



COMMISSIONED

A BIBLE STUDY BY MICHELLE KAREN D'SILVA





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TODAY'S SCATTERED SEED

***“Then I heard the voice of the
Lord saying, “Whom shall I send,
and who will go for us?”
And I said, “Here am I; send me!”***

ISAIAH 6:8



SETTING THE SCENE

The Prophet Isaiah was a giant of Jewish history. Having served as an advisor to the kings of Judah, Isaiah was matchless in his knowledge, eloquence, and discernment. Isaiah's record occurred at a crucial time in Israel's history. A civil war had split the nation into the northern (Israel) and southern (Judah) kingdoms, which eventually led to the destruction of the temple.

Isaiah (whose name means "the Lord saves") warned the kings and the people of Israel that their downfall was imminent if they did not repent. God, however, told Isaiah that although the people would not listen, he was to speak and record His messages for future generations to come. And record he did: we, who are part of that future, now see the promises of Isaiah about the coming Messiah fulfilled through the person of Christ in the New Testament. In pondering this realized prophecy, we gain an assured hope that God is active in all of history, including our own.

In the subject of this study, the nation of Judah is facing a crisis with the death of King Uzziah (also called Azariah). Uzziah was one of the greatest monarchs in Israel's history; he reigned for 52 years and raised Jerusalem to greater prominence even than King David. His death thrust them into a period of national unrest and instability. Would the new king put the needs of the people before his own? Would he honor the God of Israel? What would the future look like?

With all this in mind, Isaiah entered the Temple of God with tired eyes and a heavy heart, presumably looking for some consolation and to pray for his beloved nation. It is here that the prophet received a direct calling from God delivered through Seraphs—angels who serve as God's messengers.



CONVICTION

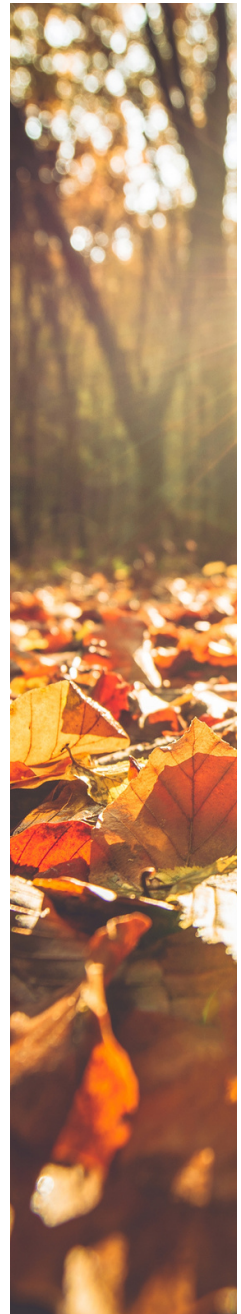
“Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

ISAIAH 6:5

Isaiah begins in chapter 6 describing what he saw as he entered the temple of God. He saw the Lord seated on the throne, His garment filling the entire temple. During that time, only the high priest was allowed to enter the inner sanctuary of the Temple (the place of the altar where God revealed His Glory and where sacrifices were offered for the sins of the people). Isaiah the prophet had entered the sanctuary of heaven, but more than that, he was invited into the very heart of God. Seeing his grief, despair, and fear over the future of Israel, God made Himself known to the prophet bringing him comfort and strength.

An earthly king had died, bringing much unrest and uncertainty. Isaiah was reminded through this vision that God was greater than any earthly king. King Uzziah may have had the longest reign of any temporal king, but the real King, the Lord, who is King of Kings, would reign forever on His throne. He was King then, and He is King today— even in the midst of our evolving world, in times of uncertainty and in times of crisis. The eternal King is One who never tires (Isaiah 40:28). He is a King who never sleeps (Psalm 121:3-4).

Isaiah saw the Lord surrounded by “Seraphs,” a term that appears only in the book of Isaiah and means “the burning ones.” Each seraph had six wings and cried to its companions in symphony with a sound that shook the very foundations of the Temple. “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isaiah 6:3) teaching us that the Holiness of God is an inescapable reality of our lives.





While we might think of this invitation as a great privilege, Isaiah was terrified. Not only did He see God is all His Glory, he also saw himself. Isaiah may have even recalled the word of God given to Moses, “no one shall see me and live” (Exodus 33:20).

Think about the word ‘Holiness’ for a moment. We live in a time where little is spoken about holiness. Perhaps we think of holiness as something restricted only to the Sabbath or confined to moral purity, but holiness is so much more.

