

# Isaiah's Revelation and Response

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Now, with the Lord's help, we pray, let us turn and consider words we have in this portion of scripture we've read.
- The prophecy of Isaiah and chapter 6. We may again read verse 1.
- In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.
- One or two thoughts on this experience that the prophet Isaiah had. On that particular occasion.
- We find that this revelation was given to Isaiah in the year in which King Uzziah died.
- [ 1 : 09 ] And the scripture is very clear as to what kind of king King Uzziah was. If you read in 2 Chronicles 26, you find there the account of scripture of that man's reign.
- And seemingly his reign was very prosperous for many years. He reigned for a total of 52 years in Judah. And for many of these years, things went very well because the Lord was with him.
- But one day it came into his mind that he would like to burn incense in the temple. And he got a censer, which was a brass container.
- And they used to have embers from the fire of the altar in the censer. Then they would put incense onto these hot embers.
- And the incense would rise as a fragrance in the holy place of the temple. And he went in with the intention that he would offer incense.
- [ 2 : 31 ] But the priests who were there, they objected because it wasn't his business to come into that holy precinct.
- He was king, but he wasn't a priest. And he took upon himself to do this, thinking that he was all-powerful.
- And the priests objected and they tried to oppose him coming in. And he became angry. And as King Uzziah became angry, so did leprosy appear in his forehead.
- It rose up, as it were, with the anger of his heart. And he realized he was a leper. And the priests hurried him out of the temple.
- And it says in the scripture that from that day onwards, he lived in a house separate from everybody else. That was the treatment they had for lepers in that particular time.
- [ 3 : 41 ] He lived in a separate house for the rest of his life. And this year in which he died, the Lord saw fit to reveal his glory to the prophet Isaiah.
- And I'd like just to say two or three things. First of all, about the revelation that the Lord gave of himself to the prophet here. The revelation.
- Secondly, the response or the effect that revelation had upon the prophet. And thirdly, the response he gave to the Lord's words, Whom shall I send and who will go for us?
- The response of Isaiah immediately was, Here am I. Send me. And then follows the kind of opposition he was to expect as a preacher of God's word.

I told this recently. I came across someone who was preaching on the difficulties of preaching in our present day.

[ 5 : 03 ] And this man says it's like preaching into the wind. You know, when the wind is against you and the wind is strong, it seems to carry your voice away.

And that's exactly the kind of situation that faced Isaiah in his day. People had gone away from the Lord. There was a kind of a wind of sin blowing in his face every minute and every word he spoke.

To the extent that in Isaiah 53 we find this statement of the prophet, Who has believed our report? It's as if nobody was believing him.

Nobody was listening. And that's the kind of day we find ourselves in. We have to preach into the wind. And we ask the Lord to give us strength to preach into the opposition, into the opposing forces of our day and generation.

Firstly then, the revelation that the Lord was pleased to give of himself to the prophet Isaiah.

[ 6 : 15 ] It was in the year the king Uzziah died. And as I mentioned a moment ago, he died a leper. And there's a sense in which his life at that point leading up to his death was typical of the life of the nation.

The nation had become leprous in a spiritual way. They had turned their back upon God. They had said we will not have this rule of God to be the rule of our lives.

You see what it says at the very beginning of the prophecy of Isaiah in chapter 1. And at verse 3 it says, The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib.

But Israel does not know, my people doth not consider. Verse 4 in chapter 1, And then right throughout the whole of the first chapter there, it highlights the spiritual poverty into which the nation had fallen.

And now the Lord appears to the prophet Isaiah. And how does the Lord reveal himself? Well it says here that he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

[ 8 : 08 ] He revealed himself as one sitting upon a throne. The king Isaiah had been on the throne for 52 years in Judah, but he had died.

Kings come and kings go. People come and people go. Great men come and great men die. But the Lord here is making this point so clearly, that the Lord, even with the king having died, the Lord is sitting upon his throne.

He is enthroned forever. In Psalm 93 we have this at the very beginning of the psalm. The Lord doth reign, and clothed is he with majesty most bright.

And then verse 2, Thy throne is fixed of old, and thou from everlasting art. The Lord is king forever.

And he reveals that to the prophet David on that particular occasion. And he is sitting upon a throne. What kind of throne?

[ 9 : 29 ] Well the throne obviously is an indication of his glory and sovereignty. And that calls us to worship him.

The throne of government. Despite the fact that the king had died, God still is the governor of the universe. It is a throne of grace, thankfully, to which we are called, even to come boldly this day.

