

# ISAIAH — THE MAN WHO SAID “HERE AM I, SEND ME”

Isaiah 6: 1-8  
David White



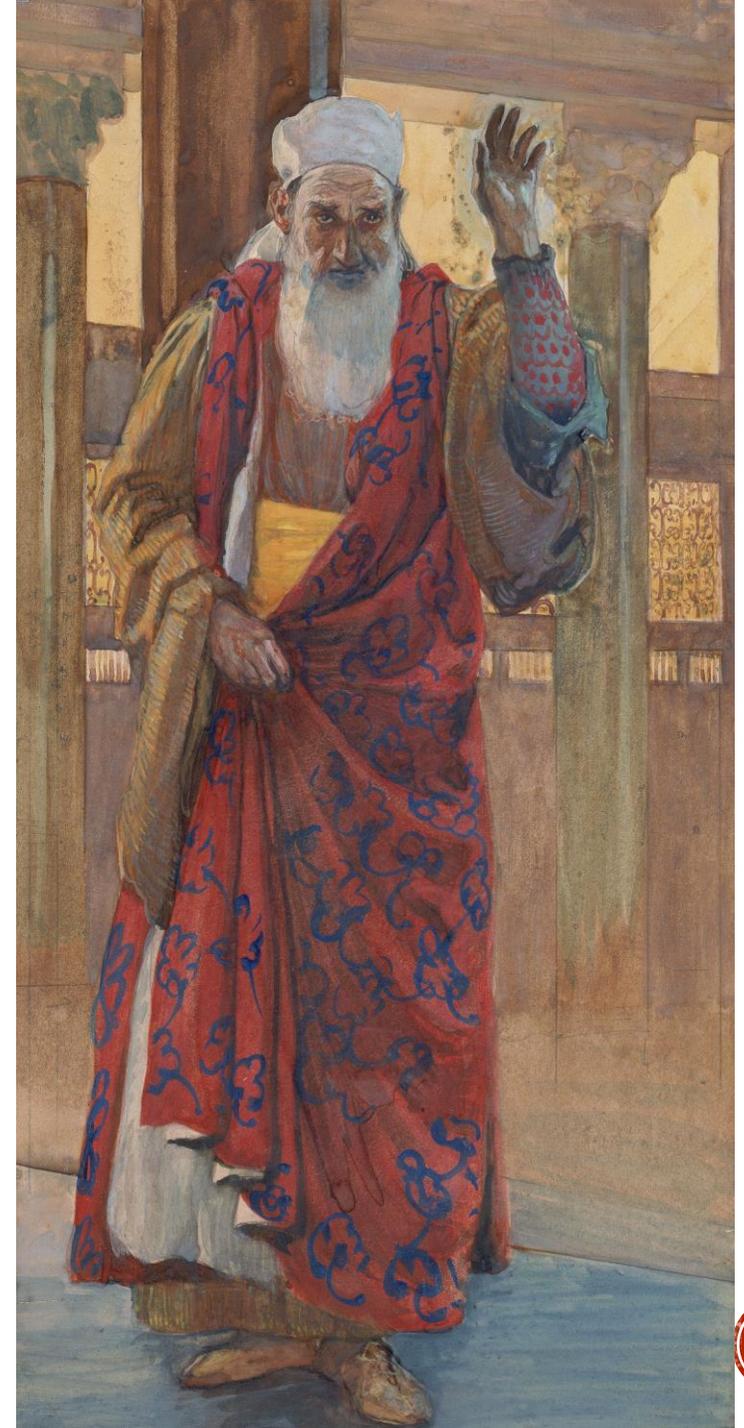
1

# PREPARING GOD'S MAN FOR TURBULENT TIMES

- Isaiah 6:1; “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.”
- Isaiah 1:1; “The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of **Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**, kings of Judah.”
  - Isaiah saw 4 human kings upon the throne in Jerusalem.
  - Isaiah vision of God sitting upon a throne would be an anchor for his faith during Good and bad times under various human kings.

# ISAIAH'S EARLY LIFE

- Many believe he was born about 760 BC and was about 20 years old when called to be a prophet.
- Isaiah was married and had two children.
- Isaiah 7:3; “And the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out to meet Ahaz, you and **Shear-jashub** your son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer’s Field.”
  - Shear-Jashub means “a remnant shall return.”
- Isaiah 8:3; “And I went to the **prophetess**, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, “Call his name **Maher-shalal-hash-baz**;
  - Maher-shalal-hash-baz means “speed the spoil, hasten the booty”



# CONTEXT: UZZIAH'S LIFE

- Isaiah 6:1; “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.”
- 2 Chronicles 26:3–5; “Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. <sup>5</sup> He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God, and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper.”
- 2 Chronicles 26:15; “In Jerusalem he made machines, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and great stones. And his fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong.”