The word “holy”, in both the original Hebrew and Greek translations, conveys the idea of separateness. In sacred scripture, when something was said to be holy, it implied that it was set apart for God. This is also where we derive the word “consecrated.” The priestly garments, for example, were considered holy, as were the vessels used only at the altar—they were ‘set apart’ for God. Holiness therefore indicates a total separation from all that is impure, morally sinful, and imperfect. It is this holiness that God mercifully imparts to us in His grace. It is only by Grace that we can be holy as God is Holy (1 Peter 1:15).

When Isaiah saw the vision, his heart was shattered. The fire of God’s presence burned his heart and exposed his soul. Gifted though he was, the sin that soaked his humanity was exposed. Seeing his own impurity, he cried out, “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips” (Isaiah 6:5).

“Woe is me” - Think about his disposition for a moment. This is a statement of deep sorrow and utter despair. Isaiah was undone before God’s Glory.

**SOW:**

Read Isaiah 61:9; Additionally, 1 Peter 1:15, Exodus 33:20

**CULTIVATE:**

Think about the words: Woe is me! Do you see yourself beholding the holiness of God? What does this passage teach you about your own holiness?

**GROW:**

Isaiah was comforted and convicted. Make a list of the areas in which you need comfort and those of which you are convicted. Then thank God for His grace and the ability to see yourself in His presence.



***Faced with God's
fascinating and mysterious
presence, man discovers his
own insignificance.***

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, 208



CLEANSING

“Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.”

ISAIAH 6:7



Isaiah acknowledged that he was a man of unclean lips. But what would “unclean lips” mean for a prophet? Would it imply gossip, anger, cynicism, lies, or slander? We are not informed of his sin, but we do know the place of his infirmity.

Scripture frequently uses the symbol of lips, tongue, or mouth as revealing agents to describe the condition of the human heart. Jesus often pointed to the things that defiled a man, highlighting that it is not what he ate or wore, but rather issues that proceeded from within (Matthew 15:19).

We must remember that Isaiah was not invited into God’s presence by mistake. The Lord brought him there for a specific purpose. But before Isaiah could be commissioned, he needed conviction and cleansing; before he could pronounce repentance on Judah, he needed to repent; before he could use his mouth to preach, he needed the anointing of God on his lips.



Notice what happens when there is repentance. When Isaiah acknowledged his sin and declared his dependency on God, God hastened to provide a remedy. Through the Seraphs, God sent the coal of fire symbolizing his purification and refining, burning Isaiah's heart to follow after God's will even at great cost.

Some biblical scholars indicate that this powerful cleansing coal is a figure of the Eucharist. Just as Isaiah was purified by the burning coal, we are purified each time we receive Holy Communion. The Eucharist heals us from our daily impurities, removes venial sin, and disposes us to receive more of God's grace.

Up to this point, the prophet had only seen God and heard the resounding chorus of angels. Now Isaiah hears the voice of God. Crucially, the original translation suggests that God was speaking to Isaiah throughout this experience, but that Isaiah could not hear Him until he acknowledged his sin was forgiven. God does not ignore our sin, He desires to forgive us so that we can be set free to hear His voice and follow His leading for our life.

**SOW:**

Read Isaiah 61:9; Additionally, Matthew 15:19

**CULTIVATE:**

Because of his sin, Isaiah knew what it was like to feel fragile. What voices (sins) are competing with God's voice in your life right now? Where in your life do you need the coal of God? What is your undoing? What does Isaiah's vision teach you about the Lord's nature and character?

**GROW:**

Break up into prayer partners and spend some time in prayer.



COMMISSIONING

***“Whom shall I send, and
who will go for us?”***

ISAIAH 6:8

Finally, God calls Isaiah to a challenge. He explains to Isaiah that he had a plan for his remnant people (verse 13) and would be merciful unto them. We gain encouragement from God’s promise to preserve His people

In verse 8, Isaiah responded “Here am I; send me!”. It takes a little courage, a bit of bravery, a pinch of panache to say to God, “Send me!” Yet faith changes us from being fearful to audacious. It is heartening to observe how quickly God affirmed Isaiah’s call. In verse 9, we read the word that commissions Isaiah: “Go”.

“Go” implies God’s call over Isaiah’s life. “Go” implies that sin does not diminish God’s purposes for our life. Often, failure, sin, and habitual mistakes hinder us in listening to God’s call. But God assures us through the prophet Isaiah that though we may sin, He does not remove His plan and purpose for us. Though Isaiah’s life began with many challenges, it ended with the mercy and forgiveness of a faithful God.



SOW:

Read Isaiah 6:8; Additional verses: Acts 26:16-1, Ephesians 3:8



CULTIVATE:

Do you sense God calling you? What can you learn about God’s mercy from this passage? Ponder the word: GO.



GROW:

Speak to a mentor, priest or friend and pray through Isaiah 6 to discern God’s call for you. Perhaps express why you refrain and hold back from the voice of God.



***“Here am I;
send me!”***

ISAIAH 6:8