

LEON EVANS



No Greater Story

Sermon
Notes

A Note from Leon

Dear Church Leader,

Thank you for opening this resource and for your heart to lead people deeper into God's greater story.

These outlines are not full scripts but they're starting points. They're designed to give you structure, clarity and to connect you to the themes in *No Greater Story*, while leaving room for your own voice and pastoral insight.

Use them as a foundation to build messages that reflect your context and speak directly to your people, wherever you are.

My hope is that as you preach and teach, your church will not only hear truth but begin to *see themselves* within God's redemptive adventure and live life with renewed faith and purpose. I'm praying for you as you lead.

With gratitude,
Leon

No Greater Story

Teaching Series Overview

The Big Idea:

Everyone has a story, nobody really gets the story they want but everybody's story can be redeemed. It can still find meaning, identity and purpose when it becomes part of God's greater story.

This series will remind people, or introduce people, to the big story of God as creator, redeemer and perfecter.

Looking through the eyes of the prophet Isaiah who acts as a time travelling storyteller, this series will help people frame their life and their faith within the bigger story of God.

Alongside the book 'No Greater Story', the basis for the teaching at Spring Harvest 2025, there are also small group notes and other creative resources to help people process the story and see their place in it.

The Overview

Session	Title	Key themes	Notes
SESSION 1	When Stories Collide	Isaiah 6 v.1-8 Isaiah's AHA moment when he encountered God in the middle of his story and everything changed.	Creative Bible reading to introduce the message Songs – Forever Holy, Agnus Dei
SESSION 2	Creator – God at the Beginning	Isaiah 40 v. 25-26 The significance of God as the creator of all things including our story. The creator in the chaos, in control and still creating.	Spoken word 1 – Creator to introduce the talk Songs – His Great Thou Art, Firm Foundation

Session	Title	Key themes	Notes
SESSION 3	Redeemer – God in the Middle	<p>Isaiah 54 v.1-8</p> <p>Understanding the redemption process, the problem, the promise, the price and the pathway.</p> <p>How God meets us in the messy and painful middle of our stories and brings redemption, turning our mess into a message.</p>	<p>Spoken word 2 – Redeemer</p> <p>Song – Amazing Grace (my chains fell off), Living Hope</p>
SESSION 4	Perfecter – God at the End	<p>Isaiah 65 v.17-19</p> <p>We all want to know how the story ends.</p> <p>Looking at the new heaven and the new earth, what does the promise of the future have to say to the stories of our present?</p>	<p>Spoken word 3 – Perfecter</p> <p>Songs – Goodness of God, 10,000 reasons</p>

Alternative Approach to a Teaching Series

The other approach to a teaching series would be to look at the big story of God as an overview in session 1, then use some of the living room chapters in *No Greater Story* to highlight for people what this means in our lives.

That God is greater than:

Our understanding, our fears, our limitations, our pain, our mess, our doubts, our plans and our hopes.

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SERMON SERIES: SESSION ONE

‘When Stories Collide’



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Bible Focus:

Isaiah 6:1–8

Theme:

Everyone has a story. Nobody gets the story they truly want – but every story can be redeemed and find meaning, purpose and identity when it becomes part of God's greater story.

Introduction

We've lost the sense of a big story; an overarching meta-narrative that makes sense of life and faith (*ref: Introduction p.15 of No Greater Story*).

A.W. Tozer quote: 'What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.'

We've lost the sense of God's greatness so it's time to look up!

Let's look at Isaiah's story, when his personal crisis collided with a divine encounter – and everything changed.

There are three responses to 'When Your Story Collides with God's Story' (*ref: Isaiah's AHA moment p.25*).

#1 – LOOK UP: See God for Who He Really Is

Text:

Isaiah 6:1

'In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord ...'

Biblical context:

National crisis. King dead. Hope low.

Your context:

Permacrisis world. Dying dreams. Fear. Disappointment. Grief.

Isaiah had been in the temple many times, but this time – everything changed.

Illustration:

Seeing your favourite band live vs. listening on a Spotify playlist.

This was a live encounter with the Holy. The moment the ordinary became extraordinary.

Application:

- What seems bigger to you right now than your view of God?
- Is something 'dying' in your life?

Look up – there's more to the story.

#2 – LOOK IN: Encounter God and See Yourself Clearly

Text:

Isaiah 6:5–7

'Woe to me! I am ruined! . . . I am a man of unclean lips . . .'

'Ruined' = disintegrating, undone.

Even gifted people (Isaiah: great speaker!) have areas of brokenness.

Your words, your wounds, your shame – God sees them and moves towards them.

Key Insight:

The moment the coal touched his lips, his guilt was taken and sin atoned – passively. You don't earn this. You receive it.

Look in – there's more to the story.

