

Isaiah 6

- Leaving Isaiah's introduction behind, we move into the book proper
 - Chapter 6 is famously the chapter where Isaiah receives his calling and commissioning as a prophet through a vision of some kind
 - Like John who "went up" into heaven in Rev 4
 - It's also a place where Isaiah receives what has to be one of the strangest and most intriguing missions in the history of missions

[Is. 6:1](#) ¶ In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.

[Is. 6:2](#) Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

[Is. 6:3](#) And one called out to another and said,
" Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts,
The whole earth is full of His glory."

[Is. 6:4](#) And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.

[Is. 6:5](#) Then I said,
" Woe is me, for I am ruined!
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I live among a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

[Is. 6:6](#) ¶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs.

[Is. 6:7](#) 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 introduces his vision with a date: the year of King Uzziah's death
 - King Uzziah is an interesting character in scripture
 - A powerful man who brought great prosperity to Israel - best since Solomon
 - His last years were marked by leprosy brought by God as judgment

[2Chr. 26:15](#) In Jerusalem he made engines of war invented by skillful men to be on the towers and on the corners for the purpose of shooting arrows and great stones. Hence his fame spread afar, for he was marvelously helped until he was strong.

[2Chr. 26:16](#) ¶ But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the LORD his God, for he entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.

[2Chr. 26:17](#) Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the LORD, valiant men.

[2Chr. 26:18](#) They opposed Uzziah the king and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful and will have no honor from the LORD God."

[2Chr. 26:19](#) But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, the leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the altar of incense.

[2Chr. 26:20](#) Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead; and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because the LORD had smitten him.

[2Chr. 26:21](#) King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. And Jotham his son was over the king's house judging the people of the land.

- Josephus adds that:

In the mean time a great [earthquake](#) shook the ground and a rent was made in the temple, and the bright rays of the sun shone through it, and fell upon the king's face, insomuch that the leprosy seized upon him immediately.

- Uzziah died around 742 BC
- And it makes sense to conclude that Isaiah experienced this vision at the start of his ministry, before he received the words in chapters 1-5
- Isaiah then describes a vision of the Lord (Adonay)
 - He is seated on a throne, rum (exalted), nasah (lifted up)
 - The train of His robe filled the temple
 - Angelic beings standing above Him, each having six wings
 - Calling holy...similar to John's vision

[Rev. 4:6](#) Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. ¶ In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.

[Rev. 4:7](#) The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.

[Rev. 4:8](#) Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

- Isaiah hears the voice of the Lord and trembles
 - And declares that as a unclean man he is ruined because He has seen the Lord of hosts
 - First, consider Isaiah's reaction as an opportunity to get a sense, a glimpse of what fear of the Lord looks like
 - We love to compare ourselves to others to gain a sense of worth
 - Wrong standard - compare yourself to God and what happens - fear
 - We consider God and our future opportunity to live in His presence - this is something all but impossible to consider in our present condition
 - So we should look through the eyes of Isaiah and see ourselves in his place
 - We would feel the same fear, unimaginable
 - There is a fear of death
 - Then there is a fear of eternal condemnation
 - The Bible consistently teaches a principle that God's holiness is so unapproachable that it places anyone who has sin in mortal danger if they enter His presence
 - Because God's righteousness compels Him to bring judgment against sin

[Ex. 33:18](#) ¶ Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

[Ex. 33:19](#) ¶ And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

[Ex. 33:20](#) But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

- It's for this reason that Paul can say that no man has actually seen God's face:

[1Tim. 6:13](#) I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate,
[1Tim. 6:14](#) that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,
[1Tim. 6:15](#) which He will bring about at the proper time — He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,
[1Tim. 6:16](#) who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

- So how is it that Isaiah can say here that he saw the Lord?
 - First, remember that the scene around the throne is not something that a man cannot see
 - Strictly speaking, it is the Father's "face" or the unapproachable light
 - We might say that the light of God is as difficult to see as the sun in the heavens
 - It's always above us, yet we live out entire life without actually looking at it except when it's low in the sky
 - In this case, Isaiah never saw the Father - He saw the member of the Godhead who was made to be seen by men

[John 12:36](#) "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." ¶ These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

[John 12:37](#) But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him...

[John 12:41](#) These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.

