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How Would You Respond?

ISAIAH 6:1-8

Introduction

1. We are almost twenty-seven centuries removed from what the prophet Isaiah witnessed in our reading.
2. King Uzziah died in 740 B.C.
 - a. He had reigned for 52 years as king over Judah.
 - b. During that time, he reinforced the city of Jerusalem and developed an elite army of over 307,000 men.
 - c. However, when he became strong, his pride became his undoing.
 - d. He entered the temple of God in Jerusalem with the intentions of burning incense before the Lord, something only the priests were to do.
 - e. This resulted in God striking him with leprosy.
 - f. He was forced to live in separate housing for the rest of his life, while his son, Jotham reigned in his stead.
3. In the meantime, a new Assyrian emperor had risen to power — Tiglath-Pileser III — and established himself as a military conqueror to be feared.
4. As long as Uzziah was on the throne, even though he had to rule through his son, Assyria could be kept at bay — but now the king was dead.
5. But who is the real king in this world?
6. Through his vision, Isaiah provides us with a decisive answer: “. . . my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isaiah 6:5).

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I. What Did Isaiah See?

A. GOD'S MAJESTY

“. . . I saw the Lord sitting on a throne” (*Isaiah 6:1*).

1. He was “sitting on a throne” (v. 1).
2. Typically, God’s glory took up residence in the most holy place of the temple in Jerusalem, between the two cherubim on the atonement cover over the ark of the covenant.
3. But this is not what Isaiah saw. He saw God seated on a throne.
4. Almost 200 years earlier, when King Solomon prayed at the dedication of this temple, he asked “will God indeed dwell on the earth?” and then answered “Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!” (*1 Kings 8:27*, NASB95).

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B. GOD'S TRANSCENDENCE

“. . . I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple . . . the temple was filling with smoke” (*Isaiah 6:1, 4*)

1. To say that God is transcendent is to say that He . . .
 - a. extends beyond the limits of ordinary experience.
 - b. is beyond comprehension.
2. Notice the terms Isaiah used to describe God’s transcendence:
 - a. “Lofty and exalted,” (NASB95), “high and lifted up” (NKJV, ESV).
 - b. “The train of His robe filled the temple” (1c)
 - c. “The temple was filling with smoke” (4b)
3. These words, however, fail to describe the greatness of God.
4. In *Exodus 24*, Moses tells us about the feast which Aaron, his two sons, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel had with God on Mount Sinai.
 - a. In verse 10, Moses tells us “they saw the God of Israel” and then states “under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as

the sky itself.”

- b. Moses’ description stops at the pavement. There are no words to describe God.

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C. GOD’S HOLINESS

1. In his vision, Isaiah also saw angelic beings which he refers to as “seraphim” — this is the only place in Scripture where these beings are found.
2. They were human in form, but had six wings, two covering their faces, two covering their feet and two used for flight.
3. They were stationed above the throne of God and “one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory” (v. 3).
4. We first encounter this word in Exodus 3:6, where God appears to Moses in a burning bush, and as Moses moves closer to investigate, God said to him, “Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”
5. Continuing throughout the rest of the O.T. we find this word used more than 800 times.
6. Through all of this, God’s people learned that there is only one being who is truly set apart in this world.
7. There is one more item which Isaiah shares with us: “. . . the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out . . .” (v. 4).
 - a. The large foundation stones on which the doorposts stood shook when one of the seraphim called out to another.
 - b. This shaking suggested the awesome presence and power of God.
 - c. In Exodus 19:18, when the Lord descended upon Mt. Sinai the Israelites had a similar experience.

“Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and

the whole mountain quaked violently” (Exodus 19:18, NASB95).

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II. What Did Isaiah Realize

A. HIS HOPELESS SITUATION

“Woe is me, for I am ruined!”