#3 – LOOK OUT: Hear God and Say Yes to His Call

Text:

Isaiah 6:8

'Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? ...'

Seeing God clearly leads to hearing God personally.

Isaiah's response:

'Here am I. Send me.'

What God may want to say to you this week:

- You're not alone – 'Greater is He who is in you ...' (1 John 4:4)
- You are useful – 'The Lord has need of it ...' (Palm Sunday donkey)
- Your story matters – When your life collides with God's story, history is made.

Look out – there's more to the story.

How do we respond?

1. Get Your Heart Right

Not perfect – just surrendered.

Check your heart posture: Distracted? Hard? Anxious? Apathetic? Broken?

2. Get Your Posture Right

Kedushah prayer: Angels on tiptoe, reaching towards God in awe.

Standing on tiptoes = readiness, reverence, responsiveness.

Footballer stance: On the balls of your feet, ready to move.

Are you ready for what God wants to do in your story?

Conclusion:

There's More to the Story

God is not finished. God is about to show Isaiah his greater story . . . over the next 3 weeks we will see Him as creator, redeemer and perfecter.

Will you respond to His invitation to join the story?

Final call to response:

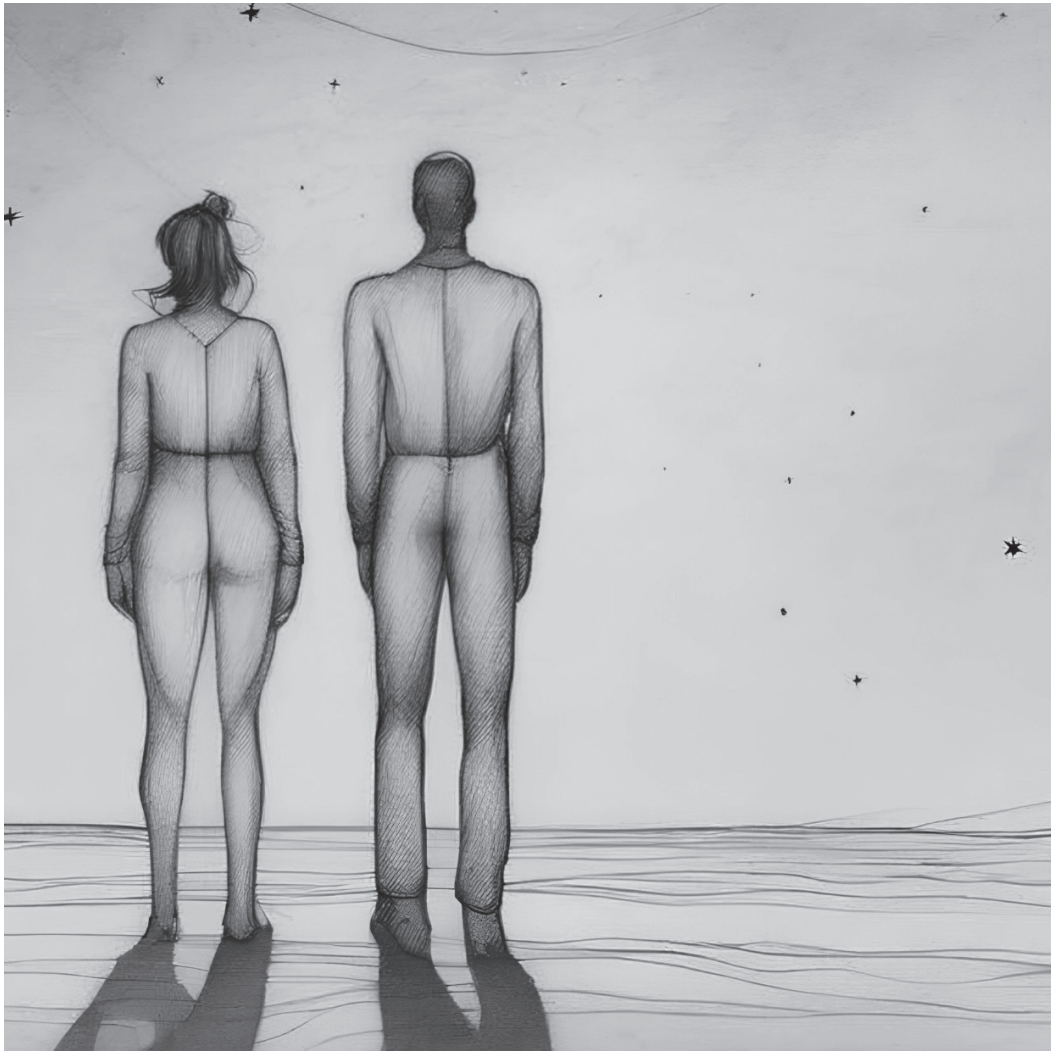
"Here am I. Send me."