- So, this is a scene in which the preincarnate Christ is seated on the throne

[Col. 1:15](#) ¶ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

[Heb. 1:3](#) And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

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- Isaiah mentions his sinfulness in connection to his lips
 - We know the Bible speaks in numerous places about how the mouth is a window into the heart
 - But in this case, Isaiah probably localized his sin to the lips in contrast to what he was seeing around him
 - Pure creatures singing nothing but praise to God
 - Oh that we could ever say the same about our our mouths - nothing but praise for God
- Then in response to Isaiah's guilt, one of these winged creatures took a burning coal from beneath the altar in heaven
 - There is an altar in Heaven! And altars are for sacrifice
 - And so this is the true altar upon which Christ's blood will be poured when He entered into the true tabernacle upon His ascension (Heb 9)
 - But at the time Isaiah is presented with this vision, this perfect sacrifice on this altar had not yet taken place
 - So there has not yet been a removal of sin through the blood of Christ
 - What could take place, therefore, was only a temporary covering or atoning for sin
 - Since no other blood is available (since the only blood sacrifice that takes place in God's throne room is Jesus' once for all offering - there are no animals sacrificed in heaven)
 - Therefore, fire must used to cleanse Isaiah
 - Since he mentions lips, God touches the fire to his lips
 - And then the creature says iniquity (guilt) is taken away

- And sin is forgiven (kaphar) atoned or covered
- Sin can only be covered before Christ's death and it is always temporary
- True removal of sin awaited Christ's death
- From the state of temporary atonement, Isaiah receives his commission

[Is. 6:8](#) 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!"

[Is. 6:9](#) He said, "Go, and tell this people:

'Keep on listening, but do not perceive;
Keep on looking, but do not understand.'

[Is. 6:10](#) "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."

[Is. 6:11](#) Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered,
"Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant,
Houses are without people
And the land is utterly desolate,

[Is. 6:12](#) "The LORD has removed men far away,
And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

[Is. 6:13](#) "Yet there will be a tenth portion in it,
And it will again be subject to burning,
Like a terebinth or an oak
Whose stump remains when it is felled.
The holy seed is its stump."

- The Lord asks this fantastic question: Who shall I send, who will go for Us?
 - Isaiah's visions were truly special
 - He sees the Messiah on His throne
 - And he hears the revelation of the Trinity expressed, much as Moses did
 - I've always found this request a bit humorous because of the way I imagine the scene

- One of two ways...either Isaiah responds eagerly because he wants to be chosen (but then who else would God choose under the circumstances)?
 - Or Isaiah answers with a bit of trepidation after noticing that there is no one else
 - Either way, the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable
 - God wanted Isaiah to make the commitment to serve in this capacity
 - Once he raised his voice, he was a prophet for life
- His commission is quite unusual
 - He gets a mission destined to failure - 100% guaranteed
 - In verse 9 God says Go and tell this people (Israel)
 - Keep on listening, keep on looking (at the prophets and God's word)
 - But don't let these messengers nor their messages penetrate your understanding
 - Furthermore, Isaiah through his ministry will render the the hearts of the people insensitive
 - Insensitive is shamen, meaning to grow fat (fat, dumb and happy)
 - Dull ears, dim eyes
 - In simple words: Numb these people with your words, until they stop hearing you
 - Why?
 - Obviously, because if they listen to you, then they might see what's coming, recognize the seriousness of their circumstances and then seek forgiveness
 - And if they seek forgiveness, then God is obligated to receive them and provide that forgiveness
 - Why is this the case? What's God up to here?

- First, remember the basis for God's judgment on Israel through Isaiah
 - They violated the Old Covenant, and therefore God is obligated to carry out judgment for that sin
 - Isaiah's ministry begins the formal indictment and pronouncement of that judgment
 - That's why it's significant that this vision happened in the year of Uzziah's death
 - The year of Uzziah's death is also the year that Rome was established
 - God was turning a page in history at this moment, causing great Gentile nations to begin to rise, like the one mentioned in chapter 5 (Babylon)
 - God preparing to usher in the times of the Gentiles which lead us all the way until the Lord's return
 - And at the moment of the Lord's return, a loophole in God's Covenant with Israel will take effect
 - What loophole?
- First, we start in Deut chapter 28 shows the contrast of blessings versus curses:

[Deut. 28:1](#) ¶ " Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

[Deut. 28:2](#) "All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God...

- Twelve verses of blessing
- Then later, the curses:

[Deut. 28:15](#) ¶ " But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...

- The curses last until verse 68 - 53 verses of curses
 - Could Israel have ever succeeded in meeting these terms?
 - The curses were all but assured

- Then in chapter 29, Moses summarizes their situation as they prepare to formally agree to the covenant

[Deut. 29:1](#) ¶ These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the sons of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He had made with them at Horeb.

[Deut. 29:2](#) ¶ And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, "You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and all his servants and all his land;

[Deut. 29:3](#) the great trials which your eyes have seen, those great signs and wonders.

[Deut. 29:4](#) "Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear.

