

March 19, 2020

**Isaiah's Job Interview**  
**The Lord, with His Divine Council's Involvement, Revises Isaiah's Calling**  
**Entering No Man's Land**  
**Isaiah 6:1-8**

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Chapter 6 is the significant pivot point in this book. It establishes the credentials for all else that YAHWEH will be using and speaking through Isaiah and ensures that the nation, and all of us in the future, know beyond a doubt that he is truly called of YAHWEH. This is most likely a revision of his prior calling. He receives a new mission.

The standard for a prophet is simple. First, they have met with the Divine Council, that much was made clear to us in Jeremiah 23:22

*Jeremiah 23:22*

*"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)*

To answer the question, I hear you thinking..." How does God do this today?" I have an answer for you.

All of us, as believers in Jesus Christ, have received this same commission from God. Every Christian is united to Christ and is commissioned to not only spread the gospel (Matt 28:18-20), but also to be Jesus to the world (2 Cor 3:18; 4:11; 2 Tim 1:9; 1 Pet 2:21; 2 Pet 1:4). Every believer is Christ's ambassador (2 Cor 5:20), having met Christ through the gospel. As the prophets before us, we are now God's mouthpieces. (Heiser 2014, 93-94)

Now that we have that out of the way.

We have already witnessed Isaiah issuing prophetic messages in the first 5 chapters. What we see here in chapter 6 is not the original calling, but an enhancement to that calling. His calling is being revised. He is now going to be involved in a very distinct mission on behalf of YAHWEH.

The proper heading to be adopted for Isa. 6 would therefore be, "The ordination of the prophet as the preacher of the judgment of hardening;" and Isa. 1-5 would contain warning reproofs addressed by the prophet to the people, who were fast ripening for this judgment of hardening (reprobation), for the purpose of calling them to repentance. The final decision was still trembling in the balance. But the call to repentance was fruitless, and Israel hardened itself. And now that the goodness of God had tried in vain to lead the people to repentance, and the long-suffering of God had been wantonly abused by the people, Jehovah Himself would harden them. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 121)

This is another fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18:18-22

### *Deuteronomy 18:18–22*

*“I will raise up a prophet like you for them from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth and he will speak to them whatever I command. I will personally hold responsible anyone who then pays no attention to the words that prophet speaks in my name. But if any prophet presumes to speak anything in my name that I have not authorized him to speak, or speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must die. Now if you say to yourselves, ‘How can we tell that a message is not from the LORD?’—whenever a prophet speaks in my name and the prediction is not fulfilled, then I have not spoken it; the prophet has presumed to speak it, so you need not fear him.” (NET)*

A common thing that we see with the prophets is that there will be several types of prophecies with different time frames for fulfillment.

The standard for the accuracy of a prophet has not changed since then, the same standard applies.

A prophet of the Lord must be correct, 100% of the time, all the time or do not bother listening to them ever again. This still holds today by the way as we have so many running around saying “thus sayeth the Lord” and they already have a history of items predicted not being fulfilled, so why do we believe them now?

By not understanding what prophecy is, the standard to be met and how important it is to the church is simply not understanding what is in the Bible or in Isaiah.

In Bible study there’s a principle known as the “Law of Proportion.” This law simply means that you can discern the importance of a subject in Scripture by how much attention is devoted to it. (Hitchcock 2012, 4)

Isaiah is prophecy. We have already seen that. So again, how important is the study of prophecy in the Bible as a whole? How important is the study of this book?

Let’s look at some of the numbers.

In the Bible

There are 31,124 verses in the Bible

In the Old Testament there are 1,239 predictions.  
6,641 verses out of 23,210  
28.5%

In the New Testament there are 578 predictions.  
1,711 out of 7,914 verses  
27%

The Bible has 7373 separate prophetic topics.  
But over 27% of the Bible is prophetic in nature.

Back to Isaiah, he is going to provide us a full, in living technicolor 3D video of his meeting. Today, this meeting would have been livestreamed on multiple platforms.

