

Isaiah 6:1-13

"Cleansed, Called And Commissioned"

Clarity, conviction, confession, cleansing, calling & commission. – All of it comes to fruition for Isaiah in Ch 6.

Vs 1-2

Isaiah's clarity. He *saw* the Lord, seated on a throne, high & lifted up, & the train of His robe filled the temple. But we note when this happened for him. It was in the year that King Uzziah died.

King Uzziah (who ruled over Judah) had a long & distinguished reign. He ascended to the throne when he was only 16 yrs old & he reigned for 52 yrs (from 792-740 B.C.). The details of his reign are found in 2nd Chronicles 26. Overall, he was a good king & was blessed of God in *numerous* ways. The Bible tells us that he did what was right in the sight of the Lord & that, *"He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; & as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper."* 2 Chronicles 26:5 Under his reign, Judah prospered militarily, agriculturally, economically & technologically. The Bible says, *"So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong."* Uzziah was a great king, a great leader & a God fearing man.

But his reign was tarnished by one thing. When he became strong, when his fame spread far & wide, his heart was lifted up, to his destruction... No longer content in his wonderful calling as the King of Judah, he *transgressed against* the Lord in deciding he wanted to enter the *temple* of the Lord & burn incense on the altar of incense... But the word of God was very clear, priests weren't kings, & kings weren't priests.

So Azariah the priest (along w/80 other priests of the Lord) went in after him, tried to stop him, but Uzziah wasn't having it. Afterall, he was the *king*, who was a priest to tell a *king* what he could & couldn't do. Uzziah became furious... & W/the censor to burn incense still in his hand, leprosy broke out on his forehead. So the priests thrust him out of the temple & he hurried to get out, having been struck by the Lord... From that point forward he lived in seclusion as a leper until the day he died.

But when Isaiah says, "In the year that King Uzziah died," he's really telling us that this was a pivotal point in the nation's history. A wonderful ruler who had a tragic end had died. This man who had elevated Judah to another level. For 52 yrs they had prospered as a nation in virtually every way! Think of how attached people can become to a President in just 4 yrs, or 8 yrs. Imagine whomever you consider to be one of the best presidents to have ever lived...

A man who changed this nation for the better in every way. Now imagine him *not* being in office for 4/8 yrs. But 52 yrs! Essentially an entire generation! & Now he's gone... This isn't only discouraging, it's devastating. What's going to happen?

It's interesting, isn't it? How we can come to put our confidence in man? Remember the exhortation of Ch 2? "*Sever yourselves from such a man,* (or more literally 'cease yourselves from the man') *Whose breath is in his nostrils; For of what account is he?"*¹ You're pretty much guaranteed your next *exhale*. It's the *inhale* that no one is assured of. We place so much confidence in a man who's not even assured of his next breath... Right now, for Isaiah, the *outlook* is pretty bleak. So God gives him the *up look*.

Uzziah was no longer on the throne, but there's nothing to fear, no reason to panic, no reason to be down, disillusioned, or depressed. Because God is still very much *on* the throne... A good king may have left his throne on earth, but the King of King's was still seated on His throne in heaven. God is still in control... Ladies & Gentlemen, there is only one true King sitting on a throne. And it wasn't Uzziah, it is the Lord. In fact, John tells us (Jn 12:41) that this was none other than J.C. pre-incarnate that Isaiah laid eyes on.

"I saw the Lord sitting on a *throne*, high & lifted up (He was exalted, seated in a superior position to both heaven & earth), & the train of His robe filled the temple." Family; let's not miss this. There is a *throne* in heaven, & the Lord God sits upon it as the sovereign ruler over all the universe! It's not a *chair*, it's not a *barstool* or something anyone could sit on. It's something that a sovereign king alone sits on. Only those w/proper authority & sovereignty occupy thrones.

& The Bible is careful to emphasize the fact that God is seated upon the throne, high & lifted up in heaven. Practically everyone in the Bible who had a vision of heaven or wrote about heaven mentions God's throne. The prophet Micaiah speaks of it (1 Kings 22:19). Job seen it (Job 26:9). David seen it (Psalm 9:4 and 9:7, 11:4). Jeremiah (Lam 5:19), Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:26, 10:1). Daniel saw God's throne (Daniel 7:9). The Apostle John saw it & made mention of it in the book of Rev over 35 times! God is sovereign, He is exalted, & He is over the affairs of all creation.

