

**Isaiah, Consistently Blowing Minds for Over 2,500 Years**  
**Paradigm Shifts Required to Move Forward**  
**Isaiah 5: 20–6:1**

March 12, 2020

**Scripture quotations are taken from the following translations:**

**ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.**

**Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB),  
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973,  
1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation  
Used by permission. [www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org)**

**Scripture quoted by permission. Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996-2016 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://netbible.com> All rights reserved.**

Based on what we have examined up to this point there is required a shift in view that must take place in our pseudo sophisticated 21st century materialistically driven scientific brains. That is the idea that Iron Age believers were not as sophisticated as we are in the Modern Age. After all, we have technology and reason.

Isaiah has already shown that is not necessarily the case and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we will see him continue to chip away at that false thinking. In fact, for us to get ready for what he will cover after chapter 5, we have some serious recalibration required.

Based on what we have examined so far in chapter 5, we know that Isaiah has crafted a song that literally sucked his listeners in. He sang a carefully crafted love story which drew them in and then he dropped the bomb on everyone. They were the source of the unrequited love that YAHWEH has been expressing in everything He has done for them.

Isaiah then moved to a series of six woes, the last four which clearly addressed issues in his culture, but also reached out and touched our culture as well.

Picking back up in Isaiah 5:20

*Isaiah 5:20–23*

*“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes And clever in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine And valiant men in mixing strong drink, Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!” (NASB95)*

The effect of these six woes is cumulative. The poetry presents a society that has lost its center, its reference, its focus, its purpose, and its chance for well-being. Thus the woes are followed by two abrupt, heavy, harsh prophetic “therefores” (vv. 24, 25), voicing Yahweh’s negative resolve. (Brueggemann 1998, 55)

*Isaiah 5:24–25*

*“Therefore, as a tongue of fire consumes stubble And dry grass collapses into the flame, So their root will become like rot and their blossom blow away as dust; For they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. On this account the anger of the LORD has burned against His people, And He has stretched out His hand against them and struck them down. And the mountains quaked, and their corpses lay like refuse in the middle of the streets. For all this His anger is not spent, But His hand is still stretched out.” (NASB95)*

One – they have rejected the law of YAHWEH, the Torah. The rules that God personally provided to them for how to live life, how to govern and live as a society, all has been rejected. Isaiah further points out, not only rejected, but despised.

This is not something that the Gentile nations can do. They do not have YAHWEH's law, which was provided specifically to Israel so that they would be a beacon to the world. The nation has failed. The failure is such that the specific light given to them by the Lord is itself being rejected by them. *"It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."* (Hebrews 10:31, NASB95)

Two – Because of that rejection, a rejection by those who had been given great light, the "anger of the Lord has burned against His people." They should know better. They have the Torah. Exactly, so YAHWEH will actively engage against His own people. He will stretch out His hand against them. For the nation, they would think that this has not happened yet. They do not see what is coming but is very close for the both the north and the south. They also have not tied in some recent events either. Coming events - so many will die that no one will be able to effectively bury the dead.

We are seeing here in verse 24 and 25 the lengths that God will go to; it reflects the depth of YAHWEH's resolve to root out the problem. What this also shows those of us in the 21st century, if we understand that God does not change, is His resolve has not changed; He will root out evil in the life of the believer.

When we give our life to Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit immediately moves in and begins the process of cleaning out the place. After all, He just moved in. He came into us because we are declared righteous because of Jesus. The move comes as a result of (1) recognizing and believing who Jesus is, that He was raised from the dead and (2) confessing, He is Lord.

*Romans 10:9–10*

*"...that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."* (NASB95)

We are justified. *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"* (Romans 5:1, NASB95)

The Holy Spirit works in us and begins to change us to be more like Jesus Christ. At times, the process may feel like it is rather brutal. He has us give up things, some of our habits, some of our practices, and at times, some relationships. He wants us to be like Jesus; to conform us to Christ. This is called sanctification.

*2 Thessalonians 2:13*

*"But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth."* (NASB95)

Coming up for us in the future, is our glorification. That occurs either through our going home to be with Him or at the Rapture of the Church when Jesus instantly changes us into our glorified bodies, and we meet Him in the air. Praise the Lord we live in the age of grace. But here on planet Earth, as He does His work of sanctification in us, He will reveal things to us we need to repent of and stop doing.