The focus of Isaiah up to this point has been earthshattering, with the revision to his calling in chapter 6, YAHWEH is going to kick it up a notch or two. There must be no doubt as to Isaiah’s calling, no doubt to his credentials as a prophet or his new mission.

*Isaiah 6:1–4*

*“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. 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. And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.” And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.”*  
(NASB95)

What a start, Isaiah has his meeting at “The Throne Room” the same year the throne room of Judah has a change. The emphasis is on the one who is really in control.

As he begins to write, King Uzziah has either died or is in the process of dying. He had been the King since he was 16 years old and he had been the King for 52 years.

Uzziah had a professional army of over 300,000 and a special ops capability of 2,600. (2 Chronicles 26:12 – 13)

During his reign there were several significant building projects completed.

But an even more compelling reason is the theological one. Judah had known no king like Uzziah since the time of Solomon. He had been an efficient administrator and an able military leader. Under his leadership Judah had grown in every way (2 Chr. 26:1–15). He had been a true king. How easy it must have been to focus one’s hopes and trust upon a king like that. What will happen, then, when such a king dies, and coupled with that death there comes the recognition that a resurgent Assyria is pushing nearer and nearer? In moments like that it is easy to see the futility of any hope but an ultimate one. (Oswalt 1986, 176-177)

The death of Uzziah, even though he had been suffering from the effects of leprosy for all these years, still hit hard. His son Jotham was an able administrator with dad still at the helm for the past 12 years, but now that Jotham is the King, how will he do?

Uzziah was Godly and followed the Lord, that provided for all Judah currently enjoys. They thought that peace was due to the professional army. There is economic good times and peace as well with the northern kingdom of Israel. But the death of a good king would be enough to throw everything into turmoil.

As we have already seen from the first five chapters, not everything on the home front achieves YAHWEH’s approval.

Complacency has resulted in the people of Judah embracing sin to a level not ever seen. As we have already seen, the curses have already been triggered. There has been an earthquake and things are just getting started.

Isaiah says that at that moment, sometime during that year that the King died, he saw the Lord. He saw Adonai. The setting that he implies is that he was at the Temple when this took place. The throne of YAHWEH was at the mercy seat. The Mercy Seat sits on top of the ark of the Covenant inside the Holy of Holies. It was there, every year after much ceremony, that the High Priest applied the blood on the day of atonement. YAHWEH’s throne.

1 Kings 6:23–36

*“He made two cherubim of wild olive wood, each 15 feet tall, and placed them in the inner sanctuary. The wingspan of each of the cherubim was 15 feet, each wing being 7½ feet long. The two cherubim were identical in shape and size; each was 15 feet tall. He placed them side by side in the inner sanctuary of the Temple. Their outspread wings reached from wall to wall, while their inner wings touched at the center of the room. He overlaid the two cherubim with gold. He decorated all the walls of the inner sanctuary and the main room with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. He overlaid the floor in both rooms with gold. For the entrance to the inner sanctuary, he made double doors of wild olive wood with*

*five-sided doorposts. These double doors were decorated with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. The doors, including the decorations of cherubim and palm trees, were overlaid with gold. Then he made four-sided doorposts of wild olive wood for the entrance to the Temple. There were two folding doors of cypress wood, and each door was hinged to fold back upon itself. These doors were decorated with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers—all overlaid evenly with gold. The walls of the inner courtyard were built so that there was one layer of cedar beams between every three layers of finished stone.” (NLT)*

It is there that Isaiah sees Adonai; he sees the Lord. He does not use the word YAHWEH. He is seeing the one who was in the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. Suddenly, while worshipping at the Temple, Isaiah’s eyes see the unseen realm and he sees the Lord.

This is the same one who was in the cloud back in Exodus. This is the pre-incarnate Christ. The second power in heaven which is seen all throughout the old testament. He is called the Angel of the Lord, the Word of God, the Captain of the Lord’s Hosts are just some of the names Jesus is known by from the OT.

