

ISAIAH 6 SERMON NOTES

Outline by Allen Ross

- vv. 1-5 – Revelation
- vv. 6-7 – Sanctification
- v. 8 – Dedication
- vv. 9-13 – Inspiration

Note the major contrast in the chapter between receptive & hard-hearted people = two responses toward God

- ch. 6 emphasizes the depravity of a nation in contrast to the holiness of God
 - The people lacked spiritual insight & would not turn from their sinful condition
- “Holy One” – used 30xs in the bk (trademark name of God in Isaiah)
 - Also emphasized = glory, majesty, righteousness (esp. ch. 6)
- Chs. 1-5 set up to ch. 6 which is the 1st chronologically
- Israel is hard-hearted:
 - See vv. 5, 10-12 – people of unclean lips; calloused hearts
 - HEART – what we might think of as the “mind” today
 - Understands, thoughts/reason, faith & belief
 - HARD-HEARTED – as a spiritual condition, it is the inability to see, understand, hear, & remember
 - Remember – How quickly we forget (Deut 31:6; Heb 13:5)
 - The heart is callous toward sin
 - Pride is another catalyst; also setbacks, disappointments
 - Yet these (the latter) should strengthen our faith (Rom 5; James 1)
 - Hard Heart & Pharaoh – Exodus
 - Already not innocent, he was already hardened in his heart, God simply “confirmed” his choice & through that brought greater glory to himself (see Rom 9:17-18)
 - Hear again this call to repentance – Isaiah himself even sees the need to repent (“I am unclean – Woe is me!

Verse 1

- Year of King Uzziah – approx. 740 BC
 - Some question timing. Isaiah could still have had ministry during the year of his death (compare 1:1 w/ 6:1)
 - The king’s death would have been a huge year of transition and anxiety among the people
 - Who would lead next?
 - Would that ruler be just as good, better, worse?
 - Assyria growing stronger in the north
 - What will our future be as a nation?
- Uzziah contrasted with God
 - “I saw the Lord” – *Lord* used 434 times in the book
 - Two forms:
 - Yahweh – Isa 6:3
 - Adonai – Isa 6:1

- “Title of the true God with a focus on the authority and majesty of a ruler (see Gen 18:27)” – MASTER
- Might change the phrase then to this: “In the year of the king’s death, I saw the one in true authority & majesty on His throne!”
- Isaiah “*saw*” the Lord – how to rectify these passage:
 - Jn 1:18 – no one has seen God
 - Exod 34:20 – no one see God & live
 - Matt 5:8 – pure in heart see God
 - Gen 33:30 – Jacob saw God
- “to see God” – used differently in different places
 - His essence is/must be invisible
 - Seen in manifestation of his glory/human form
 - He clothes that part of his nature
- **Transcendence** – God is separated from man & above man, he is holy, man is sinful; he is infinite, man is finite; he is “wholly other” than man
- Robes, attendants, temple, throne – all elements pointing to his majesty & authority (ADONAI)
- “High & exalted” – his position above the nation

Verse 2

- ❖ Seraphs – lit. “burning ones” – this is the only place that they are mentioned
 - Variety in God’s creation – different types of angels
 - Don’t care to guess on their actual appearance – word may suggest something like a dragon
 - Scripture says – 6 wings – we’ll leave it there
 - Covered faces & feet with four – presence of God, humility, service
 - Flew with two – ongoing activity
 - “Even a perfect ‘*superhuman*’ (though angels not humans) creature humbles himself before an all-holy God”
 - Cherubim – other angels – 4 wings (2 to fly, 2 to cover their bodies (Ezekiel 1)

Verse 3

- “Holy, holy, holy!”
 - Is a Hebrew superlative
 - In English, the equivalent of adding “-est” to the end of a word – i.e. holiest
 - Early church fathers saw this as a reference to the trinity
 - Angels continuously calling this out
 - This 3-fold chant only seen here in 6:3 in the OT
 - NT – Rev 4:8
 - Hebrews often used repetition to make a pt/emphasis
 - This emphasizes the degree of his holiness
 - ABSOLUTE – moral purity/separateness from creation
- Holy in Isaiah
 - NET – holy – 54xs; holier – 1xs; holiness – 1xs
 - NASB – holy – 59xs – holier – 1xs; holiness – 1xs
- Defining Holiness
 - Distinct, separate, in a class by oneself (“to cut; to separate”)
 - i.e. when we find a garment or another piece of merchandise that is outstanding, that has superior excellence, we use the expression that it is “a cut above the rest”
 - Transcendently separate; so far above & beyond us; to be different in a special way