*1 John 1:6–10*

*"If we say we have fellowship with him and yet keep on walking in the darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. But if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we do not bear the guilt of sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us."* (NET)

God will not leave us the way we were, He changes us, showing us how to be more like Him. Paul pointed this out.

*1 Corinthians 6:9–11*

*“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! The sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, passive homosexual partners, practicing homosexuals, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, the verbally abusive, and swindlers will not inherit the kingdom of God. Some of you once lived this way. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (NET)*

And because the Holy Spirit dwells in each of us, He provides the power and the capability to be conformed to Jesus Christ. This is not doable on our own.

For the nation, they have some issues, as we have seen in Isaiah up to this point. They are under the law. The law was provided to show what believing loyalty to YAHWEH looks like, among other things. Moses and Joshua went to great pains to make certain that the people understood what it was that God expected and if they violated that expectation, basically violating their end of the deal, what that looked like as well.

All God is saying here in verses 24 and 25 is that due to the current condition of the nation, He is acting, just as outlined earlier in the Torah. “Every one of Judah’s sins could be traced back to a rejection and despising of what God says. Man’s opinion was far more important to them than God’s word.” (Guzik 2000, Is 5:24-30)

This all has not happened yet, but it has started. Note in verse 25 “...And the mountains quaked, and their corpses lay like refuse in the middle of the streets.” YAHWEH is pointing something out about that the earthquake they suffered from earlier. That earthquake, well that was from Him. How do we know that? From Amos and Zechariah.

*Zechariah 14:5*

*“Then you will escape through my mountain valley, for the mountains will extend to Azal. Indeed, you will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come with all his holy ones with him.” (NET)*

*Amos 1:1*

*“The following is a record of what Amos prophesied. He was one of the herdsmen from Tekoa. These prophecies about Israel were revealed to him during the time of King Uzziah of Judah and King Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel, two years before the earthquake.” (NET)*

Isaiah ties the earthquake the nation recently sustained, to the beginning of judgments from YAHWEH. Fresh in their memory are those who died in the quake. There were so many they could not get to them all to bury them immediately. This is going to happen again very soon with the Syrian/Israeli war against Judah.

Such letting loose of the forces of nature was not regarded as nature working autonomously. God’s anger was manifesting itself: He was stretching forth his hand against his people. He smote them by touching the mountains and making them quake. The earthquake must have been unusually disastrous, for dead bodies lay about like refuse in the streets of the city for some time thereafter. For Israel of old, the anger of God was a very real thing and to be viewed with extreme seriousness. But this earthquake was merely the forerunner of other judgments to come. Therefore, after having fetched one mighty blow with his all-powerful hand, the Lord is represented as still standing with hand outstretched to fetch the next blow. (Leupold 1971, 122)

So if God has begun the process of judging His people, who still are thinking they are bullet proof and invisible; how does He intend to do so? No secret here. YAHWEH picks up the response in verse 26 with a description of an invading army.

By the way, the Assyrian Army here is not referenced by name in this section, but they obviously fill the bill, as do several other armies that will be used of the Lord such as the Syrian Army, Babylon, etc.

*Isaiah 5:26–30*

*“He will also lift up a standard to the distant nation, And will whistle for it from the ends of the earth; And behold, it will come with speed swiftly. No one in it is weary or stumbles, None slumbers or sleeps; Nor is the belt at its waist undone, Nor its sandal strap broken. Its arrows are sharp and all its bows are bent; The hoofs of its horses seem like flint and its chariot wheels like a whirlwind. Its roaring is like a lioness, and it roars like young lions; It growls as it seizes the prey And carries it off with no one to deliver it. And it will growl over it in that day like the roaring of the sea. If one looks to the land, behold, there is darkness and distress; Even the light is darkened by its clouds.” (NASB95)*

The number of armies that will pass through this area over the next few centuries is not, as many historians will say, simply due to being a speed bump on the way to or from Egypt. YAHWEH is the one who is calling for these various Gentile armies. He is intent on humbling His people and this is how He intends to do so.