"... & the train of His robe filled the temple." Think about that. Not His robe, just the train of it. You know that part that follows along behind the bride that has others tending to it, taking care of it. The train magnifies priority/majesty & dignity, you don't mow the lawn w/a train dragging behind you. That train signifies you don't serve others, you're served *by* others.

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [Is 2:22]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& We wish Isaiah would've elaborated more but no doubt what he was witnessing (much like the apostle Paul) was too wonderful for human words. When Paul saw heaven (at least I believe it was Paul) he said that he heard things inexpressible, not lawful for a man to utter. There were simply no words appropriate to the human language define/describe the glory & beauty & majesty of it all...

But he tells us, "Above it stood seraphim, each having 6 wings. W/2 he covered his face, w/2 he covered his feet & w/2 he flew." These angelic creatures of God. Some believe these creatures are the same as the cherubim, others see 2 different angelic classes. I'm not sure (for our purposes) it matters. The word "seraphim" means, "burning ones". Evidently they're burning bright before the throne of God. The psalmist (speaking of God) said, "*Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.*"² & Here we have these "burning ones" each having 6 wings.

With 2 they cover their face, w/2 they cover their feet & w/2 they fly. Why do they cover their face & their feet? The truth is, the Bible doesn't say. **The common thought would be that they're covering their face from God's glory (similar to Moses) & they're covering their feet in humility. So that w/4 wings they posture themselves in humility and w/2 they're ready to serve the Lord in any capacity immediately. The picture then would be one of humility and service to the One who sits upon the throne.**

Charles Spurgeon said, "Thus they have four wings for adoration and two for active energy; four to conceal themselves, and two with which to occupy themselves in service; and we may learn from them that we shall serve God best when we are most deeply reverend and humbled in his presence. Veneration must be in larger proportion than vigor, adoration must exceed activity. As Mary at Jesus' feet was preferred to Martha and her much serving, so must sacred reverence take the first place, and energetic service follow in due course." Or as we like to say, our service to God must stem or come out of the overflow of our love for God.

Vs 3-4

Notice the seraphim aren't directly addressing God, they're declaring & testifying of His nature & the wonder of His character to one another in His presence!

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;" why the mention of the word "holy" 3xs? Isn't it enough to say that God is holy? No. It's not.

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 104:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Now, it's possible that there's an allusion here to the Tri-unity of the Godhead. Holy is the Father, Holy is the Son, Holy is the Spirit. But also is the fact that in the Hebrew, emphasis/intensity is communicated through repetition. To say that God is Holy, is to say something. To say that He is holy, *holy* is to say far more. To say, "holy, holy, *holy*" is to declare that God is holy in the highest possible degree! He completely, absolutely, utterly & categorically holy!

Listen, "holiness" isn't simply one aspect of His nature. It is the very *essence* of His nature. What does that mean? – "Holiness" at its root, carries the idea of being set apart. If we used a microphone exclusively for worship, it was "set apart" for that purpose. You couldn't do announcements in it, mic an instrument w/it, teach a bible study from it, nothing. It was set apart for the one purpose only. There's a sense in which that Microphone would be "holy". It's set apart for a purpose. To call a man a "holy" man, would be to imply that he's set apart for the will/service of God alone.

So, to say that God is "holy in the highest possible degree" is to declare that He is absolutely & in totality separate not only from sin, but from every order of creation. If all creation were to dissolve, the Lord God would remain. God is not a "super-man", smarter than any man, stronger or wiser than any man. He's not a man at all. He's Divine.

Now, humanity is *compatible* Divinity. That's how Jesus was able to clothe Himself in humanity. But even unfallen; humanity is not on the same *scale* as Divinity. God is set apart from all creation. & This (ladies & gentlemen) is fantastic news.

