plan your study path.

	Extended 8-Week Plan	Standard 6-Week Plan	Abbreviated 4-Week Plan	Intensive 3-Week Plan
Week	Lesson			
1	*	1	1	1 & 2
2	1	2	2 & 3	3 & 4
3	2	3	4 & 5	5 & 6
4	3	4	6	
5	4	5		
6	5	6		
7	6			
8	*			

* For these weeks, rather than completing lessons, spend your time discussing and praying about your learning goals for the study (the first week) and the most valuable takeaways from the study (the last week).

The Importance of Holiness

INTRODUCTION

Holiness is at the core of God's being. When Isaiah saw a vision of God, the seraphim around the throne called out, "Holy, holy, holy," proclaiming this all-important attribute of God's character. In this lesson, Dr. Sproul explores the essential importance of holiness as a quality uniquely attributable to God.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Understand the historical context surrounding Isaiah's prophetic call
- Explain what is significant about the seraphim in Isaiah's vision
- Recognize the uniqueness of God's holiness

KEY IDEAS

- Isaiah received his call to the office of prophet through a vision of God in the full splendor of His holiness.
- The seraphim in Isaiah's vision are creatures with three pairs of wings, each serving a particular function that allows them to minister in God's immediate presence.
- Holiness is the only attribute of God raised to the superlative degree through the threefold repetition "holy, holy, holy."

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- Why are you undertaking this study? What do you hope it will accomplish?
- Why is it essential for us to understand the holiness of God? Why is it important for Christians to be holy?

Scripture Reading

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

—Isaiah 6:1–5

- What is Isaiah’s first response in his encounter with the thrice-holy Lord?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Sovereign King

0:00–14:43

- Why do English translations of the Old Testament often render the word *Lord* as *LORD*?
- How is the meaning of the phrase “the train of his robe filled the temple” drawn out by an understanding of Isaiah’s cultural context?

The Unveiled Presence of God

14:43–32:26

- Why were the seraphim in Isaiah’s vision created with multiple pairs of wings?
- What is significant about the seraphim’s threefold repetition “holy, holy, holy”?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- What is the significance of Isaiah's vision within Israel's historical context? Whom is Dr. Sproul convinced Isaiah saw in his vision?

If you are in a group, have the members read both Isaiah 6:1-7 and John 12:37-41. Discuss the significance of the passage in John for interpreting Isaiah 6:1-7.

- How does Dr. Sproul use Moses' unveiled face to demonstrate why the seraphim in Isaiah's vision must cover their faces in God's presence?

If you are in a group, have the members read Exodus 3:1-6. How does this passage help you understand why the seraphim in God's presence must cover both their faces and their feet?

- How might Isaiah's vision of God's holiness inform how we approach God in worship?

If you are in a group, have each member read Revelation 4:1-11. In this passage, the Apostle John has a vision of God's throne room similar to Isaiah's. What are some similarities and differences between these two visions? What about John's vision in Revelation 1:12-18?

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God that He is holy, holy, holy.
- Confess how often you approach God without a proper respect for His holy character.
- Thank God for His promise to sanctify you through the Holy Spirit so that you might approach Him as you ought.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to impress on you the majesty of God's holiness through this study.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. Which king of Judah died the year Isaiah received his call to be a prophet?
 - a. Josiah
 - b. Uzziah
 - c. Hezekiah
 - d. Manasseh
2. Which of the following Hebrew names or titles for God means “the sovereign One”?
 - a. *El*
 - b. *Elohim*
 - c. *Adonai*
 - d. *Yahweh*
3. What is significant about the fact that Psalm 110 is the most quoted psalm in the New Testament?
 - a. It reveals that the Son of God created the world.
 - b. It applies a title reserved for God to Jesus Christ.
 - c. It explains how Christ gave the Spirit to the church.
 - d. It announces the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham.
4. What may feet symbolize in Scripture?
 - a. Death
 - b. Frailty
 - c. Holiness
 - d. Creatureliness
5. Isaiah’s vision and call to the office of prophet is the only reference in Scripture to the creatures called “seraphim.”
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. What does the Bible commonly use to call attention to something uniquely important?
 - a. Imagery
 - b. Repetition
 - c. Punctuation
 - d. Rhyme

Answer Key—The Importance of Holiness

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- What is Isaiah's first response in his encounter with the thrice-holy Lord?