The picture being drawn for those of that day is that this first army will come from the ends of the earth. But I thought the capital of Assyria was Nineveh? That is less than six hundred miles away. Once again, we need to take up the worldview of those Isaiah is talking to.

According to the Old Testament view, these nations were regarded as far off, and dwelling at the end of the earth (Isa. 39:3), not only inasmuch as the Euphrates formed the boundary towards the north-east between what was geographically known and unknown to the Israelites (Ps. 72:8; Zech. 9:10), but also inasmuch as the prophet had in his mind a complex body of nations stretching far away into further Asia. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 118)

Where do we see that coming up?

*Isaiah 39:3*

*“Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, “What did these men say, and from where have they come to you?” And Hezekiah said, “They have come to me from a far country, from Babylon.”” (NASB95)*

*Revelation 16:12*

*“Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates and dried up its water to prepare the way for the kings from the east.” (NET)*

The image presented is that YAHWEH is the one placing a standard

נֶס – nēs – a banner, such as was set up on high mountains, especially in case of an invasion, when it shewed the people where to assemble. (Gesenius and Tregelles 2003, 552)

Yahweh raises a nēs for the Assyrians or Babylonians, about which they are to assemble for their campaign to destroy Israel. A nēs points the way to Jerusalem for the foe from the north (Jer. 4:6). The judgment will be so terrible that the remnant of the people will look like a nēs, emaciated as a signal pole. (Fabry 1998, 441)

God is telling His people that He will be the one doing the calling. And to make sure it is the right place; He will mark the location so it cannot be missed. This makes it very clear that these armies are doing their work in Judah and Jerusalem at the behest of YAHWEH in fulfillment of the prophecy told to the people back in Deuteronomy 28 and 29.

Who is YAHWEH calling to Jerusalem, the word for nation used here is גוֹיִם – goyim. In the plural however אֲרָצוֹת specially is used of the (other) nations besides Israel. (Gesenius and Tregelles 2003, 163)

YAHWEH is calling the Gentiles. He is whistling for them come. This is an ancient bee keeping activity. WHISTLE (Heb. shāraq). Used in the sense of “to allure or entice,” as a beekeeper who by whistling induces the bees to come out of their hives and settle on the ground. (Unger, et al. 1988)  
Isaiah will use this imagery again in chapter 7.

What is the result of YAHWEH calling for these armies to come?

*“...And behold, it will come with speed swiftly.” (Isaiah 5:26c, NASB95)* Or literally, hurriedly rapidly. When these armies arrive, they will come with speed and the time of their coming is rapidly approaching. Isaiah then draws a word picture of this definitely foreign army.

*Isaiah 5:27–30*

*“No one in it is weary or stumbles, None slumbers or sleeps; Nor is the belt at its waist undone, Nor its sandal strap broken. Its arrows are sharp and all its bows are bent; The hoofs of its horses seem like flint and its chariot wheels like a whirlwind. Its roaring is like a lioness, and it roars like young lions; It growls as it seizes the prey And carries it off with no one to deliver it. And it will growl over it in that day like the roaring of the sea. If one looks to the land, behold, there is darkness and distress; Even the light is darkened by its clouds.” (NASB95)*

The foreignness of the enemy (5:26a) creates an ominous atmosphere, especially in light of the covenant curse of Deuteronomy 28:49, to which the prophet may have been alluding. The army’s approach is swift and unswerving (Isa. 5:26b–27). Its seemingly superhuman warriors (v. 27a) never rest (v. 27b). They are prepared for battle and equipped with the best of weapons (v. 28a). The Assyrians’ horses gallop along without injury, while their chariots race toward their objective (v. 28b). The invaders are comparable to a vicious, roaring lion that allows its prey no escape (v. 29). The deafening Assyrian roar is accompanied by the descent of the dark clouds of judgment (v. 30). (Chisholm Jr. 1986, 55)

## Sargon II

And he, Jaman, heard of the advance of my expedition from afar, and fled unto the border of Egypt by the side of Melukh; not a trace of him was seen. Ashdod, Gath, Ashdudim, I besieged, I took. His gods, his wife, his sons, his daughters, goods, property, the treasures of his palace, together with the people of his land, I counted as booty. Those cities I took anew. (Kellner 1900, 18)

The army is huge and makes such a large cloud of dust that it darkens the sky.

