



THE WHOLE STORY

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 2018

In the sermon for this week, we have walked through the Book of Isaiah by examining the prevailing themes of the book as we specifically looked at Isaiah 52 and Isaiah 53. For Bible class this AM, we will look at Isaiah 6 and gain perspective on the vision that Isaiah had and the implications that vision has for us!

In chapter six Isaiah receives a vision directly from God. This vision gives us one of the clearest pictures in the entire Bible of the visible glory of God. More than being excited or overwhelmed at God's beauty, Isaiah recognizes God's holiness and righteousness God and his own sinfulness.

THIS WEEK'S MAIN FOCUS:

A clear view of the holiness of God changes everything.

We see the nature of God's character revealed. When Isaiah recognizes and confesses his sin, God offers two very distinct things. The first is atonement. God offers purification and a restored relationship. This one action is just a small representation of how God has dealt with humanity throughout history. He seeks us out and saves us even in our sinful state. Second, God allows Isaiah to become part of what he is doing in the world. God gives Isaiah a divine message that Isaiah is expected to communicate to others.

It is God's second action that reveals how he communicates to humanity and what he expects of his church. God revealed himself through the words he gave to the prophets. While we name the books of the Bible after the prophets who spoke them, it is important to see that God himself is the source of this message. God is the one who purified the lips of Isaiah. God is the one who sent him to the people. God is the one who gave him the message. This message that God gives Isaiah looks into the future and outlines his plan for his chosen people. There will be judgment for sin, but God will sustain those who are faithful to him. The earthly kingdom will be conquered temporarily, but God will send a messiah to restore the heavenly kingdom here on Earth.

Every believer can relate to this moment in Isaiah's life: God sought us out and purified us. God offered us a chance to be part of his work. Just like Isaiah, we should be people who look to God and say "Here I am, send me!" As we study this passage and the rest of the prophets throughout the summer, we must remember that their words are the way God has chosen to spread his message to the nations, and Jesus himself gave the same mission to the church.

There are six things that Isaiah sees about God that we need to apply today...

- I. **GOD IS ALIVE:** Uzziah is dead, but God lives on. Ps. 90:2 says Before the mountains were born, before You gave birth to the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity, you are God. God was the living God when this universe exploded into existence.
- II. **GOD IS IN CHARGE:** *"I saw the Lord sitting on a . . . throne."* No vision of heaven has ever caught a glimpse of God plowing a field or cutting grass or filling out reports or loading a truck. Heaven is not coming apart at the seams, barely holding out against its attackers. God is not having to catch a second job to make ends meet. He is never at wits' end with His heavenly realm. And He sits on a throne. All is at peace there; He has absolute control.
- III. **GOD IS OMNIPOTENT:** The throne of His authority is not one among many. It is high and lifted up. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a high and lofty throne. *"That God's throne is higher than every other throne signifies God's superior power to exercise His authority. This is the declaration of Scripture regarding Him: My plan will take place and I will do all my will."* (Isaiah 46:10) *"He does what He wants with the army of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can hold back His hand . . . "* (Daniel 4:35).
- IV. **GOD IS RESPLENDENT:** *"I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and His robe filled the temple."* We've seen paintings of monarchs with the train of their royal robe following a few feet behind them. We've seen pictures of brides with trains that stretch over the steps of the platform. God's robe fills the entire heavenly temple! His splendor and glory are peerless and beautiful. He is marked with dignity, wonderful to behold, and regal in His majesty.
- V. **GOD IS REVERED:** *"Seraphim were standing above Him; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew."* No one knows what these strange six-winged creatures with feet and eyes and intelligence are. They never appear again in the Bible at least not with the name "seraphim." Given the grandeur of the scene and the power assigned to the angelic hosts, we do well not picture chubby little babies fluttering about the Lord's ears.

VI. **GOD IS HOLY:** *"And one called to another: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts..."* Here is the word, the word "holy," that carries us to the edge of our language when talking about God. This word carries us to the brink and from there on the experience of God is beyond words. The reason I say this is that every effort to define the holiness of God ultimately winds up by saying something like, *"God is holy means God is God."* You see, the root meaning of holy is *"to cut or separate."* A holy thing is cut off from and separated from common (we would say secular) use. Earthly things and persons are made holy when they are distinct from the world and devoted to God. So the Bible speaks of holy ground (Ex. 3:5), holy assemblies (Ex. 12:16), a holy nation (Ex. 19:6); holy garments (Ex. 28:2), a holy city (Neh. 11:1), holy men (2 Pt. 1:21) and women (1 Pt. 3:5), and so on. Almost anything can become holy if it is separated from common use and devoted to God.

Questions:

1. How does reading the Bible as a love letter from God influence the way you read the words of Old Testament Prophets?
2. List how Isaiah describes God in verses 1-3 and himself in verses 4-5. Then, contrast his perspective on each.
3. List all of the actions in verses 6-12; include who is making each of these actions.
4. What three reasons did Isaiah give for saying, "Woe is me! For I am lost (or undone)"? In what ways are we like Isaiah in each of these three ways?
5. Read Matthew 13:10-16. How does Isaiah's prophecy relate to the ministry of Jesus? What does this teach us about how we receive God's message?
6. Isaiah's confession of sin was the first step in his becoming a spokesman for God. Why does confessing our sinfulness honor the Lord? How has observing someone else confess sin helped you in confessing and repenting from sin?
7. In verses 8 and 9 God commissions Isaiah with a specific message. What message have we been commissioned with? (Come up with chapter and verse not just a general description.) What are some ways we can spread this message in our everyday lives? (Be specific to what you do during your average week.)