And also it is a throne of judgment. When you read in Matthew chapter 25, that marvelous account we have there of the judgment at the last day, we see Christ sitting upon his throne, and the whole of humanity gathered before him.

And he will divide them as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. And he will just, justly judge every individual.

You will be there. I will be there. I will have to give an account of everything that I have ever done in this life. And so will you. And what I say I hear so, is a reminder to us also, that this God is enthroned, and we must not try and challenge his sovereignty.

[ 10 : 57 ] We must rather come and seek to worship him, because he is the one worthy of our worship and our adoration.

He is high and lifted up. Now when you read in John's Gospel chapter 12, at verse 41, it would indicate there that this is a revelation of Christ.

Before he came to take human nature to himself, he appeared to many of the Old Testament saints, as it were, showing himself in human nature.

Although he hadn't actually taken human nature until he was born of the Virgin, yet without sin. Nevertheless, through the Old Testament years, he revealed himself.

And I believe this is one of the occasions in which he revealed himself as the King. And he is high and he is lifted up.

[ 12 : 06 ] And it says also, his train filled the temple.

The hem of his garment. That's what it means literally. It's as if the very hem of his garment, which is the very edge, as you know, of the garment, that filled the temple.

It's not as if the temple could contain himself. It couldn't. The hem of his garment filled the temple.

The hem of his garment fills the universe. The hem of his garment fills the church in the world. The hem of his garment fills my soul.

And this is what it says here. It filled the temple. His train filled the temple. In other words, there was no space for anyone else.

[ 13 : 24 ] And that's the way the Lord is. When he appears and when he comes into our experience, there must not be others to whom we bow.

He is the one before whom we bow. He is the one before whom we must prostrate ourselves. He is the one alone whom we must worship and love and adore.

It is his will we need to do and not our own. You see, when his train or the hem of his garment fills my life, I bow before him.

And we see here that above this throne stood the seraphim. Seraphim, literally the burning ones.

These throne attendants. angels angels called seraphims. Each one had six wings.

[ 14 : 33 ] With two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly. Isn't it amazing?

these are unfallen and holy angels, the seraphim, the throne attendants. And it says here that they are so respectful of God that they cover themselves in his presence.

With two of their wings they covered their face. Isn't there a lesson there for me and for you? When we come into the presence of God, that we bow before him appropriately and present ourselves before him appropriately.

If the unfallen and sinless and perfectly holy angels cover their faces, how much more? When I think of the sin that may have gone through my mind even since I came into this building, when I think of the sins of yesterday, when I think of the sins of last week, I need to bow before him and say I need to cover my face in shame and confession.

And also with two of the wings he covered his feet. It's as if they are saying I am something like Moses was told to do at the burning bush and the Lord said to Moses at that point, take your shoes from off your feet for the ground on which you are standing is holy ground.

- [ 16 : 26 ] It's as if they feel it's inappropriate for them to have their feet as it were uncovered, but to cover their feet in the presence of holiness, in the presence of the all-seeing and all-glorious God.

And with two wings he did fly. Commentators suggest here that when God gives a command to his angels they instantly fulfill the command.

They are ready to do his bidding. Whatever God asks of them to do, they are ready and willing to immediately do it.

With two wings he did fly. And then something else. It wasn't just a visual impact this whole experience had upon Isaiah.

It says in verse three he heard something and what did he hear? One cried unto another and said holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

- [ 17 : 46 ] The whole earth is full of his glory. one seraphim called to another. It's as if they were repeating again and again this marvellous song of praise and adoration focusing on the holiness of God.

Holy, holy, holy as the Lord of hosts. People say that using the word holy three times is an indication of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Others say that it could mean the plural of majesty. unity. In the Hebrew you often find that something that is used in the plural is an indication of an intensifying of what the word means.

And this I believe is something we have here. It's an illustration of how holy our God is. And the holy seraphim sing that praise.

Holy, holy, holy. You know the word holy means separate. Separate.

- [ 19 : 31 ] Not just separate physically, but ethically as well. God is so pure. God is so holy that he is different from us.

He is separate from us. Besides being a different kind of being from us, he is also ethically different in that there is no sin in him.

He is perfectly free from sin of any kind. And we see here in verse four that the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried and the house was filled with smoke.

This is a visual impact also. He looked and the posts of the door were moving at the voice of him that cried.

It seems that this is the voice of the Lord himself. this substantial building is no match for the voice of the Almighty.