And with that, we come to the end of the song and the message that went along with it and the end of chapter 5.

Chapter 6 is the official commissioning of Isaiah as a Prophet of YAHWEH. Before we get too far into it, and since there are supernatural players involved, I thought it might serve us well to acquaint ourselves with some aspects of the Heavenly Hosts, those faithful Divine Beings who make up the Divine Council of YAHWEH.

*Isaiah 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.” (NASB95)*

And with that we are introduced to the topic of Isaiah’s supernatural calling to be a prophet of YAHWEH. Throughout the Bible, there is a pattern that shows up regarding the calling of YAHWEH’s choice of those who He would call as prophets. “There is a distinct pattern to Yahweh’s sovereign choice of human leaders, a pattern that includes the divine council.” (Heiser 2015, 232)

There is a close analogy between the Old Testament and the New Testament prophet. The Greek word προφήτης (profetis) gives a very fair idea of the meaning of the Hebrew word Nabi. The prophet is a 'spokesman,' one who represents another, and Exodus, 7:1 is the best definition or description of what a prophet is, whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament. (Thomas n.d., 3)

### **What or Who is a Prophet?**

*Exodus 7:1–2*

*“So the LORD said to Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. You are to speak everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh that he must release the Israelites from his land.” (NET)*

Forecasting future events was only a small part of what prophetic figures did and what they were about. Prophets were simply people who spoke for God—men and women who, at God’s direction, looked their fellow Israelites in the eye and told them they were being disloyal to the God to whom they owed their existence and who had chosen a relationship with them over everyone else on earth. Prophets told people the unvarnished truth and often paid dearly for it. (Heiser 2015, 232)

Those whom God selects all have a job interview. This, we see, starts in Genesis and continues into the New Testament.

Because of a simple fact, where God is, His Divine Council is also, this interview has also involved God’s heavenly hosts, His council.

That should give us a hint that some of pre-existing worldviews are now in danger.

As we prepare to enter Isaiah 6, some of our preexisting worldview paradigms must be tossed aside. The first is that “the Western “enlightened” worldview, which presumptuously holds that the cosmos is strictly material, that noncorporeal beings do not exist, and that humans are the highest form of life in the cosmos.” (Boyd 1997, 20)

If we are to take Isaiah 6 at face value, and we will do so, we must lose that preconceived notion.

Here is the reality that we need to hold onto. This is what we see in the scriptures. It is that “God’s good creation has in fact been seized by hostile, evil, cosmic forces that are seeking to destroy God’s beneficent plan for the cosmos. God wages war against these forces, however, and through the person of Jesus Christ has now secured the overthrow of this evil cosmic army. The church as the body of Christ has been called to be a decisive means by which this final overthrow is to be carried out.” (Boyd 1997, 19)

Have I lost anyone yet? This is the worldview behind Ephesians 6:11-12 and leads up to the second needed worldview shift.

The second idea we must throw aside is the non-Biblical one that the only Spirit Beings the Bible ever talks about are angels. Here is a huge paradigm shift for you, the term angel is a job description. “Much of what Christians think they know about angels is more informed by Christian tradition than Scripture.” (Heiser, Angels: What the Bible Really Says about God's Heavenly Host 2018, xiv)

The designation angel—whether mal.āk of the Old Testament Hebrew or aggelos of the New Testament Greek—means ‘messenger.’ These beings execute the purpose of the One whom they serve. (Chafer 1993, 3)

*Ephesians 6:11–12*

*“Clothe yourselves with the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.” (NET)*

Romans 8:37–39

*“No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor heavenly rulers, nor things that are present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (NET)*

Revelation specifies certain groups as well as various important individuals amongst the angels. Mention has been made of five major representations of supremacy among these beings, namely, thrones (θρόνοι), dominions (κυριότητες), principalities (ἀρχαί), authorities (ἐξουσίαι), and powers (δυνάμεις). Since the Bible does not indulge in useless tautology, it may be believed that there is a specific meaning to each of these denominations, which meaning no doubt corresponds to earthly realities which bear these appellations. The revealed truth regarding the angels is not sufficiently complete for a full analogy to be set up. The term thrones refers to those who sit upon them, dominions to those who rule, principalities to those who govern, powers to those who exercise supremacy, and authorities to those invested with imperial responsibility. (Chafer 1993, 16-17)

There are different types of divine beings. There are ranks. There are different job descriptions. There is organization and structure.

