

Here am I! Send Me!

Isaiah 6:1-8

INTRODUCTION

- A. The church's work in this present world greatly involves sharing the Gospel of Jesus with the lost.
 - 1. D. T Niles said, "Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where he found bread."
 - 2. Joseph Aldrich declared, "God's evangelistic strategy in a nutshell: He desires to build into you and me the beauty of his own character, and then put us on display."
 - 3. In lecturing to his students, Charles Spurgeon said, "Our great object of glorifying God is to be mainly achieved by the winning of souls."
 - 4. An elevator operator at a hospital in Nashville put it this way: "I'm just a nobody telling everybody about somebody who can save anybody."
- B. Evangelism is so vital because our Lord made it that way.
 - 1. Jesus says to the Eleven: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt 18:18-20).
 - 2. In Acts, Luke puts it like this: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).
- C. However, long before he came to this earth, Jesus appeared to Isaiah in tonight's text.
 - 1. John informs us that it was Jesus who appeared to Isaiah.
 - a. READ JOHN 12:37-42.
 - b. John quotes from Isaiah 6:10, and declares that Isaiah saw Jesus' glory.
 - 2. Tonight, we wish to take a look at Jesus' glory through Isaiah that we, too, might declare, "Here am I! Send me!"
 - a. READ TEXT.
 - b. This likely is the first vision Isaiah saw, and thus, chronologically belongs at the very beginning of the Book.
 - 1) However, in chapter 7 & 8, Isaiah goes into the court of Ahaz, and humanly speaking, he fails miserably, for Ahaz doesn't listen to a word Isaiah declares.
 - 2) This passage explains why Ahaz disregards the words of Isaiah; the Lord tells him to declare to the people, "Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive. 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" (vv 9-10).
 - 3) Therefore, the reader knows immediately why Ahaz reacts as he does.
 - c. Tonight, we wish to explore Isaiah's call & see what he sees.
 - 1) Doing so will allow God to call us to his service through this text as he calls Isaiah through this vision.
 - 2) What did Isaiah see? He saw: A HOLY GOD, AN UNHOLY SERVANT, & A HOLY GOD WHO NEEDS HOLY SERVANTS.

A HOLY GOD, vv 1-4

- A. READ TEXT.
- B. Isaiah sees the Lord greatly exalted.
 - 1. The text says that he sees him "high and lifted up."
 - a. This phrase occurs elsewhere in Isaiah & refers to the high position of God. E.g., "Thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and

holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite” (Is 57:15).

b. But, the concept doesn’t just occur in Isaiah in reference to God:

- 1) E.g., “The LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low; against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan” (2:12-13).
- 2) The point seems to be: There are many who exalt themselves through their pride & imagination, but there is only One who is high & lifted up: The Holy One of Israel.

2. As Isaiah sees the Lord “high and lifted up,” he notices that the train of his robe filled the temple.

- a. The Assyrians, whose invasion will be foretold in chapter 8, often depicted their kings on a grand scale compared to the men around them.
- b. There is a great deal of sarcastic imagery here—God is declaring, “Those Assyrian kings, whom I will allow to come against my people, consider themselves so ‘high and lifted up.’ Yet, I am the One who is truly ‘high and lifted up.’”

C. Isaiah sees seraphim in attendance to God, vv 2-3.

1. The Hebrew word “seraphim” literally means “burning ones.”

- a. I do not know if Isaiah is speaking of a class of angels or other heavenly beings or whether he uses “seraphim” simply to describe their appearance.
- b. It really doesn’t matter what these seraphim are, for the purpose of the text isn’t lost: Heavenly beings are employed in the praise of God.

2. The seraphim called to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

a. The praising of God as “holy” sets him apart morally from that which is not “holy.”

- 1) Twenty-five times in this Book Isaiah refers to God simply as “The Holy One of Israel.”
- 2) Such is surely no accident.
- 3) In Isaiah, the prophet speaks of both the coming Assyrian & Babylonian Captivities.
 - a) Therefore, God, as the “Holy One of Israel” is separate from the sin of his people.
 - b) Therefore, the “Holy One of Israel” has a right to judge his people for their sins.

b. The whole earth is full of God’s glory.

- 1) We can certainly see the glory of God in the things he has made; in fact, several Scriptures inform us that much can be learned of God through the natural world.
- 2) However, I’m not convinced that the seraphim have that in mind as they praise God.
 - a) The context of this Book is judgment upon the nations of Israel & Judah.
 - b) Because the whole earth is full of God’s glory, God can use the Assyrians to judge Israel & the Babylonians to judge Judah.
 - c) Furthermore, all peoples of the earth are accountable to God, for “the whole earth is full of his glory.”

D. Until we see A HOLY GOD, we have no reason to evangelize.

1. Unless God is holy, he cannot condemn the sin in this world.
2. Unless God is holy, he has no right to judge this world.
3. Unless the whole earth is full of God’s glory, he cannot expect the whole earth to be accountable to him.
4. BUT, Isaiah saw A HOLY GOD—therefore, he condemns the sin in this world, he will judge this world, & the whole earth is accountable unto him.

