



# HERE IS YOUR GOD

a study of God's attributes

SERMON TITLE: God Is Sovereign

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SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 6 & 40

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## SERIES SUMMARY

What we need most is to know God for who he truly is. How we answer the question, "Who is God?" will change our lives indelibly. The Psalmist sings, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. His greatness is unsearchable!" There's a practical tension to this. If his greatness is unsearchable, then knowing him could be exhausting because there's no end to it. However, if his unending greatness is life-giving, then the journey of knowing him will always be worth it. Also, we should resist thinking about God on our own terms because distorted understandings of God can lead us down a path to ruin. God made us in his image, and we should run from the thought of making him in our image. So, what is God really like, and how do we know it? The story of Scripture reveals the answer to these questions. He's bigger than our categories of him, yet he invites us to know him through Scripture. And this story leads us straight to Jesus. In him, Scripture declares to us, "*Here is your God.*"

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## SERMON SUMMARY

There's a question that almost everyone wrestles with today—people both *outside* the church and people *inside* the church. This question has kept people *from* faith and it's also shipwrecked many a believer's faith. Actually, the question has been around for centuries, and that question is—If God is a good God and a powerful God, then why is the world so messed up? Why all the violence? Why all the suffering? Why all the war? Why all the injustice? Why has this terrible thing happened to me? Why does she have to suffer like this? Why this, why now? *When it comes to* understanding who God is and what God is up to in the world—*when it comes to* trusting God with our lives—our "why" questions are the most profound and practical questions we wrestle with. How you deal with your "why" questions will *shape* how you interpret your world—it will *direct* the way you live, and *determine* the condition of your heart—whether you live in hope and peace or in misery and turmoil. The answer is found in an attribute of God that's somewhat hard to understand. The Scriptures teach that God is sovereign. What does "sovereignty" mean? What difference does it make? That's what we will look at today as we revisit Isaiah 6 and then fast forward to Isaiah 40.

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## SERMON SCREENSHOTS & KEY POINTS

READ Isaiah 6:1-8 — When we encounter hardship, trouble, tragedy, pain and suffering in our lives or in the lives of the people we love it can call our *core beliefs* about God into question, right? We go into our "why"-questioning- default mode. *Why did God allow this? Why didn't He keep this from happening to me or to him or to her? Why this? Why now?* When Uzziah, King of Judah died, it seemed to many that the world was falling apart. The Assyrian army was on the march. God was saying judgment was coming to both Israel and Judah. In Isaiah 6, the prophet sees, not only the holiness of God, (we talked about that last week), but he also saw God, high and lifted up, seated on His throne in heaven. He says, "My eyes have seen the King!"—the true King. In other words, God is still on the throne. He is still in control. He is still moving all of human history toward his predetermined end. And seeing that, Isaiah was ready to serve God in spite of being given a very disturbing and disheartening ministry—a ministry that would last until Israel and Judah were totally wiped out and taken into exile.

The fact is—all of Scripture shows us the sovereignty of God in action. You see it on every page in living color. You see it in stories like the Exodus and in Jonah's story. You see it in poetry (Ps22:28) and in proverbs (Prov21:11). You see it proclaimed by the prophets (Dan2:21) and in the teaching of Jesus (Matt10:29-31). From Scripture, we see that God's sovereignty is not some distant, impersonal, transcendent attribute of God. We see that God is all-powerful and all-personal. We see that God is in control of all things and in all the things that unexpectedly come into your life, He cares for you.

Isaiah 40 shows both of these important aspects of God's sovereignty as well. God is both powerful and good. He controls the course of human history—both good and bad—and he also cares for his people like a gentle shepherd.

The question is: How do you reconcile God's power and goodness with the fact that your world sometimes seems out of control? Or the fact that, when "bad" things happen to you, it sometimes seems like God doesn't care about you? What do we do with all the "why" questions that wreak havoc on our minds and hearts and faith? It's true what Jen Wilkins says in her book, "None Like Him: 10 ways God is not like us."—"The idea of God's infinite rule (His divine sovereignty) is not only hard to grasp, it's difficult to trust..." So true. The problem with both understanding and trusting God's sovereignty boils down to this: We think that in order to make God's power and goodness fit with the "bad" things that happen to us, we have to have God answer our "why" questions. We think we need God to explain himself to us. But that just isn't true. Trusting God means you don't need answers to all your "why" questions. Trusting God means you must not demand that God explain himself to you. So, what do you do?

1. Decide once and for all that, by God's grace and with his Spirit's help, to \_\_\_\_\_ ask God "why" again.
2. Submit your "why" questions to God by submitting \_\_\_\_\_ to God.
3. Take your "why" questions to the \_\_\_\_\_ and leave them there.

### *COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS*

#### KNOW IT —

What does it mean when we say that God is sovereign? How do we see God's sovereignty in Isaiah 6? What is the significance of the time stamp, "in the year King Uzziah died?" How did the vision of God's Holy Sovereignty impact Isaiah and his willingness to serve God? What message did God give Isaiah about his ministry and how long he would have to preach to a people who wouldn't listen?

What do we learn about God's sovereignty from the Exodus story? What do we learn about God's sovereignty from Jonah's story? What do we learn about God's sovereignty from Jesus' teaching in Matthew 10:29-31? What do we learn about God's sovereignty from Isaiah 40?

#### UNDERSTAND IT —

How do you reconcile the fact that God is sovereign—that he is both all-powerful and all-good—that he is in control of all things and in all things, he cares for you—with the fact that your world seems out of control and it doesn't seem like he cares for you when bad things come your way?

LIVE IT — What steps can we in order to more consistently trust in God's Sovereign power and goodness when we encounter those "terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days" that are common to us all?

#### SHARE IT —

How would you explain God's sovereignty to a child whose dog died and who is asking, "Why did God allow this to happen? Did God cause this to happen? Did God hate my dog?"