

### Isaiah's Vision and Commissioning Isaiah 6

Isaiah 6:1-4 - *"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" <sup>4</sup> And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke."*

#### Background Notes

In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah had an awesome vision of the majesty and holiness of God.

King Uzziah died in 740 BC. Uzziah was one of the good kings of Judah - but he made one big mistake during his reign. Not content with his role as king, he became proud and wanted to perform the role of a priest as well - a role that God had not given him. Azariah the high priest and eighty priests of the Lord tried to restrain Uzziah from burning incense in the Temple, which was a function that was only to be performed by a consecrated priest.

Uzziah became angry and wouldn't listen to the priests, so God struck him with leprosy. Because Uzziah was a leper, he was quarantined from society and cut off from the house of the Lord until the day of his death. (Read about Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26.)

What a lesson for us! We need to be content with the role and the spiritual gifts that the Lord has given specifically to us. We should not covet the role that God has given to someone else, and we shouldn't attempt to use someone else's gifts.

Are you content to be the man or woman that God made you? Are you satisfied with the gifts and talents that He's given you? Or are you dissatisfied, always striving to change God's plan? Don't make the same mistake that Uzziah made! Because of pride and discontent, Uzziah had to experience the heavy hand of the Lord's discipline.

In contrast to the proud and sinful King Uzziah, Isaiah was humble - and he was very conscious of his sinful condition. *"So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips" (v5).*

Isaiah was given a vision of the majesty and holiness of God, something that Uzziah probably wanted, but didn't attain. Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne. The majesty of the Lord *filled* the Temple. It was not just concentrated between the cherubim of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holiness – it filled the entire Temple.

In the vision, Isaiah also saw a number of seraphim standing and hovering above the Lord's throne. Seraphim are a classification of angels that are occupied with the holiness of God. The seraphim had six wings -- four were used for covering their face and feet, emphasizing reverence in the presence of a holy God.

The seraphim called out, *"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory!"* Although this three-fold repetition of "holy" doesn't prove the doctrine of the Trinity, it certainly paves the way for the doctrine of the Trinity to be fully developed and fully revealed later in Scripture.

This is also true of verse 8, where the Lord said, *"Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"* The plural "Us" does not prove the doctrine of the Trinity, but it certainly helps to provide the foundation for the full revelation of the doctrine in the New Testament.

The thrice-repeated "holy" emphasizes to the highest degree the holiness of God. The average person does not realize nor appreciate the awesome holiness of God. If they did, the realization would lead them to salvation.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. Salvation should follow a realization of God's holiness.

Isaiah 6:5-7 – *"So I said: 'Woe is me, for I am undone! Because 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.'" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said, 'Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.'*

"Holy" means morally perfect, and pure, and set apart from all sin. God is perfectly holy, and we all must come to the realization that we fall far short of God's absolute holiness.

Notice Isaiah's reaction and response to the vision of God's holiness. The disciple Peter responded the same way when he realized the power and majesty of the Lord Jesus: *"Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man."* (Luke 5:8).

All of us must come to the same place of realization for salvation. We must realize that God is holy, but we are sinners and unclean. We don't measure to God's required holy standards. *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).

In Isaiah 6:6-7, we have a wonderful picture of salvation. A burning coal was taken from the altar and Isaiah's unclean lips were touched with it. Then Isaiah's iniquity was taken away and his sin was forgiven. He was declared clean.

The altar of sacrifice in Isaiah 6 is a *type*, or a picture, of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins. That is the basis of our salvation, and it is the only basis on which a holy God can forgive our sins and declare that our iniquity is taken away.

Have you come to the place where you realize the awesome holiness of God - and your lost and sinful condition, apart from Christ's sacrifice for you? Salvation should follow a realization of God's holiness.

## 2. Service should follow a realization of God's call.

Isaiah 6:8-10 - *"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me.' <sup>9</sup> And He said, 'Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive. <sup>10</sup> Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed."*

The account of Isaiah's call to ministry is found in verses 8-10. Notice that his call to service **follows salvation**. This is still the case today. Service for God follows salvation.

Every believer is called to serve the Lord in some way, and in some place, and in some capacity. Some Christians are called to full-time ministry. Some Christians are called to missions in other countries. Some Christians are called to serve the Lord in secular employment. But **all** Christians are called to serve. Service should follow a realization of God's call. In verses 9-10, Isaiah was called to a ministry that would be unpleasant. People were not going to listen to his sermons, and they were not going to return to obeying the Lord. When he responded to the Lord's call, Isaiah probably thought that through his ministry Israel would turn back to the Lord and renounce her idolatry and immorality. He probably thought that there would be a sweeping revival. But it was not to be.

The Lord quoted verses 9-10 when the disciples asked Him why He spoke in parables. Matthew 13:10-16: *"And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?' He answered and said to them, 'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given... And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear.'"*

In these verses, the Lord didn't mean that God deliberately hides truth so that people are unable to believe, but rather that God hides the truth from people who **refuse** to believe.

Isaiah 6:11-13 - *"Then I said, 'Lord, how long?' And He answered: 'Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, the houses are without a man. The land is utterly desolate, <sup>12</sup> The Lord has removed men far away, and the forsaken*

*places are many in the midst of the land. <sup>13</sup> But yet a tenth will be in it, and will return and be for consuming, as a terebinth tree or as an oak whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump."*

In verse 11, Isaiah asked the Lord how long he should continue this ministry. The Lord answered him in verse 11: *"Then I said, "Lord, how long? And He answered: "Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant..."*

Isaiah was to continue to proclaim God's message until God's judgment fell on the rebellious nation. This took place when Jerusalem was destroyed and the people were taken as captives to Babylon. So Isaiah had to fulfill that unpleasant ministry for his entire lifetime!

The *"tenth part"* mentioned in verse 14 is either the poor people who were left in the land at the time of the captivity, or the remnant of the people that eventually returned from the captivity. In either case, they would be subjected to further discipline, but out of that tenth part would come a godly remnant of Jews called the "holy seed." They would be preserved – and this is true right to this day.

Even though Isaiah was called to an unpleasant ministry, there was the promise of fruit in the future. Service should follow a realization of God's call.

## **Practical Application**

### **Have you told the Lord, "Here I am - send me"?**

When Isaiah said, *"Here I am - send me,"* there were "no strings attached" to his voluntary commitment to serve. Isaiah didn't say, "Here I am, Lord - send me to serve in Hawaii!" And he didn't say, "Here I am, Lord - send me to minister in a wealthy church!"

Essentially, Isaiah said: "Here I am, Lord. Send me whenever, and wherever, and to whomever you choose. I have no prerequisites or conditions to dilute my commitment to You. There are no strings attached!"

What about me? What about you? Have you told the Lord, "Here I am - send me"?