Again, not only does it mean that He is separate from sin, won't tolerate sin, will absolutely obliterate sin & one day remove it from His universe. (Btw that presents a problem for us in that we're *sinner*s... Enter the gospel, praise God? God can save you from your sin, but you have to come His way, & that way is through J.C. who said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*"³)

But because God is intrinsically holy. That means His power is a holy power (of an order infinitely greater than ours, there's nothing He can't do). He doesn't simply have *more* love than we do, His love is of an infinitely greater order (it's altogether separate from ours). His forgiveness, His comfort, His compassion, His wisdom, every nuance of His nature is holy & set apart in a different/infinitely greater way than His creation.

"The whole earth is filled w/His glory." The word "is," isn't in the Hebrew.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 14:6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

So, it could be present tense. Or they could be saying, “The whole earth *will be* filled w/His glory” speaking of the fullness of what God will fulfill in the establishing of His kingdom upon the earth.

But notice these angels were literally “rocking the house” w/their shouts of acclamation, adoration & praise! The posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out. Now, I’d assume heaven’s handiwork is up to code! 😊 This is some powerful praise! My question is, what’s our excuse? Last I knew, no angels have experienced the redeeming work of the cross of J.C.! Would to God that we would receive clarity in whom we worship & blow the roof off w/our voices!

So, we have the scene. The Lord, seated upon a throne, high & lifted up, the hem of His robe filling the temple, there’s royalty, majesty, power & glory. The angels are shouting, singing, declaring God’s praise. He is holy in the highest degree, the earth... filled w/His glory, the doorposts are shaking, the smoke of His Shekinah glory filling the temple.

Vs 5

Clarity brought conviction; conviction brought confession. “Woe is me, for I am undone!” & This is always the result of people coming into the presence of God. When confronted w/the holiness of God. It’s not our humanity we’re struck with. It’s not our mortality that staggers us, it’s our sin, our impurity. “Woe is me for I am undone! For I am unclean!” All these experiences you hear of where people see heaven or see the Lord & come back all peachy... I don’t know... that’s not typical of the scriptural experience. When Job saw the Lord he said, *“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes.”*⁴ When Daniel had a vision of the Lord he said, *“... my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength.”*⁵ He fell w/his face to the ground. When Peter realized who Jesus was, we read, *“...he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’”*⁶ & When John had a vision of the Lord in Rev Ch 1 we read, *“And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.”*⁷

There is something about the awareness of who truly is, that will bring a man low in the awareness of who *he* truly is... a man of unclean lips. Dwelling in the midst of a people of unclean lips... Of course, unclean lips testify of an unclean heart.

Now, that’s not to say that Isaiah wasn’t a godly man prior to this experience. I’m not saying that at all. It’s that the more clearly we see who *God* is, the more clearly we see who *we* are.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Job 42:5–6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Da 10:8]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Lk 5:8]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Re 1:17]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& Listen, being “undone” in the presence of God is not a bad place to be. It creates a profound humility, which will translate into usability. Isaiah is crying out for God to cleanse Him, to make him acceptable in His sight...

Vs 6-7

Clarity led to conviction, led to confession, led to cleansing. When you cry out, when you confess, God will cleanse. What does the Bible say? *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*⁸ One of the Seraphim takes a pair of tongs, grabs hold of a live coal from off the altar, flies to Isaiah & presses it to his lips.

Listen, the throne is for God. The altar is for you & me, it’s where sin is dealt *with*, taken *away* & purged. This no doubt points us to the altar of the cross of J.C. where Jesus bore the “heat”, the full fire of the wrath of God against sin that we might be purged. When our sin was placed upon Him & God poured out the fire of His judgment, our sin was consumed. But Jesus, not being a sinner was not consumed, He conquered death.

Now, we should also note that what happened in Isaiah here was purely of grace. God didn’t say, “If you want to have clean lips, if you want your iniquity taken away & your sin purged, you need to be baptized.” (Or circumcised, or pray so long, or read so much or whatever). God did the whole thing. It was only Isaiah’s to receive by faith.

Something else we want to see is the fact that this was a spiritual transaction. An outward demonstration of the inward purification of the heart. I’m just telling you. If you have a sinful mouth, you can go & kiss all the red-hot charcoal you want, it’s not taking your sin away. This represented the purging of the sin from his heart.