1. Isaiah realized there was no hope for him.
2. He was utterly unlike the Holy One.
3. In Ephesians 2:1, the apostle Paul said that you and I, before our obedience to Christ, were in a similar situation — “you were dead in your trespasses and sins.”
 - a. A dead person has no power to correct their situation.
 - b. They are completely dependent upon someone acting on their behalf from the outside.
4. Further down, in verse 12 of Ephesians 2, Paul adds that we had “no hope and [were] without God in the world.”

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B. HIS SINFUL CONDITION

“I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips” (v. 5b).

1. Why did Isaiah refer to his lips and not his heart?
 - a. Our lips are a reflection of what is in our heart (Matthew 12:34; 15:18).

“For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.” (Matthew 12:34, NASB95)

“But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.” (Matthew 15:18, NASB95)
 - b. Lips used to praise self and put others down can never be used in God’s holy service (James 3:9-10).

“With it [the tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.” (James 3:9–10, NASB95)

2. Isaiah sees his situation as being so hopeless that he doesn't even ask for cleansing or deliverance:
 - a. Isaiah underestimated God's grace (i.e., "God could never forgive me for all that I have done in my life.")
 - b. God has not given him this vision in order to annihilate him (God does not reveal our sinfulness because He seeks to destroy us).
 - c. No, it was to open Isaiah's heart to God's gracious cleansing.

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III. What Isaiah Received

“Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, “Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.”” (Isaiah 6:6–7, NASB95)

A. ISAIAH'S FORGIVENESS

1. In Isaiah's vision he saw one of the seraphim take a pair of tongs, go to the altar, remove a burning coal and then fly to Isaiah.
2. He then took the burning coal in his hands and touched Isaiah's mouth with it.
3. As he did this, he said, “Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven” (Isaiah 6:7).

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B. OUR REDEMPTION

1. You and I are in a hopeless situation because of our iniquity and sin.
2. However, it is not a burning coal taken from an altar that cleanses us, but the precious blood of Christ.

3. In 1 Peter 1:18, the apostle Peter wrote that you and I “were not redeemed with perishable things like silver and gold from [our] futile way of life . . . but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (v. 19).
4. In Ephesians 1:7, the apostle Paul wrote that it is in Christ that “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”
5. How often have we sung these words?

**Redeemed how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed thru His infinite mercy,
His child, and forever, I am.**
6. How do we respond to such a salvation? How did Isaiah respond?

Slide 9**IV. How Isaiah Responded**

“Then 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!”” (Isaiah 6:8, NASB95)

A. “WHOM SHALL I SEND, AND WHO WILL GO FOR US?”

1. God did not directly tell Isaiah to go here or there and speak to a certain people or individual.
2. To Jeremiah, God said, “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak” (Jeremiah 1:17).
3. To Jonah, God said, “Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me” (Jonah 1:2).
4. But with Isaiah, we find the only instance of a prophetic call in which there is no direct call.
5. God did not ask, “who will go for Us?” because He did not know who would

respond.

6. He asked the question to give Isaiah, a man now cleansed from his sin, an opportunity for service.

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B. "HERE AM I. SEND ME!"

1. Isaiah's response indicated he would willingly serve.
2. Perhaps it was that Isaiah thought many hearts would be turned to God.
3. God assured him that such would not be the case (vv. 9-10)

"Go, and tell this people:

'Keep on listening, but do not perceive;

Keep on looking, but do not understand.'

Render the hearts of this people insensitive,

Their ears dull, and their eyes dim,

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,

Hear with their ears,

Understand with their hearts,

And return and be healed."

4. God did not call Isaiah to success as the world counts success, but to faithfulness.
5. It is because of Isaiah's faithfulness that we are still reading his message today.

Conclusion

1. Have you been convicted of your sin by a recent vision of God?
2. I am not talking about a vision such as Isaiah had, but the vision we are provided every time we open God's Word.
3. It is this Word, which according to the writer of Hebrews, "is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and

intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

4. God, in his great love, seeks to cleanse us from our sin and put us to work in His kingdom.
5. He is looking for faithful men and women who are willing to serve from now until He calls us home.
6. Does that include you?