

**Isaiah 6:1-8(ESV)** <sup>1</sup>In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup>Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup>And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"<sup>4</sup>And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup>And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" <sup>6</sup>Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup>And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for. <sup>8</sup>And 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."

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Isaiah chapter six contains content that is literally out of this world. If the temperature of Scripture could be kept, Isaiah 6 would have one of the highest of temperatures found in the Bible. Exodus 20 would also be super high when God spoke to Moses on Mt. Sinai giving the 10 commandments. The Lord God is revealed in Isaiah chapter 6. The closest we get to seeing the actual Person, the Lord God in the Old Testament is found in this chapter. I have studied this chapter since the mid 70's. 1. **The holiness of God is the major theme.** Honestly, I cannot do God's holiness justice because I am such a sinner. There have been times in my life when I have sensed God's holiness profoundly and enjoyed every second of it. On the other hand, the more of God's holiness we experience the deeper the sense of our own sinfulness. We are entirely undone. Our sin is exposed completely. We are fully naked and all that we can see is our sinfulness. The weight of our sins is unbearable.

God's holiness is so great that our imaginations cannot begin to understand the vastness of it. There is nothing on this earth, or in the universe, that compares to God. The universe itself is not big enough to contain the full Presence of God. Our God is no pipsqueak. One word and God brought the entire universe into being. If you want to compare yourself to God, please do not do that. We are absolutely nothing compared to God. One word and God will make a new heaven and a new earth. It is called re-creation and it will happen in the blink of an

eye. It will happen instantly. It will not take millions of years to do something that God does in a single second. God's creating and re-creating power is unlimited. One day that will fully be understood.

**2. For the most part Uzziah was a good king until his pride got the best of him.** For 52 years Uzziah reigned in Jerusalem, ascending to the kingship at the age of 16. In January of 1969, 52 years ago, President Johnson's administration ended during the height of the Vietnam war/conflict and President Nixon was inaugurated. Those of you who were alive during President Roosevelt's administration felt like he was president forever. His presidency was a mere 12 years compared to Uzziah's 52 years.

**3. Uzziah began his reign "doing what was right in the in the sight of the Lord."** He put God first and God blessed his early reign. I quote, *"He was victorious in battle over the Philistines and other nations. He built towers in Jerusalem and strengthened the city walls. He dug massive cisterns in the desert and stimulated great expansion of the nation's agriculture. He restored the military power of Judah to a standard almost as high as it had been under David. For most of his career Uzziah was noted as a great and beloved king"* (R.C. Sproul, The Holiness of God, pg.31).

**4. Uzziah's reign ends badly and sadly.** His success went to his head. He entered the tabernacle and took it upon himself to do an activity that God only allowed the priests to do. 88 priests tried to stop him from committing such an atrocity. In the past, when things were not done properly, the immediate judgment of God occurred, putting to death those that did not honor God in all of God's holiness. Uzziah tried to play God. (Ibid. pg. 31).

A word about this. A fault that some of us have in the church, including myself, is this. We confuse what we want for the church for what God wants. One's desires and wishes for St. Mark can be really good, but it is not what God wants. We worship God in the splendor of God's holiness, no small thing indeed. Our own personal desires of what we think worship ought to be

can hinder the actual work that God wants to do during our time of worship. We never want to mess with God's holiness. It can be downright dangerous and yes, quite destructive. It is time to get our eyes off of ourselves during worship and simply focus on God and all of God's holiness. When that happens something supernatural happens in worship and it is never boring. **5. God's Holy Presence brings new life not boring deadness.**

Uzziah became enraged at the priests. He screamed at them in fury. God struck him with leprosy. I see God being gracious to Uzziah, striking him with leprosy and not death as he did to the sons of Aaron. Uzziah could never enter the temple again and lived in a separate house from the palace until he died. A man who served God well until he became too full of himself and his own opinions. He dishonored the priests of the temple in front of God and all and did he ever pay a price. It is best to stay humble before God for obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22). When God humbles those with pride it marks them, and they are never the same. Watch out.

Isaiah 6:1,"*In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.*" Isaiah was in deep grief. The king was dead. Isaiah had done his best to speak the Word of God to the king, no easy task. Isaiah had a heart for the king, a God-given burden to bear. It is quite possible Isaiah entered the temple to receive consolation in a time of national and personal grief. I wish more of you would enter the sanctuary during the week for a time of prayer and silence before our Holy God.