Now look what happens... having been purged of his sin, he’s ready to serve...

Vs 8

Btw, I should point out that Isaiah didn’t passively say, “God I’m here, if You want You can use me...” He actively pursued the Lord to use Him, to send Him. “Here am I! Send me.” Now, God could’ve done the work Himself. He could’ve dispatched any # of angels. But He prefers to *use man, to reach man. A man redeemed can minister the message of redemption. But He won’t force you. If you’re waiting around for God to force you to serve Him, it’s never going to happen. He’s looking for someone willing (It’s that freewill we were talking about last week).* “Whom shall I send, who will go for Us?”

⁸ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [1 Jn 1:9]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

(& Yes, you're seeing another reference to plurality of the singularity of God, whom shall *I* send, who will go for *Us*?)

But the point is that God is looking for people who *want* to be used by Him. Isaiah had seen the Lord for who He was. He'd been cleansed *by* the Lord, now He (w/out hesitation) wanted to minister to others on behalf *of* the Lord... & That's the appropriate order & response.

Vs 9-10

So follow the flow. Clarity leading to conviction, leading to confession, leading to cleansing, leading to the calling, leading to the commission... "Go." When you avail yourself *to* God, you've been cleansed *by* God, God will use your life.

He always has a "go" for you. Whether it's across the world, across the street or across the office, God wants to use you to give His word to others.

Now; the way God would use Isaiah was gonna be tough. God was honest. Like when He called Paul. He said, "I will show him how many things he *must suffer* for My name's sake." He didn't say, "You should serve Me Paul, it'll be really great! I'll provide 1st class tickets, limousines, great hotels, the best of the best for My servants." Paul was shown that he would suffer tremendously, but he answered the call anyway.

God tells Isaiah, "You're going to preach these people to hell." Think about that. "They're not going to repent, but you're going to make them accountable." They'll hear & not understand, they'll see but not perceive. – God's word can change lives, save souls, heal hearts... But it can also condemn, confirm destruction & bring judgment. Paul said that like this, "*For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.*"⁹ The same sun that softens the wax, hardens the clay.

If your heart is soft & your mind is open, you will see, hear, understand w/the heart & be healed (saved). If you're closed off to God, not interested in the truth. Then the same message won't bring you salvation, it'll confirm you in your condemnation. – Like Pharaoh, a person can cross the line so that not wanting to repent, God will confirm you in that position... I don't know where that line is for each person. That's why the Bible says, "*Today is the day of salvation, if you'll hear His voice, don't harden your heart.*"

⁹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [2 Co 2:15-16]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

These Vs (9&10) are quoted 6xs in the N.T. God desires that all men everywhere be saved. But what we're reading here is that God took those who *wouldn't* see & confirmed them so they *couldn't* see.

God won't blind you to the truth against your will, but if you don't want to see it, He won't save you against your will either. And when a person/people cross the line, they've rejected the opportunity to turn & be saved, there's nothing left but judgment. **CLOSE**

Vs 11-13

Isaiah asks a logical question. "How long will I preach to those who won't hear & see & reject Your word?" Essentially God says, "Till destruction comes." "Till there's no one left." Now, God always has his remnant (1/10th in this case). But basically 9 out of every 10 people would reject his message...

But don't miss it. When Isaiah's encounter w/God was concluded. He was no longer a mourner (woe is me), he was missionary. He wasn't on the sidelines, he was in the game. He'd seen the Lord clearly, it brought conviction, confession, cleansing... he heard the calling & despite the difficulty fulfilled his commission. What an example for you & me. May God use our lives for His glory...

Prayer Points:

God, what a powerful passage You've brought us to & through. I pray that its impact will bring forth fruit that remains for Your glory. That You ignite the passion of our praise & worship, that we see You clearly. & Desire Your cleansing continually, & may we lay hold faithfully that for which You've laid hold of us.

Perhaps God is seeking to lay hold of you even now. If God is dealing w/you, don't harden your heart. Open your heart. God can forgive you of all your sin, believe on the Lord J.C. & you will be saved.