- [ 20 : 49 ] And we see that in another place also in the jail at Philippi where Paul and Silas were imprisoned in the innermost prison and their feet in the stocks.

And you remember at midnight they were singing the praises of God and all of a sudden an earthquake came. Who brought the earthquake? I believe it's the same one who caused the doors of the temple to move.

In this particular case in Isaiah chapter 6 it's the voice of God. He who spoke the universe into being by a word of power isn't he able to move things that he has created.

Of course he is. And that's the way it happened here. The posts of the door moved. Oh that the posts of the doors of my own life and your own life would move.

That these stanchions we have erected in our own minds and these strong things that we have set afoot in our own lives that they would be moved if they are sinful at all.

[ 22 : 02 ] That the Lord would move them and dismantle anything and everything that is not according to his own mind and will. And the house was filled with smoke.

You know that when the high priest on the great day of atonement in Israel when the high priest went into the most holy place the holy of holies he had to go in there with the fragrance and the smoke of the censer so that the dazzling glory of the Lord present in the most holy place would not damage his eyes.

the most holy place was filled with smoke filled with that smoke from the censer. And this is an illustration here that the house of God at that time was filled with smoke in such a way that I say I would not be consumed by this revelation of the glory of the Lord.

much more could be said about that revelation but that's what the Isaiah saw and heard in the year that King Uzziah died the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up and his train or the hem of his garment filling the temple.

The Lord is making a statement. Secondly what effect did this have on the prophet? Well maybe it's a surprise to you to read what comes in verse five.

[ 24 : 16 ] He's not just jumping for joy because he had seen a glimpse of the glory of God. What does he say?

Then said I woe is me for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. You see when the Lord shines into our hearts he shows us what we're like.

Just like the sunshine coming in through your window highlights the dust particles hanging in the air. You wouldn't be aware of them unless the sun shone so brightly into your room.

But when the sun shines brightly into your room you see these things hanging in the air. on a spiritual level the same kind of thing happens when the majesty and the glory of the Lord is revealed to us.

[ 25 : 38 ] This is the impact. This is the effect. We realise who we are. We realise our sinfulness. We realise how far short we come of what the Lord asks us to be.

We realise how different we are from him. And the prophet says woe is me I am undone because mine eyes have seen the king the lord of hosts.

Isn't it amazing that this is the effect it had on the prophet. When he says I am undone it's as if he is saying I am a dead man.

I'm a dead man because I am a man of unclean lips. I don't think Isaiah was a man who spoke dirty words.

Don't think he was a man who was given to swearing. That's not what he means. What he means is that the best thing I can do is tainted with sin.

[ 27 : 07 ] The best words that come out of my mind and of my heart really they're not as pure as they ought to be. We have all spoken out of turn haven't we?

With the best will in the world we cannot but speak out of turn sometimes. But you see when the Lord comes and reveals himself to us and shows ourselves to us we realise the gravity of not speaking the truth and the gravity of not being accurate and perfect in all that we say and do and are.

I am a man of unclean lips and what's more I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. When you read throughout the previous chapters you realise when they were coming to the temple they were offering physically sacrifices in the temple of God but really their heart wasn't right.

These people in Judah they were unclean. They were unclean in motive and unclean in their lives.

What's the answer? What's the solution to this great problem in which Isaiah finds himself? well the solution is this in verse 6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me having a live coal in his hand which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar and he laid it upon my mouth and said Lord this has touched thy lips thy iniquity is taken away and thy sin is purged.

[ 29 : 07 ] What an amazing situation that was. After the prophet had mourned over his sin and uncleanness a heavenly messenger came.

One of the seraphim clearly commanded by the Lord on the throne to come and having a live coal in his hand which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar he laid it upon my mouth and he said this has touched your lips your iniquity is taken away your sin is purged.

What does this mean? The live coal of course the altar of burnt offering always had a fire upon it and the altar of burnt offering was the place where the offering for the sins of the people was being offered and we see that the symbolism here is very clear that what the seraphim has done is gone and taken a live coal from either the altar of burnt offering or the altar of incense one or the other and applied it to the prophet's mouth and lips meaning that the efficacy and the merit and the power of the sacrifice that had been offered and received by God is now applied to the prophet so that the sins of the prophet are dealt with on the basis of the sacrifice already given and this is an illustration of the work of our Lord

