

Send Me (Isaiah 6:1–13)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (5/20/2018)

Introduction

1. Chapter 6 details the call and commission of the royal prophet, Isaiah.
2. The first chapters of Isaiah are not in sequential order.
3. These chapters are designed to prepare the reader for the focus of Isaiah's ministry, the coming of Emmanuel.
4. Israel and Judah were in the final stages of their long apostasy, fully deserving of the judgment threatened against them.
5. However, rather than doom and gloom, Isaiah presents the glorious hope of a new and better kingdom after the fire of judgment has cleared the field.
6. Nevertheless, for Isaiah to be effective, he had to experience personally the fear of God against the awful weight of his own guilt in order to appreciate fully the glorious thrill of grace in forgiveness and usefulness.
7. In the last message we focused on Isaiah's vision of the sovereign King seated on His heavenly throne.
 - a. Just the sight of the throne room with the attending worship of the seraphim was enough to provoke the fear of judgment for his own failure and guilt.
 - b. His recognition of the awful jeopardy of his condition prompted his cry of anguish and confession—*“Woe is me, for I am lost.”*
 - c. This vision was God's loving and gracious way to bring Isaiah to the place of forgiveness, pardon, and cleansing.
8. The proposition to be investigated in remaining verses (8–13): Effective ministry requires one to understand the peril of those to whom he ministers (in order to have compassion and sympathy) and something of the design of God's saving purpose (so he can offer hope to the hopeless).

I. Isaiah's Call

1. The sovereign Lord pictured in Isaiah's vision is (1) all powerful, doing whatever He pleases; (2) all wise, knowing perfectly how His purpose will succeed; (3) supremely good, working all things without any harm to the will of the creature acting against his nature.
 - a. Isaiah is targeted in the Lord's plan to confront Judah with her rebellion and sin; however, to do this effectively—
 - 1) Isaiah was given a look into the deliberations of the divine council, which was essential to the authority of his message (Jeremiah 23:16–18).
 - 2) The call was formed as a question, not a command; although this was God's will—*“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”* It was designed to illicit the prophet's positive and expected response—*“Here I am! Send me.”*
 - b. God does not coerce response but enables the response He desires in a way that leaves the creature doing the will of God with joyful cooperation.

- c. Hardening comes when grace does not enable change at the time God's will is presented. The creature simply responds out of His nature.
2. There are three powerful observations to be made—
 - a. Isaiah is accorded the unique privilege of having his *human voice* accepted in the divine council.
 - b. Grace makes a clear and profound change, transforming sin's despair of judgment to willing and eager desire for service.
 - c. The ministry is not to be judged by immediate and abundant fruit but by obedience and faithfulness.

II. Isaiah's Commission

1. Isaiah's ministry was not expected to bring revival and restoration to his generation.
 - a. His ministry was to ensure the decree of *hardening*, not by withholding the truth, but proclaiming it to deaf ears and unwilling hearts.
 - b. This hardening decree was not an end in itself but prepared for a greater and more fruitful work that would come out of the consequences (11:1; see Job 14:7–9).
2. Isaiah's seemingly negative message, a contrast to the majority prophetic opinion (Jeremiah 23:16–18), has led to the book's continued rejection by the Jews.
 - a. For example, verse 13c ("*The holy seed is its stump*") is absent from the LXX; although more than sufficient textual evidence supports it.
 - b. It is my opinion that dispensationalism is also a Jewish effort to deny the plain truth declared by Isaiah.
3. Isaiah's response ("*how long?*") to his seemingly hopeless expectation of convincing and repentance forms the platform for the Lord's message of hope.
 - a. That hope, however, comes only from the ashes of the total destruction of the apostate nation (vv. 11–13).
 - b. Even though a remnant remains (v. 13), their holy presence will not prevent the destruction decreed (see Genesis 18:23–26).
4. Nevertheless, the purpose of God remains in light of the "seed" promised (Genesis 3:15), which is the sum and substance of Isaiah's message (9:6–7).

What Can We Take Away?

1. The present oppressive spiritual climate is no cause for despair, even if spiritual renewal does not immediately come because God's timing is not ours.
2. God's purpose to restore all things is both sure and certain, even in times of spiritual darkness (Isaiah 8:11–17).
3. Examine your own faithfulness to Him and seek His face for grace to be all He has desired for you in Christ. We are both salt and light to this generation, even in the midst of many prophets with their false messages.