

A Vision of the Lord

One of my favorite passages of scripture is Isaiah 6:1-8. Isaiah has a vision of the Lord that forever alters his life. He writes:

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. Above him stood the seraphim (angels). Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called 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 shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. 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!”

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

And 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.”

This vision is a vivid picture of the calling of a sinful man to serve a holy God. It is a window into the salvation experience, from which we may derive four main truths pertaining to God’s offer of Salvation in Jesus Christ.

First, ***God is Holy***. He is the creator and sustainer of the universe. He is awesome in majesty and power, and infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is completely set apart from sin and sinfulness, and has a holy hatred for the rebellion that has captured our hearts. He demands holiness of his creation, for he says, “You shall be holy as I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16). Therefore, when Isaiah comes before the throne of God he says, “Woe is me! For I am lost.” This brings us to our human problem.

Man is sinful. Isaiah recognizes his own sinfulness in light of God’s perfect holiness, and he cries out in fear. Elsewhere, he writes, “Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved? We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment” (Isaiah 65:5-6). The apostle John writes of his own vision of the LORD saying, “But nothing unclean will ever enter [heaven], nor anyone who does what is detestable or false” (Revelation 21:27). Our problem is that Holy God will not abide with sinful man. Sin deserves punishment. The punishment for sins is death (Romans 6:23). This is the bad news.

There is wonderful good news in this vision, too. Isaiah has obvious remorse for his sinfulness and God makes a way for him to be forgiven. In the vision, one of the angels takes a burning coal from the altar of God and touches Isaiah’s mouth. His guilt is taken away and his sin atoned for. God has made a way for our guilt to be removed, just like He had done for Isaiah. Jesus Christ is our burning coal. ***Jesus is the Answer*** to our sin problem. The gospels show us how Jesus was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit of God and born of the virgin, Mary. He became a man and was tempted in every way that each of us is, and yet never succumbed to

temptation. He perfectly pleased his heavenly father in every way, even humbling himself to die on the roman cross. He died as the unblemished lamb of God, a perfect sacrifice on the cross, for your sins and in your place. He was raised from the dead the third day after his death, showing himself to be alive to over five hundred people at once (1 Corinthians 15:1-8). John 3:16-17, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

Finally, we see Isaiah’s response to the call of God on his life. The voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And Isaiah said, “Here am I! Send me.” The proper response to the call of God is obedience in faith. The proper response to the call of God for salvation is faith, expressed by our repentance and belief. ***In order to be saved, Repent and Believe*** the good news of Jesus Christ. Mark records for us the first sermon that Jesus ever preached, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). The apostle Paul writes in Romans 10:9-10, “Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” Will you turn from you sins and turn to Jesus, believing and trusting in Jesus to forgive you? If so the promise given is this, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). What an awesome promise!