Isaiah cried woe upon himself when he encountered the thrice-holy Lord in his vision. Even while about to be commissioned as a prophet of Israel, Isaiah cries, "I am lost" and declares himself to be "a man of unclean lips." Dr. Sproul will further explore Isaiah's experience, which he describes as "disintegration," in lesson two of this series.

During the Video

Sovereign King

- Why do English translations of the Old Testament often render the word *Lord* as *LORD*?

*Most English translations use both *Lord* and *LORD* because there is a different Hebrew word being translated for each one. *LORD* is used to translate the divine name, Yahweh. *Lord* is used to translate the Hebrew term Adonai, an exalted title for God meaning "the sovereign One."*

- How is the meaning of the phrase "the train of his robe filled the temple" drawn out by an understanding of Isaiah's cultural context?

In ancient times, the clothing of monarchs was a measure of their status. A monarch was even esteemed in accordance with the material of his robe, whether ermine, sable, mink, or canvas. When Isaiah saw the train of God's robe completely filling the temple, he was having a visual experience of the majesty of His garments, which were incomparable to those of any earthly king.

The Unveiled Presence of God

- Why were the seraphim in Isaiah's vision created with multiple pairs of wings?

God created these creatures with multiple pairs of wings in order that they might minister in His immediate presence. In addition to the wings that served an ordinary purpose, the seraphim required wings to cover their faces from the refulgent

glory of God's unveiled presence and to cover their feet, which perhaps were symbolic of their creatureliness.

- What is significant about the seraphim's threefold repetition "holy, holy, holy"?
The seraphim in Isaiah's vision are heard calling out to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" Repetition is used in the Bible to call attention to something that is uniquely important. Holiness is the only attribute of God given this threefold repetition, and it comes from the mouths of angels.

After the Video

- What is the significance of Isaiah's vision within Israel's historical context? Whom is Dr. Sproul convinced Isaiah saw in his vision?
Isaiah 6:1 tells us that Isaiah had his vision of the Lord "in the year that King Uzziah died." This is significant, because with the death of King Uzziah, Israel had entered a period of uncertainty and mourning, yet Isaiah beheld the sovereign One over all creation. Dr. Sproul is convinced that Isaiah caught a glimpse of the enthronement of Christ in all His majesty.
- How does Dr. Sproul use Moses' unveiled face to demonstrate why the seraphim in Isaiah's vision must cover their faces in God's presence?
Dr. Sproul demonstrated why it is that the seraphim needed to cover their faces in God's immediate presence by reminding us of how the Israelites reacted when they saw Moses' unveiled face after he had only glimpsed God's back. God did not show Moses His face, for man cannot see God's face and live (Ex. 33:20). If Moses needed to veil himself before the Israelites, who had not seen God, then the seraphim, who dwell in the immediate presence of God, had even more need to veil themselves.
- How might Isaiah's vision of God's holiness inform how we approach God in worship?
The answers to this question are manifold. Dr. Sproul noted how even the foundations of the threshold shook in the presence of God's holiness (Isa. 6:4). For this reason, Isaiah's vision can help to inform how we, as creatures made in God's image, should approach Him in worship. Whenever we come into God's presence, Isaiah's vision should be a reminder to us of God's holiness so that we approach Him with the appropriate reverence, awe, and thanksgiving.