# UZZIAH'S SIN OF PRESUMPTION

- 2 Chronicles 26:16–21; “But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the LORD his God and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. <sup>17</sup> But Azariah the priest went in after him, with eighty priests of the LORD who were men of valor, <sup>18</sup> and they withstood King Uzziah and said to him, “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the LORD God.” <sup>19</sup> Then Uzziah was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, and when he became angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the LORD, by the altar of incense. <sup>20</sup> And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous in his forehead! And they rushed him out quickly, and he himself hurried to go out, because the LORD had struck him. <sup>21</sup> And King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death, and being a leper lived in a separate house, for he was excluded from the house of the LORD. And Jotham his son was over the king’s household, governing the people of the land.”

# ISAIAH 6:1–8

- “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” <sup>4</sup> And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” <sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” <sup>8</sup> And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

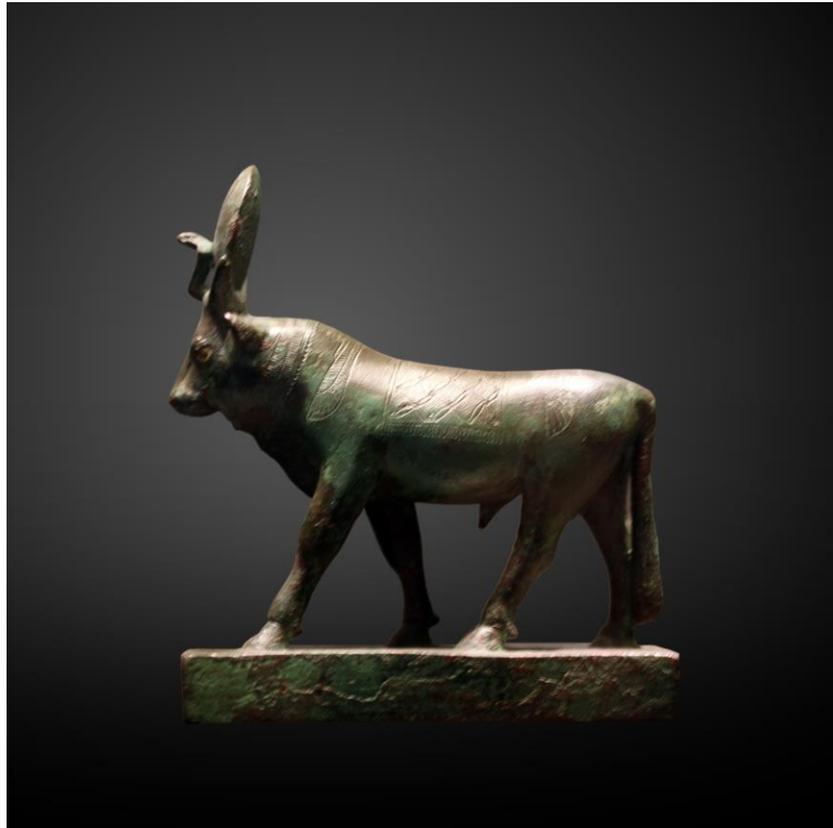
# **THE KING (UZZIAH) IS DEAD; LONG LIVE THE KING (YAHWEH)!**

- If you were writing a review of Isaiah 6, you might title your review

**“The king (Uzziah) is dead;  
Long live the King (Yahweh)!”**

- Subtitle: Assurance in a time of Uncertainty

# PAGAN IMAGES AND PAGAN GODS



- Isaiah 6:1 “.... I saw the Lord...”
- Israel’s pagan neighbors could physically see manifestations of their gods, who were understood as being present in natural phenomena such as sun or storm, or in their idols.

# “I SAW THE LORD...”

- When Moses ask to see God’s glory, God replied, Exodus 33:20; “But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”
  - John 1:18; “No one has ever seen God...”
  - 1 Timothy 6:16; “who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.
- In visions, several have “seen God.”
  - Exodus 24:9–10, “Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, <sup>10</sup> and they saw the God of Israel...”
  - 1 Kings 22:19–20, And Micaiah said, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; <sup>20</sup> and the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ And one said one thing, and another said another.
  - Ezekiel 1:1; “In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.”
  - Steven saw Christ standing at the right hand of God as he was martyred (Acts 7:54-60).

# THREE KEY POINTS ABOUT ISAIAH'S VISION

- Isaiah 6:1; “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.”
  - Sitting upon a throne
  - High and lifted up
  - The train of his robe filled the temple

# “SITTING UPON A THRONE”

- Revelation 4:2; “At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.”
  - θρόνος (“throne”) as God’s throne occurs 17 times in Revelation chs. 4–5 (of 38 occurrences in chs. 4–22).
  - The high frequency in chs. 4–5 emphasizes that, although God’s realm is separated from the earthly, he is nevertheless in control over earth’s affairs.
  - Regardless of how rampant evil seems to run and to cause God’s people to suffer, they can know that his hand guides everything for their good and his glory.
  - This is demonstrated by the fact that all the judgments in chs. 6–16 issue from God’s throne (e.g., 6:1–8, 16; 8:3–6; 16:17).
- The throne emphasizes that God is indeed the true king of Israel.
- All human kings die, but God remains on his throne.