Jesus Christ isn't it he has given himself up a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God and now the efficacy or the power of that work of Christ is applied to us by the Holy Spirit when he comes and applies the benefits of redemption to our souls the Lord said to people when he was in this world these marvellous words your sins are forgiven you on what basis on the basis of everything that Christ himself was and was to do and he says to us today when we believe in him your sins are forgiven you however impure and unclean your lips might be and your life might be when you believe in Jesus all that he has done to dig away sin is applied to you so that now it is said of you he has touched your lips your iniquity is taken away and your sin is purged what a blessing

Isaiah had that day oh blessed is that man to whom is freely given forgiveness in his sins isn't it amazing when you think back to the old testament symbols the old testament rituals on the great day of atonement two goats had to be procured and one of them was sacrificed on the altar the other one was not sacrificed it was it remained alive and the sins of all the people were confessed upon its head and according to God's commandment that goat or the scapegoat was led into the wilderness by the hand of a fit man and let go far from the congregation it would never return again symbolizing that the sins of the people were cast away never again to come back to bring condemnation upon them the psalmist also says as far as east is distant from the west so far hath he removed from us in his love all our iniquity

[ 34 : 03 ] Isaiah had that assurance he was assured that his sins were forgiven and that his iniquity taken away and then he hears a voice I heard the voice of the Lord saying whom shall I send and who will go for us what response is he going to give to this command this challenge well a man who has had his sins forgiven a man who knows what it is to be blessed by the Lord when he hears the Lord's voice and the Lord's word commanding or challenging that person by grace and in faith responds and that's what this man did whom shall I send who will go for us here am I send me

I am ready to go whatever you ask of me I'm ready to do it isn't that the way you are you to whom the Lord has shown his grace and love and mercy you whose heart he has drawn after himself there isn't anything you wouldn't do when he calls you to do something for him isn't that right to do your will I take delight although my God that art isn't that what the psalmist in psalm 40 says and that's what the Lord Jesus Christ himself said when he came into the world that he came to do the will of the father and he did it perfectly faithfully right to the end and for us to be Christ like in our life we will seek to do his will also whom shall I send who will go for us he says

I'm here ready to go where do you want me to go verse nine go the Lord said and tell this people this people who are in the previous verses mentioned as a people of unclean lips as a people who don't know the Lord as a people whose sins are as scarlet and they are as deep as crimson people who do their own thing yes go to them go to them go and tell this people hear ye indeed but understand not seek ye indeed but perceive not and so on and the prophet says verse 11

Lord how long it seems to be an awfully difficult task Lord that you're asking me to perform people who don't want to hear me people who don't want to embrace the word of God that I preach to them how long must I do it I read once of John Calvin who was feeling the burdens of ministry and it is if he went to the Lord in prayer and he said Lord how long must I carry these burdens and he made out that the Lord said to him to the end of the road to the end of your life and that's what this man hears Lord how long and the Lord answered until the cities be wasted without inhabitants and the houses without man and the land be utterly desolate and the

Lord have removed men far away and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land of course he's talking about the great captivity the people are going to be taken to Babylon by Nebuchad and there spend 70 years in captivity great forsaking in the midst of the land we who profess to have tasted that the Lord is gracious he's calling us to a task isn't he you are my witnesses says the Lord that I am God that I am a holy God that I am a just God a God who will sit in judgment at last upon the lives of every individual a God who in Christ made reconciliation for the sins of his elect people a God who is gracious to those who truly repent and we are called to be witnesses in our day to be witnesses in our family in our workplace in our community wherever the

[ 39 : 45 ] Lord sees fit to appoint your place of our board and work you have to be a witness there thinking back to the picture I highlighted at the beginning the man who was preaching into the wind maybe you'll find it like that often enough as if what you're saying is being carried away with the wind of worldliness the wind of Komoko you people but this is what he calls us to to be faithful and you know I believe that kind of faithfulness begins in your personal relationship with the Lord in private on your knees seeking strength and grace meditating upon the word of God and reading it prayerfully seeking light and seeking direction and seeking strength then you go out and face the world a witness for

Christ in our very dark day in our very dark day whom shall I send who will go for us are you here and you haven't yet gone for the Lord have you not stood up and said Lord I want to be one of those who proclaim your name those who were following David long ago the king and the point came when they had to show their true colors they said thine we are oh David and for thee we are thou son of Jesse and so do it with the people of God still they have to stand forth and be witnesses for him they have seen a glimpse of the king in his glory and in his beauty they acknowledge their sinfulness but they have tasted of his mercy and now they want to go and tell others about this great king and what he is able to do for them may

God bless these thoughts to us let us pray health