AN UNHOLY SERVANT, vv 5-7

A. READ TEXT.

B. Isaiah at once sees his dire situation & calls out that he is undone, for 1) He is a man of unclean lips & 2) He has seen the LORD.

1. Isaiah’s lips are unclean.

- a. The prophet has just heard the seraphim praising God with absolutely clean lips.

- b. Isaiah is fully cognizant that his lips do not come near the cleanness of those lips & he, thus, cannot join in the heavenly chorus.
 - c. In a very real sense, lips can be neither clean or unclean.
 - 1) Lips utter only what the heart tells them to utter.
 - 2) “What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person” (Mt 15:18).
 - d. But, because our lips are a “window to the soul,” what we say has a great bearing on how holy we are.
 - 1) “I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Mt 12:36-37).
 - 2) Because Isaiah’s lips are unholy, he stands condemned before God.
2. In his unholy position, Isaiah has seen the LORD.
- a. Isaiah certainly believes that his death is imminent; he is thinking that he only has seconds until he draws his last breath.
 - b. That is because no man can see God & live.
 - 1) When Moses asked to see God, the Lord says, “You cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live” (Ex 33:20).
 - 2) However, Isaiah only saw a representation of God, not God himself, for no man has ever seen God (Jn 1:18).
- C. While Isaiah contemplates his final moments on earth, a seraphim flies to Isaiah with a burning coal. The seraph touches Isaiah’s lips with the coal & declares that his guilt has been taken away.
- 1. This coal, we are told, is from the altar. Perhaps, we are to think of the sin offering taking away Isaiah’s sins.
 - 2. Notice that it’s Isaiah’s lips that are touched.
 - a. He had acknowledged the sin of his lips & it’s that sin that is taken away.
 - b. God takes away the sins that Isaiah has confessed.
 - 1) Unless we are willing to confess our sinfulness, we cannot have cleansing.
 - 2) “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1:9).
- D. Until we see ourselves as UNHOLY SERVANTS, we have no reason to evangelize.
- 1. Until we have appropriately dealt with our own sins through Jesus, we can be no good to the lost & dying in this world.
 - a. Jesus declares: “Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eyes? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (Mt 7:3-5).
 - b. Have we dealt with our own sins through the blood of Jesus?
 - 2. Until we have our sins atoned for, we can be no good to the lost & dying in this world.
 - a. What good could we ever hope to accomplish if we haven’t ourselves first been washed through Jesus’ blood?
 - b. Have you had your sins washed through Jesus’ blood?

A HOLY GOD NEEDS HOLY SERVANTS, v 8

- A. “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.’”
- B. God asks a somewhat rhetorical question, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”
 - 1. I say that question is somewhat rhetorical, for God knew precisely whom he would send.
 - a. The question between the Lord & the seraphim wasn’t any deliberation, but it was for Isaiah’s benefit.
 - b. The Lord had an important message to deliver to Judah & he had no one to deliver that message.
 - 2. Could the Lord not be asking the same question to us? “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”

- a. Could it not be that the Lord wants us to commit to doing his work, to commit to seeking the sheep that has wandered away?
 - b. Do we even notice those around us who live in sin?
 - 1) We know that the majority of the people in this world are going to be lost: “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few” (Mt 7:13-14).
 - 2) We also know that being lost is a horrible situation in even this present world: “Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called ‘the uncircumcision’ by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Eph 2:11-12).
- C. Isaiah volunteers to go with two simple sentences: “Here am I! Send me.”
- 1. Isaiah realizes that he cannot look around & wait on everyone else to do the Lord’s work; he needs to do what the Lord wills.
 - a. Do we not have a real tendency to wait on everyone else to do what needs to be done in the church? Someone else will volunteer to teach that class, someone else visit the sick, someone else will do this or that.
 - b. Why can we not willingly offer ourselves to the work of the Lord?
 - 2. Isaiah willingly volunteers for a difficult work.
 - a. As we mentioned previously, going to the nation of Judah is going to prove to be a quite daunting task.
 - 1) Ahaz isn’t going to listen to a single word Isaiah speaks from God.
 - 2) But, Isaiah still knows that he has a responsibility to go.
 - b. The work of the church is far from easy.
 - 1) Paul often had quite a difficult time as an apostle of Christ.
 - a) “We do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself” (2 Cor 1:8).
 - b) “As servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger” (2 Cor 6:4-5).
 - 2) There can easily be anger or hurt feelings as we share the Gospel of Jesus.
 - a) But, that anger is often the first step in obeying the Gospel of Jesus.
 - b) I recall that on one occasion, I had done a Bible study & Tammy asked how it had gone. With a smile on my face, I told Tammy, “It went very well. She’s upset & she won’t sleep at all.” She called a little later to be baptized & has been faithful ever since.
 - 3) People are going to reject the Gospel of Jesus—just like Ahaz rejects the preaching of Isaiah.
 - a) Yet, Isaiah had a message to preach & he preached that message faithfully.
 - b) Are you willing to be sent? Are you willing to preach the message faithfully?