- Morally pure – not just purity though; that's not all that "holy" is
- Describes every aspect of his nature
 - We think of it as an additional characteristic (i.e. mercy, love, justice, etc.)
 - Holy describes his characteristics or rather qualifies them. He is holy generally—synonymous with his deity—holy love, holy justice, holy mercy, holy knowledge

Verse 5

- "Woe is me!" = Isaiah response to this sight (lament)
 - Isaiah acknowledges his sin in the presence of God – HUMBLES!
 - The people had been called to reflect the nature of God yet failed!
 - "It is in seeing God for who He is that we can see ourselves for who we are & can therefore accurately evaluate our condition!"
 - Notice that Isaiah doesn't blame others – Woe is ME
 - Not "they did it" or "woe are they"
 - He sees his true nature before God – HONEST evaluation
 - Isaiah may be one of the holiest/finest people in the land (assumption), yet even he sees himself as unholy before God!
 - We compare ourselves to others = God is the standard, the measuring stick for use to use in comparison = measure ourselves first!
 - How quick are we to notice the sins of others but not our own? Or see our sin as an inhibitor to our worship/praise of God?

Verses 6-7

- ❖ Dealing with his SIN
 - Symbolism of sin removed here with coal & "you are clean"
 - Iniquity – sin, guilty, punishment (all 3)
 - Atoned – covered & remembered no more
 - See 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 9:12, 22
- ❖ Altar – either incense one before veil or "of sacrifice" in front of the Holy Place
 - Coal from it – symbolic virtual cultic cleansing
- ❖ Taken away = forgiven (atoned) – see previous page
- ❖ "A comprehensive dealing with sin takes place. Isaiah confessed what he knows but God deals with his guilt/iniquity, the inner reality of the deviant nature, & with his sin, the specific instances of short coming."
 - Picture – sum of \$ = covers a debt
 - "kipper/koper" is payment of divine justice

Verse 8

- "Us" – plural in Hebrew = Godhead, not trinity but plurality
 - Same as Gen 1:26; 9:6; 11:7; Deut 6:4-5; Ps 110
 - Gen 1:1 is different – "Elohim" (c.f. Gen 5:1) – plurality though
- "Who will go?" – God not saying that he didn't know
 - This is an invitation for men to respond
 - There is always a responsibility for us to respond
 - We're not ROBOTS! Not forced to choose him. Desires that we do though
 - Looking for willingness
- "Send me!" – actually – "Look—me! Send me!"
 - Imperative = an insistence?

- Similar to disciples response
 - Isa – “then I replied”
 - Mt 4:17-19 – “immediately they left their nets”
- See Acts 20:24
- Jerry Bridges – “Whether suddenly or slowly, we should aim to increase our awareness of God’s holiness and our sinfulness, coupled with an ever deepening understanding of the meaning & application of the gospel.

Verses 9-13

- Ending here would have been great but Isaiah’s task is not a happy one. He must go and pronounce judgement on the hard-hearted people! Impending doom! And God says – “They won’t listen!”
 - They persisted in their sin
- Words here quoted in the Gospels
 - See Mt 13:14-15; Mk 4:10-12; Lk 8:10; Jn 12:39-41 & also with Paul (Acts 28:26-27; Rom 11:8)
 - The synoptic references all connected with the parable of the sower – like the present passage they anticipate widespread failure to make proper response to the words
 - His preaching would be in vain but necessary & he’s willing to do this task
- The judgement hardens them but this only comes after years on their own of defective hearing. God simply “confirms” their choice/position
- Devastation would be total – v. 13 (1/10 saved)
- “Holy Seed” – remnant, looking forward to Jesus (Messiah) – HOPE!
- God knows either by foreknowledge or his hardening of their already wayward hearts that they will not respond & be saved
 - The Theology of this is hard – if people live under the influence of the Scriptures & continue to reject its message, Paul says that God gives them (see Romans 1)
- God is merciful even when he judges – v. 13 – 1/10th
 - Still fulfilling his promise to preserve the people