*Exodus 23:20–22*

*“I am going to send an angel before you to protect you as you journey and to bring you into the place that I have prepared. Take heed because of him, and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him. But if you diligently obey him and do all that I command, then I will be an enemy to your enemies, and I will be an adversary to your adversaries.” (NET)*

This angel has the name of YAHWEH in Him. He has the power to pardon, something only YAHWEH can do, and obedience is required. This is Jesus.

*John 12:41*

*“These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.” (NKJV)*

John confirms that this is Jesus for us here in John 12:41

He does not see YAHWEH here, but he does see Adonai at the beginning, “But He said, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!”” (Exodus 33:20, NASB95)

On top of that, the throne the Lord is on us above every other throne in the universe. It is “lofty and exalted.” This means that He is above all others.

So far in verse one, Isaiah sees the Lord on a throne, He is over all other thrones as He is “lofty and exalted.” He also sees the train of His robe physically filling the Temple. His robe filling the Temple reflects that He still wants the nation’s true worship.

Last week we examined who some of the residents of the unseen realm were. We see a lot of job descriptions in the Bible for them, both fallen and faithful. Here we get a physical description and a hint of what really took place in Numbers 21:6. We are introduced to seraphim.

Seraphim is the plural form of *śārāp*, a Hebrew word also translated “snake” (Num 21:6, 8; Isa 14:29). These descriptions are reflected in iconography from the biblical period. Neither is ever qualified with the term *mal’āk*, and so it is incorrect to think of cherubim and seraphim as angels. (Heiser, Angels: What the Bible Really Says about God’s Heavenly Host 2018, 25-26)

*Isaiah 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.” (NASB95)*

Seraphs are throne guardians. Unlike the cherubs that Ezekiel sees, the seraphs have six wings, not four just like the four living creatures of John in Revelation 4.

Thanks to Numbers 21:6, we know a bit about their appearance.

### Numbers 21:6

*“And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.” (Jewish Publication Society of America 1917, Nu 21:6)*

The Seraphim are now generally conceived as winged serpents with certain human attributes. The word *śārāp* has three occurrences in the Pentateuch (Num 21:6, 8; Deut 8:15) and four in Isa (6:2, 6; 14:29; 30:6). It is generally taken as a derivative of the verb *śārap*, to “burn”, “incinerate”, “destroy”. Since the verb is transitive, *śārāp* probably denotes an entity that annihilates by burning. While the etymological sense is thus “the one who burns (the enemies etc.)”, the term refers several times to some serpentine being. (Mettinger 1999, 742-743)

We have understood Isaiah’s vision to be a heavenly council of the divine king and to such belongs a great number of praising and serving beings. The seraphim are not protective deities, comparable to *Sēdu* and *Lamassu* positioned at the sides of a king’s throne in the Babylonian region, but rather they serve the function of the “host of heaven,” as in 1 Kings 22. They do not carry Yahweh’s throne, as in Ezekiel, but they hover above him. One must distinguish, therefore, between cherubim and seraphim; (Wildberger 1991, 264)

שָׂרָפִים – serapim - a species of venomous serpents, Nu. 21:6. שָׂרָף מְעוֹפֵף a flying dragon, Isa. 14:29; 30:6. It is supposed to be the Gr. *πρηστήρ, κάυσων*, so called from its inflamed bite. If the derivation is to be sought in the Phœnicio-Shemitic languages, I should prefer regarding it as so called from swallowing down, see שָׂרָף No. 1; but it corresponds to the Sanscr. *sarpa*, serpent; *sarpin*, reptile, from the root *srip*, *ἔρπειν*, *serpere*. Compare Bochart, Hieroz. t. iii. p. 221, ed. Lips. (II.) pl. שָׂרָפִים Isa. 6:2, 6, an order of angels attending upon God, and appearing with him, having six wings. (Gesenius and Tregelles 2003, 795-796)

We are aware of the cherubim as throne guardians thanks to the requirement for images of cherubim to be on the Mercy Seat. We also see from the description of Solomon’s work that images of cherubs were everywhere in the Holy place and the Holy of Holies to the point that there are two 15-foot-tall gold covered ones on both sides of the Ark with the Mercy Seat. This is another type of throne guardian. They are snake like and would have been understood as such by everyone reading this during the time of Isaiah. Remember, the Jewish nation had been in Egypt almost a thousand years earlier and they would also be aware of the Egyptian culture. The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament provides some additional background.