A representative sample includes:

### **Terms Associated with Spirit Beings**

Rulers  
Powers  
World rulers  
Spiritual forces of evil  
Heavenly rulers  
Powers  
Watchers (Daniel 4:11)  
Cherub (Genesis 3:24)  
Seraph (Isaiah 6:7)  
Living creatures (Revelation 4)  
Thrones  
Dominions  
Principalities  
Authorities  
Powers

We miss what the Bible is really saying as we pass over terms like heavenly host, Lord of Armies, Captain of the Lord's Hosts, etc.

Our third paradigm to fall is this. Just as God uses men and women here on Earth to accomplish His will, He also does the same with spirit beings. Just like we have free will, they do as well, we see by the fact that a third (Revelation 12:4) of them have followed Lucifer into rebellion.

2 Chronicles 18:18–22

*Micaiah said, “That being the case, hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, with all the heavenly assembly standing on his right and on his left. The LORD said, ‘Who will deceive King Ahab of Israel, so he will attack Ramoth Gilead and die there?’ One said this and another that. Then a spirit stepped forward and stood before the LORD. He said, ‘I will deceive him.’ The LORD asked him, ‘How?’ He replied, ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets.’ The LORD said, ‘Deceive and overpower him. Go out and do as you have proposed.’ So now, look, the LORD has placed a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours; but the LORD has decreed disaster for you.” (NET)*

Thus Micaiah's account of his vision (1 Kgs 22:19b–22) has Yahweh seated on his throne with his court around him. He asks who will undertake a certain task. Various suggestions are made by members of the assembly. Finally one individual makes a proposal which Yahweh accepts. Yahweh commissions the proposer accordingly. Despite the terms 'host of heaven' for the court and 'spirits' for the individual members, the functioning of the old divine council is obvious. The setting is more ambivalent, but the traditional function is clear again in the vision report of Isa 6:1–11, in which the prophet is present as the volunteer. (With the first person plural of v 8, Yahweh speaks for the divine court as a whole; so also in the divine resolutions of Gen 1:26; 3:22; 11:7.) (Parker 1999, 206)

Number four, there is a heavenly bureaucracy. We saw it showing up in 2 Chronicles 18, but it appears elsewhere. Psalm 82 and 89 refer to it as well. "The term divine council is used by Hebrew and Semitics scholars to refer to the heavenly host, the pantheon of divine beings who administer the affairs of the cosmos. All ancient Mediterranean cultures had some conception of a divine council. The divine council of Israelite religion, known primarily through the psalms, was distinct in important ways." (Heiser, Divine Council 2008, 112)

Referring to our list we clearly see that there is a hierarchy in the world of fallen divine beings as well as in those who have remained faithful. Recall that prior to his fall, Lucifer was a title cherub. Many scholars have pointed out that there is a discernible hierarchy within the divine council. All council members, including Yahweh, are heavenly spirit beings (rûḥôt; šamayim; 'elōhîm). However, a careful comparison of the council terminology sketched here with texts from ancient Canaan, particularly Ugarit, and the terms "sons of God" (benê [ha]'elōhîm/'ēlîm) and "angel" (mal'āk), allows one to discern three tiers within the council. (Heiser, Angels: What the Bible Really Says about God's Heavenly Host 2018, 15)

Five. As we have seen in the titles of those fallen divine beings, we pick up on the notion that the nations have been assigned or allotted their own fallen ones to follow. It did not start off that way but due to rebellion, turned out that way.