# “HIGH AND LIFTED UP”

- In a hierarchy of power and authority, God is followed by the king, with the people falling below them.
- Jesus on the cross, was “lifted up.”
  - Isaiah 52:13; “Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.”
  - John 12:32–33; And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” 33 He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

# **“THE TRAIN OF HIS ROBE FILLED THE TEMPLE”**

- The common mode of male dress was an outer robe, which generally fell between the knee and the ankle but did not have a train per se.
- The term is better translated as “his hems,” the very edges of his garments, which were sufficient in themselves to fill the temple.
- This graphically illustrates the power, majesty, and size of God.
- The greatness of God is overpowering.

# “ABOVE HIM STOOD THE SERAPHIM.”

- Angelic beings mentioned only twice in the Bible, both occurrences in this chapter of Isaiah (6:2, 6).
- The word seraphim is plural in number, but it is impossible to say from Isaiah’s vision just how many he saw.
- seraphim, if only because the serpent was an accursed species to the Hebrews.
- Most probably the seraphim were an order of celestial beings comparable in nature to the cherubim, and engaged in a somewhat similar form of service around the divine throne.
- Isaiah described each seraph as having six wings: two shielded the face, two covered the feet, and the remaining pair enabled the seraph to fly.
- One proposed identification is with a six-winged creature holding a snake in each hand, carved on a relief from Tell Halaf in Mesopotamia. This figure may have been a representation of the mythological scorpion-men mentioned in the Gilgamesh Epic as guardians of certain sacred mountains.



# “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD...”

- Isaiah heard a holy hymn, for the seraphim “were calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory’ ” (v. 3).
  - He heard the angelic beings offer a crescendo of praise, worshiping God for his glorious omnipotence as well as for his holiness.
  - They repeated the word *holy three times in order to perfect God’s praise, for the Hebrews considered three a number of completion.*
- Perhaps the threefold “holy” is a hint of God’s triune being as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The well-known Reginald Heber (1783–1826) hymn based on this text connects the holiness of God with his triune being: “Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!”
- The words of this holy hymn were accompanied with holy sights and sounds. “At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke” (Isa. 6:4).
- The angelic voices thundered.
- The place filled with smoke so that God’s glory was shrouded in mystery.

# ISAIAH'S REACTION -- WOE

- Isaiah 6:5; And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”
- In Isaiah 5, Isaiah had pronounced six woes against the people of Jerusalem.
- The contrast between God’s vision and Isaiah’s self-image was too great!
- Isaiah is expressing: “I am ruined. I am undone. I am shattered and overwhelmed. I am devastated and dismantled. It’s over...”
- What overwhelmed the prophet was a sense of his own sin.

# ISAIAH'S REDEMPTION

- Isaiah 6:6–7; “Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”
- These two verses teach nearly everything there is to know about God’s plan of salvation.
  - The coal was taken from the altar.
  - In other words, it came from the place of sacrifice.
  - Therefore, Isaiah was reconciled to God on the basis of a sacrifice.
- The coal was applied directly to his sin (“I am a man of unclean lips”)

# ISAIAH'S RESPONSE

- Isaiah 6:8; And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”
- The question “Who will go?” does not mean God did not know or that he hoped someone would go.
- He asked the question to give Isaiah, now cleansed, an opportunity for service.
- Isaiah knew that the entire nation needed the same kind of awareness of God and cleansing of sin he had received.
- So he responded that he would willingly serve the Lord.
  - Unselfishly – “Send me.”
  - Unincumbered – nothing would hold him back.
  - Unconditional – no conditions placed on God for him to serve.

# ISAIAH'S RESPONSIBILITY

- Isaiah 6:9–10; And he said, “Go, and say to this people: “ ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’ <sup>10</sup> Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”
- God orders Isaiah to make sure the people do not repent and thus avoid judgment.
- The passage is quoted numerous times in the NT to support the general lack of a positive response among the Jewish people to Jesus as the Messiah.
- Matt 13:14–15; John 12:40; Acts 28:25–29.

# ISAIAH'S QUESTION: HOW LONG?

- Isaiah 6:11–13; Then I said, “How long, O Lord?” And he said: “Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste,<sup>12</sup> and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.<sup>13</sup> And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled.” The holy seed is its stump.
- God’s prophets many times did not like the message God gave them to deliver.
- Jeremiah 1:6–8; Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.”<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.<sup>8</sup> Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD.”
- Jeremiah 9:1; Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

# WHAT CHANGES IN US DOES ISAIAH'S VISION PRODUCE?

- When Isaiah walked out of the temple that day, he was no longer a mourner—he was a missionary.
  - He was not merely a spectator; he was a participant.
  - God had equipped him to do the job: Isaiah had seen the Lord, he had seen himself, and he had seen the need.
  - Knowing that God was on the throne, and that God had called and commissioned him, he was ready to preach the Word and be faithful unto death.
- What an example for us to follow today.
- Romans 8:31-39 – Nothing can separate us from the love of God.
- Matthew 28:18-20 -- All authority belongs to Christ, and we must make disciples.
- 2 Timothy 4:1-4 – Preach God's word no matter what people's reaction might be.