“The Uraeus serpent appears in Egypt above all as a protective deity. It kills the enemies of the gods and of the king by spitting fire (its poison).” The Uraeus serpents are attested on Palestinian seals, with one striking group from the 8th century portraying four-winged serpents. (Rutgersworden 2004, 224)

Iconography and imagery existed at the time and most of Isaiah’s readers would identify the seraphim as snakelike winged throne guardians.

The root word *seraph* comes from means to burn completely in the Hebrew.

So, we see snakelike throne guardians, hovering motionlessly with a burning appearance over the throne.

The use of the root word may also speak to their burning zeal for service to YAHWEH.

They have six wings, but only need two to fly. They cover their faces with two of the wings and their feet with two of the wings. We do not know how many of them are there, at least two based on the language of verse 3 but the word used is plural.

The two wings covering their feet means the wings possibly cover the lower parts of their bodies. Two wings alone of the six were kept ready for instant flight in God’s service; two veiled their faces as unworthy to look on the holy God, or pry into His secret counsels which they fulfilled (Exod. 3:6; Job 4:18; 15:15; 1 Ki. 19:13); two covered their feet, or rather the whole of the lower parts of their persons—a

practice usual in the presence of Eastern monarchs, in token of reverence (cf. Ezek. 1:11, “two (wings) covered their bodies”). (Fausset n.d., 582)

The word used for feet is the Hebrew word *regel* רגל and the use of this word in Hebrew is varied beyond the simple term and understanding...feet.

Since the feet are a point of contact with the unclean environment, priests must wash their feet before beginning their duties (Ex. 30:19, 21; 40:31).  
F. J. Stendebach, ” (Stendebach 2004, 315) “

Because such a zone of uncleanness attracts unclean spirits, the high priest wears apotropaic bells on the hem of his robe (Ex. 28:33–35; 39:25–26; Sir. 45:9). This usage also explains the euphemistic use of *regel* for the genitalia (Ex. 4:25; Isa. 7:20). (Stendebach 2004, 315)

Understanding the issues a Jew would have surrounding this term, it is appropriate for the seraph to cover the lower portion of its body as a sign of holiness.

When the seraphim in Isa. 6:2 cover their feet with two of their wings, this is probably not a euphemism for their genitalia; they are to be thought of as covering themselves totally in the presence of the holy God. (Stendebach 2004, 316)

Isaiah sees, hovering snakelike throne guardians, almost dragon like in appearance, with wings covering their face and wings covering their bodies as they minister to the Lord.

*“And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.”” (Isaiah 6:3, NASB95)*

This language implies two seraphs, but it could also imply that there were two groups as well.

One group would call out “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts.” Using the term Holy three times in succession is an allusion to the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Three is the desired number of witnesses for judicial actions in the Torah and also the number of witnesses for confirmation of something. It is also used in Hebrew grammar to emphasize something.

The intensification of attributes by means of repetition belongs rather to rhetoric than to syntax, e. g. Ec 7:24 עמק עמק exceeding deep; 1 S 2:3, Pr 20:14; the adjective is even used three times in Is 6:3.—Cf. the repetition of adverbs for the same purpose in Gn 7:19, Nu 14:7 (אדא אדא exceedingly, also אדא אדא Ex 1:7, &c.); Ez 42:15.—On the other hand, in Dt 28:43 the repetition expresses a continuous progress, higher and higher ... lower and lower; in Dt 2:27 (see § 123 e) and 16:20 (nothing but justice) the constancy of the action. Cf. Ex 23:30 טה טה little by little, very gradually. (F. W. Gesenius 1910, 431-432)

The seraphim are worshipping the Lord. Their praising of the glory of the Lord is as the Psalmist indicates in Psalm 145:8-13. “The LORD is merciful and compassionate; he is patient and demonstrates great loyal love. The LORD is good to all, and has compassion on all he has made. All he has made will give thanks to the LORD. Your loyal followers will praise you. They will proclaim the splendor of your kingdom; they will tell about your power, so that mankind might acknowledge your mighty acts, and the majestic splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an eternal kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations.” (NET)

This is not something being said once either, this is a continual song with one group singing Holy and the other sing of the whole earth being filled with the glory of God.

