

Isaiah's Vision of God's Temple

Key Verse: *"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."*
—Isaiah 6:8

Selected Scripture:
Isaiah 6:1-10

THE PROPHET ISAIAH HAD observed the unfaithfulness of God's covenant people, Israel. Divine offers of mercy and forgiveness had fallen repeatedly upon heedless ears. Consequently, the Lord sent a different message, to which this lesson specially relates. Since this message would be a difficult one to proclaim, a vision was given to Isaiah of the majesty of God to encourage him, that he might volunteer to speak the Lord's words to Israel. In the vision, Isaiah saw God sitting on a throne in his temple. Above him were beings, called "seraphims," who proclaimed, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."—Isa. 6:1-3

The words of the seraphim could only be true in a prophetic sense, for the whole earth has not yet been filled with the Lord's glory. However, God would have Isaiah, and later his consecrated people of this Gospel Age, know that evil shall not always prevail. Indeed, several centuries later, Jesus' gave his followers a model prayer, which gives assurance that God's kingdom shall come, and his will shall be done, on earth, as it is done in heaven.—Matt. 6:9,10

Upon hearing the seraphim, Isaiah's first thought was

his own imperfection as a member of the fallen race. He said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." Nevertheless, Isaiah recognized the great privilege afforded him to be given a glimpse of "the King, the LORD of hosts." (vs. 5) As the vision continued, one of the seraphim brought a live coal from the altar of the temple, and therewith touched the prophet's lips. In the symbolic language of the vision, the Lord said to Isaiah, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." (vs. 7) By this, God indicated to Isaiah that because he realized his own blemishes, as well as the Divine majesty and goodness, he was now counted pure. In addition, he would be granted powers of speech which were not his own, but inspired by the Lord.

Upon hearing these words of the vision, Isaiah's heart was quickened with a desire to further engage in the divine service, no matter what the message. Consequently, as recorded in our Key Verse, when he heard the Lord inquire for one to speak to his people, Isaiah immediately responded, "Here am I; send me."

God's message to Israel, given by Isaiah, concerned their continued lack of faithfulness, which would eventually result in their being carried away into captivity. (vss. 9-12) This message was later repeated by Jesus and the Apostle Paul as applicable to Israel at that time. Only a "remnant" of Israelites accepted the Messiah, and were received into the higher dispensation of Divine favor of this Gospel Age.—Matt. 13:13-17; John 1:11,12; Rom. 11:5-11

The message of present truth which today continues to call God's people out of the world is, in many respects, like that which Isaiah delivered to Israel. It is a message that is not generally well received, especially by those who love sectarianism and the worship of human theories and creeds better than they love the Lord and his Word. However, what a privilege is ours to continue to present the Gospel message with the same zeal demonstrated by Isaiah!

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