#### *Deuteronomy 32:8–9*

*"When the Most High distributed nations as he scattered the sons of Adam, he set up boundaries for the nations according to the number of the angels of God. And his people Jacob became the portion of the Lord, Israel an allotment of his inheritance." (The Lexham English Septuagint, Second Edition 2020)*

#### *Genesis 11:5–8*

*"And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of humans built. And the Lord said, "Look, there is one race and one language of all, and they have begun to do this, and now they will not fail at all that they try to do. Come on, let's go down there to confound their tongue, so that each of them will not understand their neighbor's voice." And the Lord scattered them from that place over the face of all the earth, and they stopped building the city and the tower." (The Lexham English Septuagint, Second Edition 2020)*

They rebelled and demanded worship contrary to the assignment parameters given to them by YAHWEH. Psalm 82 is His response.

The origin of this idea is to be sought in the ancient Near Eastern concept of the Divine Council. The existence of national deities is assumed in the Rabshakeh's taunt: "Who among all the gods of the countries have delivered their countries out of my hand that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" (2 Kgs 18:35 = Isa 36:20). Closer to the time of Daniel, Sirach reaffirms Deuteronomy 32: "He appointed a ruler over every nation, but Israel is the LORD's own portion" (Sir 17:17; cf. Jub 15:31–32). (Collins 1999, 663)

I am going to stop there. If you want more detail, I would refer you to the series we did on the Unseen Realm where we taught, following a pattern laid out by Dr Michael S. Heiser. We looked in depth at the Spirit World and how it plays out in our Bible and in our world today. Once you get a grasp on this worldview, it has the impact of you looking at the Bible all over again as if you had never really read it before.



Isaiah 6 provides the reader the validation material, the credentials necessary to see that just as others who were prophets of YAHWEH, Isaiah is as well.

Who Did YAHWEH Appear To?

This is not a complete initial list but is an exemplar of what it is a Jew would be looking for in terms of the prophetic credentialing process.

Adam – Genesis 2

Enoch – Genesis 5:21-24

Noah – Genesis 6

Abraham – Genesis 12:1-7, 15:1-6

Isaac

Jacob

Moses

The pattern that emerges from the patriarchal sagas is that when God chooses someone to represent him, that person must first meet with God. By necessity, that meeting is with the visible Yahweh, who can be discerned by human senses. In many cases, the divine job interview occurs in a place that is described as God's home or headquarters, the place where the divine council meets. (Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*, First Edition 2015, 236)

It becomes clear as we study the scriptures that true prophets of YAHWEH had this job interview and met with the Divine Council.

*Jeremiah 23:16–22*

*Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. They say continually to those who despise the word of the LORD, 'It shall be well with you'; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, 'No disaster shall come upon you.' For who among them has stood in the council of the LORD to see and to hear his word, or who has paid attention to his word and listened? Behold, the storm of the LORD! Wrath has gone forth, a whirling tempest; it will burst upon the head of the wicked. The anger of the LORD will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intents of his heart. In the latter days you will understand it clearly. I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my council, then they would have proclaimed my words to my people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds." (ESV)*

YAHWEH makes it clear, thanks to Jeremiah, what the requirements are. "The implications are clear: true prophets have stood and listened in Yahweh's divine council; false prophets have not." (Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*, First Edition 2015, 239)

...a picture begins to emerge in which the Lord shares power and decisions both with his council and with human beings. This conception is as pervasive in the Bible as it is absent in the Western Christian philosophical tradition, which in part accounts for the fact that the academic problem of evil is intractable for us but nonexistent in Scripture. (Boyd 1997, 132)

This is a concept that is seen even in the oldest book in the scriptures, the book of Job.

*Job 1:6*

*"Now the day came when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD—and Satan also arrived among them." (NET)*

Eliphaz referred to the Divine Council as well when he was asking if Job had special wisdom *"Do you listen in on God's secret council? Do you limit wisdom to yourself? What do you know that we don't know? What do you understand that we don't understand?" (Job 15:8–9, NET)*

Later in this same section Eliphaz also points out the fallibility of some members of the council when he says "If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, how much less man, who is abominable and corrupt, who drinks in evil like water!" (Job 15:15–16, NET)

A generation earlier, the Prophet Amos had made it clear, just as Jeremiah will in the future, that the prophet only repeats what it is that they have personally heard from YAHWEH and His council.