The title is also something to be noted as well, the Lord of hosts. Or, YAHWEH who commands Armies.

And about the level of praise, the bass is up, way up.

*Isaiah 6:4*

*"And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke." (NASB95)*

The praise of the seraphim is thundering. It makes the doors shake and while the doors shake, the Temple fills up with smoke.

For Isaiah, who I am sure is prostrate on the floor, this must be seriously mind blowing. This is holiness at a level he has never comprehended before and praise at a level he has never heard and now, the smoke. His mind would be filled with what the Torah says.

*Exodus 19:18*

*"Mount Sinai billowed smoke all over because God had descended upon it in fire, and its smoke went up like the smoke of a furnace, and all the people were very astonished." (Lexham Press 2020, Ex 19:18)*

That event was at the beginning of giving of the law and the covenant between YAHWEH and His chosen people. The same covenant that they have violated and are now, based on what we saw in the first five chapters, entering judgement over.

Speaking of judgement, an event still in the future.

*Revelation 15:8*

*"...and the temple was filled with smoke from God's glory and from his power. Thus no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues from the seven angels were completed." (NET)*

This is the true Temple that exists in heaven where YAHWEH is enthroned and seated at His right hand is the man, Jesus Christ. What we are seeing here in Isaiah is the preincarnate Christ.

I never cease to be amazed at the temerity of some who allege they are teaching the word of God yet talk about seeing God or Jesus Christ and relate it as if it was a discussion like talking to you or me.

Isaiah reflects the true attitude that we as human beings have to confront as we come to a holy God. As we read this, I am so thankful that we live in the age of grace and thanks to the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, have full access through Him.

*Ephesians 2:13–18*

*"But now in Christ Jesus you who used to be far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, the one who made both groups into one and who destroyed the middle wall of partition, the hostility, when he nullified in his flesh the law of commandments in decrees. He did this to create in himself one new man out of two, thus making peace, and to reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by which the hostility has been killed. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, so that through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father." (NET)*

*Isaiah 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." (NASB95)*

Isaiah, in the presence of the throne confirmed by the presence of the seraphim and their continually booming praise, literally shaking the ground he is on, realizes his true condition before the Lord. He sees himself as the lowest of the low. I find it amazing what the Psalmist says about the one we see on the throne here, just a few hundred years in the future as He hangs on the cross for us.

*Psalms 22:6–8*

*“But I am a worm and not a man. I am scorned and despised by all! Everyone who sees me mocks me. They sneer and shake their heads, saying, “Is this the one who relies on the LORD? Then let the LORD save him! If the LORD loves him so much, let the LORD rescue him!”” (NLT)*

Jesus Christ fully identified with us, yet never sinned. He was fully God and yet fully man. He paid the price for us on the cross to provide us with eternal life.

*John 14:6*

*“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (NASB95)*

But here in Isaiah, we see the realization of being undone by the holiness of the one on the throne. Isaiah sees reality. His words reflect it.

All he might rely on to sustain him before God vanishes in ruin. For he knows God’s unerring assessment has to be his undoing. This is because he has unclean lips, and others of his people do too. (Rosscup 2008, 1087)

No matter how well we think we are doing with the Lord. No matter where we are on the path of sanctification and becoming more like Jesus, we too, are also totally and completely undone by the same realization that Isaiah has, before God and without Christ, we are utter failures.

*2 Corinthians 2:14–16*

*“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?” (NASB95)*

Isaiah has entered no man’s land. All he is worthy of before God is to be destroyed and he fully expected that to take place.

