

Fearful that he has seen the Lord, for God told Moses in Exodus 33:20 that “no one may see me and live.”

- In the presence of God, Isaiah immediately feels convicted of his own sinfulness as well as that of Judah.

Have you ever felt a sense of conviction? What did you do about? Have you experienced a feeling of guilt or responsibility for a large group?

- A seraph flies to Isaiah with a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The angel puts it to his lips and tells him his sin is now blotted out.

Ready for Service (6:8-13)

- When God asks, “Whom shall I send, who will go for us?” Isaiah responds, “Here I am, send me!”

Who do you think is the “us” God is referring to here?

- God explains what he wants Isaiah to say to the people. He wants them to keep listening, but their minds will be dull, their ears stopped, their eyes blind.
- The end of the chapter points us toward hope: “The holy seed is in its stump.”

~ * ~ * ~ * DISCUSSION QUESTIONS * ~ * ~ * ~

1. *How do you—and how can we, as a meeting—get a sense of God’s greatness today?*
2. *Do you feel it’s necessary for things to be “torn down” before they can be “built up”? Isaiah was redeemed without being destroyed. Will God do as much for Israel?*

Welcome, Friends! to

“The Book of Isaiah”

A ten-week class exploring the Book of Isaiah and its relevance to our faith and practice today.



Michelangelo's "Isaiah" from the Sistine Chapel, Vatican City

WEEK 3: Ch 6

The Background of Chapter 6

WEEK THREE

- The year King Uzziah died, 740 BCE, was a disastrous year for the people of Israel.
- After three years of siege, the Aramean city of Arpad fell to the King of Assyria. After that, he set his sights on Jerusalem, and at that moment, King Uzziah died, just when his people needed him most.
- King Uzziah was said to be a military genius who had won wars against the Philistines, the Arabs, and the Ammonites.
- He was stricken with leprosy, it is believed, because he had underestimated the greatness of God and barging into the inner sanctuary of the Temple.
- King Uzziah was replaced by King Jotham, who was said to be weak.
- It was a time of great unrest and fear for Israel.¹

Isaiah's Vision

- Isaiah responded by going to worship in the Temple courtyard.
- As he worshipped, he had a powerful vision of God which set the path for his prophetic ministry.
- Moore writes, "King Uzziah had just been replaced by weak King Jotham, but Isaiah "saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne" as the real King of Judah, a King so magnificent that even the hem of his royal robe completely fill Solomon's Temple." [p. 34]

What do you imagine Isaiah was feeling when he began to worship? Have you ever had a sudden opening or felt an immediate change as a result of prayer?

Proclamation of the Seraphs (6:2-4)

- The word *seraph* is Hebrew for "one burning with fire"

¹ Background information from *Straight to the Heart of Isaiah*, by Phil Moore, pg. 33

WEEK THREE

- Moore writes, "Glorious though these angels are, they use their wings to cover their own imperfections from the Lord and to shield their eyes from his utter perfection. They even sing their son to each other rather than to the Lord, for fear that they might catch too powerful a glimpse of him." [p. 34]
- The angels sing "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts" the phrase *holy, holy, holy* is an ancient indicator for the *degree* of holiness. Elsewhere in scripture, the Hebrew phrasing for *pure gold* is translated as, "gold, gold." And *pure silver* is "silver, silver." So the fact that *holy* is used three times indicates that this is a level of holiness beyond anything human language has described before.
- The seraph voices were powerful and shook "the pivots on the thresholds" Moore says that these two massive bronze pillars Isaiah is referring to had Hebrew names that translate to *Stability* and *Strength* [1 Kings 7:15-22]
- "The house filled with smoke" also gives the impression of an earthquake—things may come tumbling down! Moore also points out that smoke also speaks of God's presence in 1 Kings 8:10-12 and Revelation 15:8.

Do you find the description of the seraphs awe-inspiring, or frightening, or something else? What do you believe about angels?

How would you react if you had a vision like this when we go into worship today?