From deep grief to utter ecstasy. Isaiah opens his eyes, and he sees the Lord, the great Sovereign King. Judah's king was dead but the real King, our Sovereign God still reigns above. I think in the first moments as Isaiah was fixed on what he saw, his entire being was filled with bliss, heavenly bliss, as some call it an ecstatic experience. This is Isaiah's call by God to serve God full time as a prophet for the rest of his life. It is one of the most magnificent callings found in the Bible. Isaiah was changed forever and what he saw and heard comes out in every

chapter in the book of Isaiah. The New Testament quotes from the book of Isaiah more than all of the other prophets combined. An Old Testament prophet saw the Lord before he was born of the virgin Mary. In the very Throne Room of God he saw and heard things we will not see or hear until God brings us home. I believe he looked at the earth from God's perspective and saw all of human history from the time of Adam and Eve to the time of the second coming. I say this because his prophecies are all over the place, sighting historical happenings as well as future happenings up until the second coming. He saw it all.

**6. The greatest vision ever was seeing the Lord God Almighty in all of God's holiness.** The angels, called seraphim, are heavenly creatures. Even though they are sinless they cannot gaze at the Lord God. They have to cover their eyes and even their feet in the Presence of God. When Jesus comes again our positions in heaven will be higher than the angels for then we will see God face to face. The angels are not given that right in the exalted presence of God.

*<sup>3</sup>And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" <sup>4</sup>And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.* These verses say more about God than can ever be learned this side of eternity. In Hebrew poetry the trifold holy means there is nothing on this earth that compares to God. God is holy other. There is no being more holy than God for God is the holiest of all. God is perfect in every way, without a dark side, without a shadow, only pure, right, faultless, and righteous in every way. His holiness is so holy that God is described at times as unapproachable light. There is no sight in the universe compared to the Holy Presence of the Lord God Almighty. God has never done anything wrong or made a mistake.

One scholar writes this of the threefold holy. "It is perfection x perfection x perfection. His holiness is simply his God-ness in all his attributes, works, and ways. God alone is God. He is not like us.

I think it right and healthy to focus on God's holiness especially when someone we love is taken from us. I think it is best to focus on the holiness of God as our nation continues to sink into the morass of sin. God's holiness is uplifting. There is no one greater than God and yes, we are in relationship with Him.

**7. Woe is me. I am a dirty rotten sinner.** *<sup>5</sup>And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"* I have called all of us dirty rotten sinners and I know Isaiah would agree. Enjoying the Holy Presence of God, Isaiah became more than aware of his dirty rotten sinfulness, his creatureliness in the Presence of the Creator. It is as if he dis-integrated. He fell into pieces. He became unraveled. He felt the entire weight of everyone of his sins and he thought he was going to die. "For the wages of sin is death"(Romans 6:23).

Friends, please hear what I am about to say. Today, God is cleaning house. God is separating the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the tares, the true Christians from the fake believers. God is presently exposing sin, right and left, and God's patience with our sin is nearly spent. Church leaders, yes, Christian leaders are falling like flies all across our nation. The world has entered the church instead of the church impacting the nation for Christ. God is humbling us, convicting us of our sin, for God is tired of our sinful ways. What is being said in public and private, what is coming out of our mouths offends God when we put our own thoughts and words above God's. Listening to the leaders of our time is highly offensive to people who live by Biblical convictions. There are a lot of dirty mouths out there.

*<sup>6</sup>Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup>And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.* **8. There is no blessing greater than the total and complete forgiveness of all of our sins being atoned for by Jesus.** One

of Isaiah's greatest sins was his mouth. Dr R.C. Sproul writes, "The tongue is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. This was the realization of Isaiah. He recognized that he was not alone in his dilemma. He understood that the whole nation was infected with dirty mouths: "I live among a people of unclean lips" (pg.45). In the flash of the moment Isaiah had a new and radical understanding of sin. He saw that it was pervasive, in himself and in everyone else. **9. God showed Isaiah his corruption all at once.** There was no place to hide. Isaiah was naked and alone before God, full of sin and it was ugly.

**10. God's grace is greater than our sin for the blood of Jesus atones, covers them all.** The coal from the altar that touched his lips burned his sin out of him, being refined by Holy fire. The coal of fire represents the finished work of Jesus on the cross. Jesus' work on the cross was applied to Isaiah and Isaiah felt the weight of his sins removed. He received a full pardon. The relief he felt was heavenly. The Holy Presence of God had done the great cleansing work. Isaiah now had the confidence to be a spokesperson for God. He was fully forgiven and set on God's mission for him for the rest of his life. The call was irrevocable. God's holiness grabbed him, and Isaiah felt that for the rest of his life. Amen and Amen.