

A BETTER KING, SERVANT, CONQUEROR

The Book of Isaiah

Isaiah 6

Verse to Remember

*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.*

Isaiah 6:3


Chapters 1 through 5 have served as a prologue to the book of Isaiah. Now in chapter 6 we read about God's call to Isaiah to be his prophet. This comes at the end of an era of blessing for Judah: "In the year that King Uzziah died" (v. 1). Isaiah was a man of importance in the kingdom of Judah, likely even part of the royal family. He cared deeply for his people. Isaiah's name essentially means "God saves." He was a skilled communicator whom God called to prosecute his covenant people for their unfaithfulness. The message God gave Isaiah would indeed harden their hearts, but it is full of the gospel of grace.

Day 1 — The Holy King Read Isaiah 6:1–4.

1. Skim through the summary of King Uzziah's reign in 2 Chronicles 26. How is "the King, the LORD Almighty" (v. 5) that Isaiah sees different from Uzziah?¹
2. Use a dictionary or Bible to compose a definition of holiness.
3. Describe Isaiah's vision of the Holy One. (vv. 1–4)

Read verse 5. Why do you think Isaiah responds this way?

In Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, there is no good, better, best. Instead a word is repeated to add emphasis. To say "holy, holy" would be to say "very holy." Here, and in Revelation 4:8, **"holy, holy, holy" gives God the highest praise possible.**

4. The New Testament gives us more information about the King before whom Isaiah trembles.
 - a. Who is the glorious King that Isaiah saw? (Jn. 12:41)
 - b. How do people respond when they see the exalted Holy One? (Rev. 1:10–18; Rev. 4:6b–11;  Acts 22:4–16)
 - c. How do you respond to these visions of your God? You may wish to write out a prayer, sing a song, or humbly admit your sin.

Day 2 — Woe to Me!
Read Isaiah 6:5–7.

1. Look back at the six woes of Isaiah 5 (verses 8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22). How is the woe Isaiah pronounces in today's reading different?

What does this tell you about Isaiah?

2. How does God solve the problem of Isaiah's lack of holiness? (vv. 6–7; Consider Exod. 29:35–37.)

3. Each of us would also be completely undone in the presence of the Holy One.
 - a. What has God done to atone for your sin? (Rom. 3:21–26; Heb. 9:13–14)
 - b. Like Isaiah, what must we do to receive this gift? (1 Jn. 1:5–9)

The seraphs were able to worship in the presence of God, and the words of their lips were not spoken in vain repetition. Isaiah realized that his lips were not clean; he was unable to truly worship in his sinful condition. Upon his confession God gives His holiness to cover Isaiah's sin and to remove his guilt. Isaiah is given not only clean lips but also a new heart. His cleansing has prepared him for his role as prophet of God, the one who speaks the words of God to the people.

To atone means “to cover”.... With reference to sin the thought is that the person is so covered by means of a sacrifice that the sin can no longer be seen; the sin is atoned for. God does not see the sin.... That which covers the person (namely, the sacrifice) God regards as sufficient. He is satisfied.”²


Day 3 — Sent by God
Read Isaiah 6:8–10.

1. The Lord speaks for the first time in this vision, asking for someone to send (v. 8). Why do you think Isaiah responds to the call in the way that he does? (You may wish to consider Psalm 51.)

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2. What kind of ministry is Isaiah called to? (vv. 9–10)

What does Isaiah's call teach us about how to measure success in ministry?

3. All four gospels quote this passage, applying it to Jesus' ministry.
- Why does Jesus say he speaks in parables? (Mt. 13:10–16; Mk. 4:10–12;  Rom. 9; Rom. 11:22–23)
 - How do the people respond to the words and miracles of Jesus?
Jn. 1:10–11; Jn. 12:37–40

Jn. 1:12–13; Jn. 12:42

4. The fact that God gives understanding to some and not to others is a hard truth. Meditate on Paul's response to this truth in Romans 11:33–36.

Day 4 — A Stump of Hope?!

The images of the **seed or offspring, root, stump, and branch** run from Genesis to Revelation. Just after the fall Eve is promised a seed that will crush the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). In 2 Samuel 7:12–16 God promises King David that his offspring "will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." In John's vision of the end of time he is comforted by the words, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has triumphed" (Rev. 5:5).

All of these images ultimately point to Christ.

Read Isaiah 6:11–13.

1. How long will this judgment on Judah last? (vv. 11–12)

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2. This chapter began with the death of a mostly good king and ends with a description of the coming destruction. How does God remind Isaiah that judgment and destruction do not have the last word? (vv. 5–7, 13; Hint: Job 14:7–9)

3. At the end of this passage (v. 13) we're left with an apparently dead stump. But what does God promise will come from this stump? (Is. 11:1; Is. 4:2–3)

Day 5 — Encountering the Holiness of God **Reread Isaiah 6.**

What will you take away from this passage?

*The 📖 symbol indicates verses for further study.

¹ Adapted from Kathleen B. Nielson, *Isaiah: The Lord Saves*, Living Word Bible Studies (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2011), 50.

² Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, Volume 1 Chapters 1-18 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 252-253.