Though praise was the order of the day, Isaiah was not qualified to praise the king. His lips (the instruments of praise) were “unclean” because he was contaminated by his sinful society, which had rejected the “Holy One of Israel” and his word. (Chisholm Jr. 2002, 25)

*Isaiah 6:5*

*I said, “Too bad for me! I am destroyed, for my lips are contaminated by sin, and I live among people whose lips are contaminated by sin. My eyes have seen the king, the LORD who commands armies.” (NET)*

Isaiah uses the suffixed (perfect) form of the verb for rhetorical purposes. In this way his destruction is described as occurring or as already completed. (Biblical Studies Press 2005, Is 6:5)

Isaiah is conscious of his own sin and his need to be cleansed. He knows that he cannot do this.

Isaiah has already written about the condition of the nation and he also identifies that because he is part of that nation, one that is not worthy to praise the Lord as the seraphim do, he is doubly condemned.

The theocracy, the kingdom that was intended to be the servant of the Lord, was not fit to utter His praise. Praise is a privilege, not granted to all, but only to those whose guilt has been removed. (Young 1965, 249)

Isaiah provides one more reason why he is worthy of destruction, something he believes is already a forgone conclusion. He has seen the King on the Throne. Not King Uzziah or Jotham, but the true King over Judah and Israel. When others had this occur, well John fell to his face as a dead man. (Revelation 1:17)



Daniel had no strength left in him and looked like death warmed over. (Daniel 10:8)

Job, after spending a lot of time being self-righteous with his friends, when confronted by God, despises himself and repents in dust and ashes. (Job 42:5-6)

*Isaiah 6:6-7*

*“Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. 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.”” (NASB95)*

Based on what Isaiah says, God's grace moved immediately. Notice there are no directions given to Isaiah about what he needs to sacrifice in the Temple, there are no to do's given at all.

Salvation, the act of cleansing, comes from the Lord.

One of the seraphim who have been hovering around the throne suddenly peels off and goes directly to Isaiah.

That would be a shock to Isaiah and a fulfillment of his expectation of impending doom. What happens next reflects the grace of God. This seraph has a burning coal in his hand. Isaiah knows that fire, smoke, this is all a sign of judgement and God's wrath in the OT. There is a reflection though of what is about to happen in the perpetual fire that is to be maintained at the Temple.

*Leviticus 6:12*

*“but the fire which is on the altar must be kept burning on it. It must not be extinguished. So the priest must kindle wood on it morning by morning, and he must arrange the burnt offering on it and offer the fat of the peace offering up in smoke on it.” (NET)*

That fire is a picture of the fire Isaiah is now seeing at the throne, or at least the cola coming off the fire.

This is not a fire of judgement but something entirely different.

*Leviticus 17:11*

*“for the life of every living thing is in the blood. So I myself have assigned it to you on the altar to make atonement for your lives, for the blood makes atonement by means of the life.” (NET)*

The perpetual fire (Lv. 6:12-13) on the altar went beyond symbolizing divine wrath, for the altar was the place where the holy God accepted and was satisfied by blood sacrifice (Lv. 17:11). It holds together the ideas of the atonement, propitiation and satisfaction required by God and of the forgiveness, cleansing and reconciliation needed by his people. All this is achieved through substitutionary sacrifice and brought to Isaiah, encapsulated in the single symbol of the live coal. (Motyer 1996, 78)

What happens next happens only for Isaiah. He is the one who has been confronted with his need by seeing the Lord. He is the one who is expecting destruction and in the need of mercy. Again, where does the throne, in the Holy of Holies, reside? It is on the lid of the ark between the two cherubim, the same place the blood is applied every year during the day of atonement. Isaiah is before that throne and with the one who will make the ultimate sacrifice for atonement, the preincarnate Christ.

Isaiah's need was his lips, and the Lord meets that need directly by having the coal applied to them.

What does Isaiah have to do? Nothing.  
What does God do? Everything.

The coal is applied to Isaiah's need and he is forgiven. God went way beyond what it was that Isaiah perceived as his need, he knew he had unclean lips. He had said things he should not have said. He had not said things he should have, and he realized that was a source of problem for him.