*Amos 3:1–7*

*"Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O house of Israel, and concerning the whole tribe that I led up out of the land of Egypt, saying, "But I knew you out of all the tribes of the earth. On account of this, I will avenge upon you all your sins. Will two walk together at all if they are not acquainted with themselves? Will a lion roar from his thicket when it does not have prey? Will a cub give its growl from its den at all if it did not seize something? Will a bird fall upon the ground without a bird-catcher? Will a trap spring up in the land without capturing anything? Will a war-trumpet sound in a city and the people not be terrified? Will there be wickedness in a city which the Lord did not bring to pass? Because the Lord God will not render a deed if he has not revealed instruction to his servants, the prophets." (The Lexham English Septuagint, Second Edition 2020)*

It is in his divine council (sôd) that God deliberates and decides on a plan (sôd). (Parker 1999, 207)

The prophet Isaiah is the one who will fully introduce the idea of the coming Messiah. This is a change in what it was that was understood by the Jews of Isaiah day. Israel was intended by YAHWEH to be His people. They were instructed by YAHWEH to conduct Holy War throughout the land. "What is at stake in such wars is not simply earthly territories or the dominion of earthly governments: from the perspective of the Old Testament, what is at stake is the kingly rule of the one true God. The struggle of nations to dominate, or at least to resist, Israel is also, and even more fundamentally, a struggle of other gods, with whom these nations are in league, to resist Yahweh." (Boyd 1997, 134)

They failed...miserably.

By what we have seen in just the first five chapters of Isaiah, the nation has gone over to the other side. They have become the enemy by following the enemy and siding with the enemy. When we understand that there is a spiritual component that is behind everything in the world, we begin to understand the why of Isaiah's calling and ministry.

In chapter 6, we see the full impact of his call, the glory of the God he is serving and the imperative nature of the message he is to proclaim and the rejection he will encounter to this message.

Chapter 6 provides the credentials for Isaiah that he is a true prophet of YAHWEH.

## Works Cited

2020. In *The Lexham English Septuagint, Second Edition*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- Boyd, Gregory A. 1997. *God at War: The Bible & Spiritual Conflict*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic.
- Brueggemann, Walter. 1998. *Isaiah 1-39, Westminster Bible Companion*. Edited by Patrick D. Miller and David L. Bartlett. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Chafer, Lewis Sperry. 1993. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 2. 7 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.
- Chisholm Jr., Robert B. 1986. "Structure, Style, and the Prophetic Message: An Analysis of Isaiah 5:8-30." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143.
- Collins, J. J. 1999. "Prince." In *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, by Karel van der Toorn ed., Bob Becking and Pieter W. van der Horst. Leiden: Brill.
- Fabry, Heinz-Josef. 1998. "ֹאֵל." In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, by G. Johannes Botterwick ed., Helmer Ringgren and David E. Green trans. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Gesenius, Wilhelm, and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles. 2003. *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.
- Guzik, David. 2000. *Isaiah, David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible*. Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik.
- Heiser, Michael S. 2018. *Angels: What the Bible Really Says about God's Heavenly Host*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- Heiser, Michael S. 2008. "Divine Council." In *Dictionary of the Old Testament Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, by Tremper Longman III ed. and Peter Enns. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
- . 2015. *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible, First Edition*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- Keil, Carl Friedrich, and Franz Delitzsch. 1996. *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Vol. 7. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson.
- Kellner, Maimilian Lindsay. 1900. *The Assyrian Monuments Illustrating the Sermons of Isaiah*. Boston, MA: Damrell & Upham.
- Leupold, H. C. 1971. *Exposition of Isaiah*. Vol. 1. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
- Parker, S. B. 1999. "Council." In *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, by Karel van der Toorn ed., Bob Becking and Pieter W. van der Horst. Leiden: Brill.
- Thomas, W. H. Griffith. n.d. *The Work of the Ministry*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Unger, Merrill Frederick, R. K. Harrison, Howard Frederic, and Cyril J. Barber. 1988. *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press.