How will you respond to the invitation to step into God's greater story?

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SERMON SERIES: SESSION TWO

‘Creator – God at the Beginning’



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Introduction

Within our often-chaotic world, how we can anchor our life and faith in God as the creator?

The Bible reveals God's story in four acts: Creation, Fall, Redemption and Perfection
(ref: p.20 of *No Greater Story*).

Context of Isaiah:

(ref: *Introduction p.15*)

Isaiah prophesied during one of the most turbulent periods in Israel's history (8th–6th century BC).

Judah faced spiritual decline and oppression from the Assyrian Empire.

Despite the judgement, Isaiah brings a message of hope.

Act 1: The Creator – God at the Beginning

Key text:

Isaiah 40 v.25–26

A.) God as Creator: The Origin of All Things

(ref: *Chapter one, p.43*)

Isaiah's message: God is the originator of the story. He is the creator who sets everything in motion.

Biblical Reference: 'In the beginning, God created . . .' (Genesis 1:1)

B.) Science and Faith: Not Mutually Exclusive

Einstein quote: 'Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.'

Creation and Science: Both offer insights into the universe, and neither needs to oppose the other. Faith and reason can coexist.

Dr. Robert Jastrow (Astronomer) quote on p.52 of *No Greater Story*.

Three Key Truths About the Creator

1. There's a Creator in the Chaos

Isaiah's call: Look up and see the Creator in the midst of chaos.

Application:

When we see God clearly, we begin to see everything differently. God is the origin of the story, even in times of turmoil.

2. There's a Creator in Control

Context:

Isaiah 40 was spoken during the exile when God's people felt despair.

Key Verse:

'Comfort, comfort my people says your God . . .' (Isaiah 40:1)

Isaiah 40:12–26 describes the majesty and greatness of God, asking: 'To whom will you compare me?'

God's sovereignty: God is in control of the heavens and the earth. He holds the stars in place and is more than capable of managing our lives.

Illustration:

Young sailor holding onto a rock during a storm – God is the unshakable rock in our lives (*ref: p.73*).

Application:

God's greatness is far beyond our understanding, our fears and our limitations, and He holds everything together, including our struggles.

3. There's a Creator Still Creating

Key Hebrew Word:

Bara – 'formed, fashioned, shaped.'

God is still actively at work.

Isaiah's Challenge:

Even when things seem chaotic, God is still shaping and forming the world and our lives.

Key Verse:

'Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.' (Isaiah 40:28)

God's creative work continues:

God is not done. He is still creating, still bringing life and still breathing hope into our world.

Application:

Trust that God is at work even when we can't see it. He is shaping our future, our purpose and the world.

The Creator's Invitation to His People

Isaiah 40:28–31 – Those who trust in the Creator will find renewed strength.

Key Concept of Hope: Qavah – 'Wait for, endure, look patiently for.'

Waiting in hope leads to a deeper trust in God's ongoing work in our lives.

Isaiah's Message:

Even in difficult times, God is still working. Our role is to trust and wait patiently in hope.

Response

A call to trust God with your story, he is the creator . . .
In the chaos, in control and still creating!

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SERMON SERIES: SESSION THREE

‘Redeemer – God in the Middle’



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Introduction

Opening question:

What makes a great story?

Key Point:

Tension is what makes a story compelling – whether it's a movie, TV show or even a real-life situation.

Examples:

The Dark Knight (Interrogation Scene), Jurassic Park (T-Rex Escape), Titanic (Iceberg Collision), A Quiet Place (Evelyn Stepping on a Nail)

Why does tension work? It pulls us in and makes us care because it makes everything feel like it matters. We don't know how it will end.

Everyone has a story, but not everyone gets the story they expect. Often, we find ourselves in the middle of the story, where tension runs high.

The Problem – A Redeemer Is Needed

Key text:

Isaiah 54 v.1–8

What is a redeemer and why do we need redemption?
(*ref: Chapter six p.103*)

Illustration:

When I had a fall or needed rescue . . .

Redemption requires a sacrifice: just as God provided clothes made of animal skin for Adam and Eve after their exile (Genesis 3:21), a sacrifice was necessary to redeem humanity.

The Promise – A Redeemer is Coming

Jewish interpretation of scripture has multi-layered meanings (*ref: p.107*).

Layers of Meaning in Isaiah's Prophecies:

- **Cyrus:** A Persian king (Isaiah 44:28) who played a redemptive role in releasing Israel from Babylonian exile.
- **Hezekiah:** A king who brought temporary restoration to Judah.
- **Zerubbabel:** Helped rebuild the temple after exile.
- **The ultimate redeemer – Jesus:** Isaiah's prophecies point beyond earthly kings to the Messiah.

Isaiah 7:14: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.'