*Psalm 120:2-4*

*I said, "O LORD, rescue me from those who lie with their lips and those who deceive with their tongue. How will he severely punish you, you deceptive talker? Here's how! With the sharp arrows of warriors, with arrowheads forged over the hot coals." (NET)*

Isaiah saw himself as one who should be dealt with as he came from a nation which clearly had a problem with deception. But God has taken care of the problem for Isaiah. More than just his mouth, the Lord forgave him of all his iniquity, all his sin. The salvation provided by the Lord is comprehensive. It is not piecemealed out. When we are forgiven of our sin, we are forgiven of all our sin, past, present and future. We obtain fully comprehensive forgiveness.

The past has been effectively dealt with and the future will be different. This is declared by the Seraphim, who speaks for YHWH! (Utley 2001, 95)

This is a picture of God's grace. Isaiah knew what he deserved, yet he was meeting with the one who occupied the throne at the mercy seat, and he received mercy.

With the sin problem dealt with, God moves directly to the mission. He isn't perfect, we aren't either, but there is a job to do and our Lord loves to give us the opportunity to partner with Him relying on Him to do that job.

*Isaiah 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!" (NASB95)*

When I was in Bible school, I was taught that this was an expression of the trinity. An expression from all three members as considered the plurality of majesty. There is another option which we discussed a bit last week and that involves the Divine Council.

In any case, Yahweh never speaks about himself by using the plural of majesty. (Wildberger 1991, 270)

*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)*

The implications of the passage are that true prophets have stood and listened in Yahweh's council, whereas false prophets have not. The divine council bears witness to Yahweh's decision. (Heiser, Angels: What the Bible Really Says about God's Heavenly Host 2018, 42)

For additional background on the topic I would refer you to our discussion last week.

Clearly, once Isaiah is forgiven, the question is asked by the Lord to the entire group who is attending around the throne room. We see glimpses of that in the scriptures and we should get a clue simply from the fact that already here in chapter six there have been two references to the Lord of hosts.

So, the question is basic, the Lord wants to know who to send, who will go on behalf of Him and the Divine Council.

What is missing? What would you want to know before saying yes? Remember, this is the Lord who is asking.

Exactly, we do not need to know anything else. If the Lord is asking, that works for me as it did for Isaiah.

Isaiah did not know the nature of the mission God had designed for his emissary, the length of the responsibility, where this person must go, the content of the message, or the difficulty of the task that must be accomplished. Nevertheless, Isaiah immediately volunteered to go. He did not make excuses like Moses or Jeremiah (Exod 3:11; 4:1, 10; Jer 1:6) but gladly volunteered to serve God. (Smith 2007, 194)

Isaiah has a clear picture of the holiness of God. He knows who is the true King and he knows that he has received mercy, abundant mercy, from that King when all he truly deserved was death. There is no need to know anything other than the Lord wants to know who will go.

This is how the Lord works even today. We hear Him asking us to go here, work there, serve in this ministry, whatever it is that the Lord has asked of you. Our response should be the same as Isaiah. He does not complain, bargain, ask for conditions, nothing. He is asked if he would go and knowing nothing more than it is the Lord asking, he doesn't just say yes, he literally is jumping up and down saying send me.

Are we that way? Do we immediately step out in faith?

Do we follow the model given to us by Isaiah or are we more like Moses and tell God He has the wrong person?

Are we more like Gideon, Ananias, or Paul?

Gideon threw out a fleece or two. He really really wanted to be sure.

Ananias questioned God's sanity when told to go lay hands on Saul. Do you know who this man is Lord? Meanwhile, Paul, as soon as Ananias met with him, began "proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues." (Acts 9:20)

We will pick this up next week in verse 9 as God begins to give the formal charge to Isaiah. But for us today, we have some time right now that normally we would not have had. We are being forced to slow down and when that happens, like with Elijah, we can hear what it is He is saying.

As we go through the social distancing and everything else connected with this virus, we need to be listening to and for His voice. Don't waste the time, but spend the time looking for the robe filling up the temple.

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