- Sound familiar to Isaiah?
- Despite all that had happened to them in coming out of Egypt, they still had not been given the capacity to follow God truly - God wasn't ready yet
 - So in Deut 29 Moses relates how they will break the covenant and be scattered and judged for their disobedience
 - But in Deut 30, Moses describes a coming redemption

[Deut. 30:1](#) ¶ "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you,

[Deut. 30:2](#) and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons,

[Deut. 30:3](#) then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.

[Deut. 30:4](#) "If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back.

[Deut. 30:5](#) "The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

[Deut. 30:6](#) ¶ "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.

[Deut. 30:7](#) "The LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you.

[Deut. 30:8](#) "And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe all His commandments which I command you today.

- When God is ready, He says He will regather Israel (presently ongoing)

- And He will bless them in the Land
 - How can these things happen? How can Israel please God according to a covenant they can't keep?
- Notice He regathers them in conjunction with giving them a new heart, one capable of obeying the commandments of God
 - This has not happened yet (Jer 31:31)

[Jer. 31:31](#) ¶ "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

[Jer. 31:32](#) not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

[Jer. 31:33](#) "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

[Jer. 31:34](#) "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

- This is the moment of regeneration that comes upon Israel at the moment of Christ's return
- So on a future day, the nation is finally able to perform perfectly the requirements of the Old Covenant, because they won't be sinful people
 - They will be new creatures in spirit and body
- But until that day comes, God is not ready to open their eyes and unstop their ears for He doesn't want them to return until the appointed time
 - Because when Israel does return and seek forgiveness, God must give it to them
 - This brings us to the loophole I mentioned earlier
 - God added a promise in the terms of the OC that obligates Him to bring Israel the blessings of this covenant even if they have not met its terms

[Lev. 26:39](#) ` So those of you who may be left will rot away because of their iniquity in the lands of your enemies; and also because of the iniquities of their forefathers they will rot away with them.

[Lev. 26:40](#) ¶ ` If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me —

[Lev. 26:41](#) I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies — or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity,

[Lev. 26:42](#) then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land.

[Lev. 26:43](#) ` For the land will be abandoned by them, and will make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes.

[Lev. 26:44](#) ` Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God.

[Lev. 26:45](#) ` But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.'"

- If and when Israel confesses its sin and the sin of the forefathers in acting with hostility toward God - then God will honor the covenant made Abraham
 - But God has a moment when that turn of Israel toward God will happen

[Zech. 12:8](#) ` In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD before them.

[Zech. 12:9](#) ` And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

[Zech. 12:10](#) ¶ ` I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

[Zech. 12:11](#) ` In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

[Zech. 12:12](#) ` The land will mourn, every family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves;

[Zech. 12:13](#) the family of the house of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself and their wives by themselves;

[Zech. 12:14](#) all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves.

- This is the appointed moment for God to turn Israel
 - Notice the connections to the earlier verses we read
 - The nation is back in it's land (after regathering)
 - Their is national confessions and mourning over the past sins of their forefathers and the hostility in which they acted against God
 - They come to realization because of the pouring out of the Spirit of grace
 - Just Jer 31 promised - no one will need to teach another to know the Lord, for all will know Him
 - And in Deut 30 when God said in the day when you return to me with your whole heart, circumcise the hearts of your children and you will prosper as chief nation
 - In other words, as God places all these steps in place, He established that Israel's repentance under the Old Covenant brings that contract to an end and results in all the blessings materializing
 - But that outpouring can only happen when the nation has a changed heart and returns to God in unison
- God is going to hold that day off until He reaches His appointed time and pours out His Spirit
 - And in the meaning time, He carries out the curses as required
 - And God has purposed this period of judgment and waiting to give opportunity for the Gentiles

[John 12:37](#) But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him.

[John 12:38](#) This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?"

[John 12:39](#) For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again,

[John 12:40](#) " HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM."

[John 12:41](#) These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.

- The rejection of Christ in His day was a part of God's plan to withhold forgiveness for Israel during that time
 - Isaiah's day is merely the beginning of that judgment

[Rom. 11:7](#) ¶ What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;

[Rom. 11:8](#) just as it is written,

“GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR,
EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT,
DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY.”

[Rom. 11:9](#) And David says,

“LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP,
AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.

[Rom. 11:10](#) “LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT,
AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER.”

[Rom. 11:11](#) ¶ I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

[Rom. 11:25](#) ¶ For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery — so that you will not be wise in your own estimation — that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

[Rom. 11:26](#) and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,

“THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

[Rom. 11:27](#) “THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,
WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”

[Rom. 11:28](#) From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;

[Rom. 11:29](#) for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

[Rom. 11:30](#) For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience,

[Rom. 11:31](#) so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy.

[Rom. 11:32](#) For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.