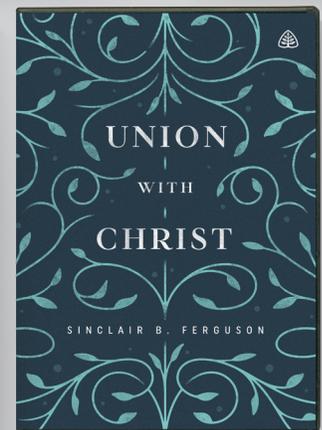
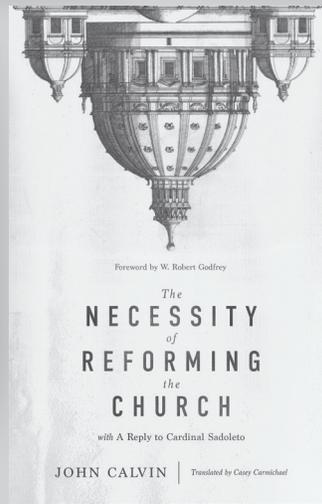
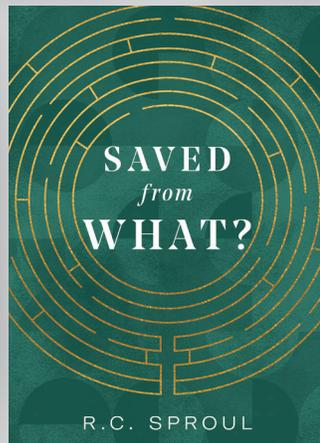
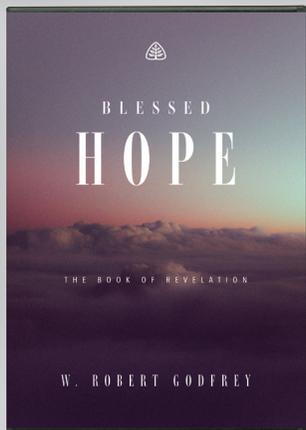
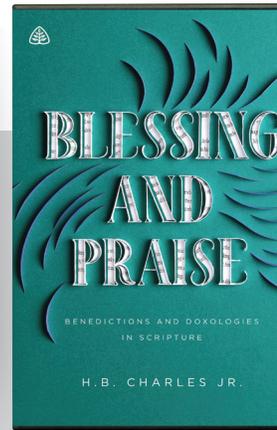
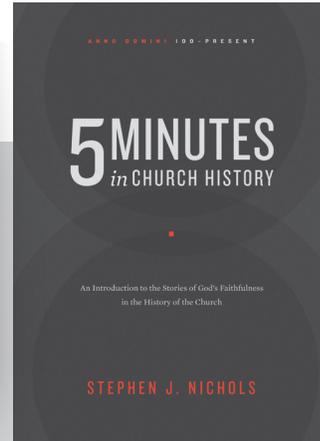
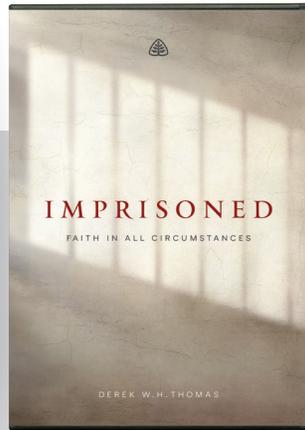
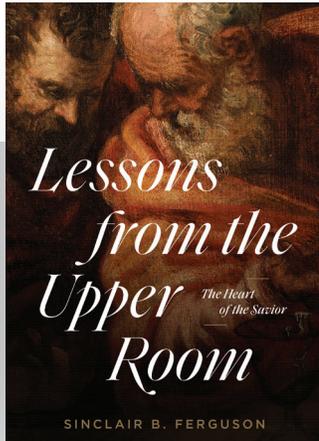
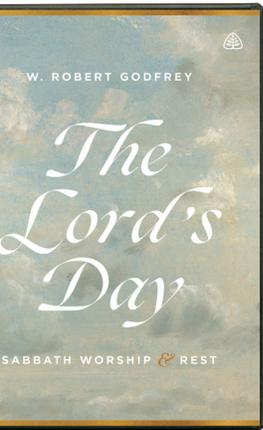
REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 1

1. **B.**
While Josiah and Hezekiah may be the most recognizable kings of Judah because of their reforms in the southern kingdom, Uzziah was the king of Judah who had died the year Isaiah received his call to be a prophet (Isa. 6:1).

2. **C.**
El and Elohim are common names for God in the Old Testament. Yahweh is God's revealed, covenantal name. Adonai is the title and name for God in the Old Testament that means "the sovereign One."
3. **B.**
Each of the answer choices is a way in which the writers of the New Testament use the Psalms, but in this lecture, Dr. Sproul unfolded the significance of Psalm 110 as the most quoted psalm in the New Testament because it uses God's title Adonai (the sovereign One) in reference to Jesus Christ.
4. **D.**
Feet may at times symbolize someone's creatureliness in Scripture. Using Moses' encounter with the burning bush, Dr. Sproul explained that Moses removed his sandals as a sign of his creatureliness and submission before a holy God. This could help explain why the seraphim must cover their feet in God's immediate presence, in order to cover their creatureliness.
5. **A.**
Though some biblical scholars have attempted to identify the seraphim found in Isaiah's vision with the cherubim found in such places as the curtains of the tabernacle, the Bible distinguishes the two creatures, and the seraphim are mentioned in the Bible only in Isaiah's vision and call to the office of prophet.
6. **B.**
In both the Old and New Testaments, repetition is used to call attention to something uniquely important. It is a literary device used especially in Hebrew. We see this device used by Jews, such as Jesus and Paul in the New Testament, and it is how the seraphim underscore the uniqueness of God's holiness in Isaiah 6.

We want to see men and women around the world connect
the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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