Matthew 1:22-23 applies this prophecy to Jesus, confirming Him as the ultimate fulfilment of Isaiah's words.

What will the redeemer be like? – Isaiah 9:6 describes the Messiah's nature:

'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.'

- **Wonderful Counsellor:** wisdom when you need it most.
- **Mighty God:** strength when yours is running out.
- **Everlasting Father:** security when life feels unstable.
- **Prince of Peace:** calm when you sense you might be sinking.

The redeemer in the middle of our stories:

Everyone's life contains mess – personal, relational, financial or emotional. In the middle of your mess, you need a redeemer.

Illustration:

Personal story about mess.

The Price – A Redeemer Had to Pay

Isaiah's Servant Songs: Isaiah introduces the concept of the 'Servant' who will bear the cost of redemption.

The Price of Redemption:

Redemption comes at a cost, and that cost was borne by the Suffering Servant – Jesus.

The Pathway – A Redeemer Makes an Invitation

2 Corinthians 5:21: 'God put the wrong on him who never did anything wrong, so we could be put right with God.'

Redemption isn't just something we receive once; it's a life to live out every day.

The Fulfilment of Redemption:

In Isaiah 61, the Messiah's mission is outlined – proclaiming good news, setting prisoners free and healing the broken-hearted.

Luke 4:18-19: Jesus reads from this passage and declares that 'today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'

This is the beginning of a new kingdom and a new era of redemption!

Redemption through a community:

Redemption is not just personal; it's communal. Isaiah's suffering servant is not just one individual but a group – God's people (the Church) who continue His redemptive work on earth.

Application: The Invitation to Live Redeemed

The 'But' Problem:

'But I...'

We all have a story with a 'but' – reasons we feel disqualified or unworthy of redemption.

Story of the Little Boy and His Boat:

He builds a boat, loses it and finds it in a shop. He says, 'Now you're twice mine. First I made you, then I bought you back.'

God says the same to us – He created us, and then He redeemed us through Christ.

Response

Have you received the gift of redemption? Are you living in the good of that gift?

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SERMON SERIES: SESSION FOUR

‘Perfecter – God at the End’



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Introduction

Human beings are drawn to the end of the story, but how will it end up?

Question:

How does God's greater story end? How does your story end?

Isaiah writes to people asking this very question.

The Context of Isaiah's Message

Isaiah speaks to exiles wondering about their future.

Previous chapters encourage them to look:

- **Up:** God the Creator is still in control.
- **Within:** The Redeemer is coming to heal and reconcile.
- **End:** Isaiah calls people to look forward.

The Final Act – God the Perfecter – God at the end

Key text:

Isaiah 65 v.17–19

(*ref: Chapter eleven p.171*)

Five Features of God's New Creation (Isaiah 65)

1. A new creation beyond comparison

Isaiah 65:17 – 'I will create new heavens and a new earth ...'

Word 'new' (Hebrew: *chadash* / Greek: *kainos*) – not just a cleaned-up version, but something fundamentally different.

The end isn't a return to the old, but the unveiling of something greater.

Key Point:

Our future is not an upgrade – it's a complete transformation.

2. A new creation overflowing with joy

Isaiah 65:18–19

God rejoices over His people; sorrow and crying cease.

Hebrews 12: Jesus is the Author and Perfecter of our faith.

Isaiah 46:9–10 – God declares the end from the beginning.

Key Point:

God's plan ends with everlasting joy – your story included.

3. A New Creation Where Death Doesn't Win

Isaiah 65:20

No more premature death, no more tragedy.

A vision of life, full and unbroken.

Key Point:

Death is not the end – it's defeated in the new creation.

4. A new creation that restores purpose and security

Isaiah 65:21–23

Work, creativity, family – all redeemed and secured.

No more exploitation or wasted effort.

Key Point:

In God's kingdom, purpose is preserved and frustration removed.

5. A new creation where peace really means peace

Isaiah 65:25

SHALOM: peace that is relational, social, and cosmic.

A world no longer marked by harm or destruction.

Key Point:

True peace isn't absence of war – it's fullness of life.

'So What?' Application for Our Stories

1. Look forward with hope

Tim Keller: 'Christian hope is life as it was meant to be.'

God's perfect ending rewrites our present outlook.

2. Look forward with purpose

Living between the trees (Eden to New Creation).

We are called to participate in the ongoing story God is writing.

Model the life that's coming in our churches and lives.

3. Look forward with expectation

Dallas Willard: 'the aim of God in history is the creation of an all-inclusive community of loving persons, with Himself included in that community as its prime sustainer and most glorious inhabitant...'

Response

Philippians 1:6: He who began a good work in you will carry it to completion.

Jesus is not just the Author – He is the Perfecter.

Hold fast. He will finish what He started.

- Salvation response ...
- Response for those struggling to 'hold on' right now.