

A Trek Through Isaiah 06 - 6:1-13

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Context

Ch 1 - 5 Author's preface

- Heading 1:1
 - Names the author
- Comprehensive failure, complete restoration 1:2-31
 - Introduction to the section
- The Ideal Lost and Found 2:1 - 4:6
 - What might have been (and will be) for God's people
 - Heading 2:1
 - God's Ideal for His People 2:2-4
 - Jerusalem will be lifted above all
 - Judah's current reality 2:5 - 4:1
 - Yahweh has rejected His people
 - The prophet says: do not forgive them
 - The Day of the Lord 2:10-22
 - Yahweh answers: A day of reckoning is coming
 - Judgment and Redemption 3:1 – 4:1
 - Everything necessary for a civil society will be removed
 - Zion Redeemed 4:2-6
 - The Messiah will appear
 - A remnant will remain in Zion
 - The city will be cleansed
 - Yahweh will dwell with His people
- Grace Exhausted 5:1-30
 - Parable of the vineyard 5:1-7
 - Laments and Consequences 5:8-24
 - Description of the stink-fruit harvest
 - Judgment has begun 5:25-30
 - Judah has been struck down
 - Destruction is coming
 - There is only distress and darkness

Ch 6 Isaiah's call

- Vision of Yahweh v1-4
- Conviction v5
- Atonement v6-7
- Offering for service v8
- Commission v9-10
- Concern for the nation v11
- Yahweh's faithfulness v12-13

Why does ch 6 not come at the beginning of the book?

- Two possibilities
 - Chronological: narrated in chronological order
 - Ch 1-5 early preaching
 - Ch 6 call
 - Ch 7-66 later preaching elaborating Yahweh's plan for history
 - Theological:
 - Ch 1-5 describes the present condition of Judah and her eventual glory as the place where Yahweh's word comes to the world.
 - Ch 6 shows how this was accomplished with Isaiah. He was brought before Yahweh, confessed his sinfulness, experienced God's gracious forgiveness, then was commissioned so speak for Him.
 - Ch 7-66 then is Yahweh's word through Isaiah describing how the same thing will be accomplished for His people

Isaiah's conversion and atonement 6:1-13

Yahweh reveals Himself

6:1-4 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is Yahweh of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory." And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called out, while the house of God was filling with smoke.

- In the year of King Uzziah's death
 - Good king.
 - Long prosperous reign.
 - Near the end of his reign, trespassed in the temple and was made a leper (unclean).
 - Now the good king was gone
 - To Isaiah, the king symbolized the nation
 - End of Judah's expansion and prosperity.
 - Start of national decline.
 - Assyria increasing.
 - Futile to depend on an earthly king
 - Only Yahweh could provide security
- I saw the Lord
 - Theophany: pre-incarnate Christ.
 - John 12:41 Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him.
- sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up
 - Sovereign.
 - Lord: Adonai. King and Judge. A vision of sovereignty & judgment.
 - Exalted
- With the train of his robe filling the temple.
 - Over all.
 - Touching every part of His creation.
- Seraphim stood above Him
 - Lit "burning ones". Fire a symbol of holiness.
 - Showing an appropriate response to Yahweh
 - Above Him. Not superior to Him. Standing ready to serve.
 - Covered His face. God too holy to look upon.
 - Covered His feet. Targum has "body" for feet; perhaps indicating humility..
 - Ears not covered: hear the word of God.
 - He flew. In service

- Holy, holy, holy.
 - Separate from creation
 - Separate from sin: ethically pure, upright, true
 - Heb repeated for emphasis. Only 3x in Heb Scriptures = super-superlative.
 - May indicate the Trinity.
- Whole earth is full of His glory.
 - God's glory shown in the display of His attributes. Declarative glory.
 - Display in creation is sufficient so people are without excuse
 - Rom 1:20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.
- And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called out,
 - Thunderous acclaim
- the house of God was filling with smoke.
 - A picture of awesome majesty. Smoke often accompanied the presence of God.
 - Excludes Isaiah from the temple.

Isaiah sees his unworthiness

6:5 Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts."

- Ruined. Heb: cut off. Broken over his own sin.
- Unclean lips.
 - Unable to praise God as the Seraphim were doing.
 - Showed the condition of the heart.
- I live among a people of unclean lips
 - Identified with his people.
 - Broken over their sin. The entire nation is unfit to praise God.
- the King, Yahweh of hosts.
 - Uzziah is dead, but here is the real Ruler of all
 - Covenant God and Creator
 - All-powerful

Isaiah's sin is atoned for

6:6-7 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. And he touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is atoned for."

- Isaiah is helpless; he does nothing.
- God takes the initiative.
- Burning. Action of HS.
- From the altar. From the place of atonement.
- He touched my mouth with it.
 - Act is symbolic. Stone & fire cannot remove sin.
- said. Isaiah is told that his guilt is taken away. The words convey the meaning of the act.
- your iniquity is taken away. Declared righteous.
 - Col 2:13-14 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.
- your sin atoned for.
 - Does not say how God can forgive sin. That will come in ch 53
- No mention of pain
 - May be that the burning was not physically hot.
 - May be that the pain was insignificant compared to the vision of God, Isaiah's realization of his sin, and the forgiveness he received.,

Yahweh calls and Isaiah responds

6:8 Then 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!"

- Heard... Said.
 - Reconciliation. Isaiah, once far off, is now near; was silent, now can speak.
 - Eph 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
- Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?.
 - God speaks to the Trinity in Isaiah's hearing but not directly to Him.
 - Not a command but announcement of the opportunity
- "Here am I. Send me! The response of true faith
 - Conviction of sin
 - Understanding of salvation
 - Willingness to go
 - As David when his sin with Bathsheba was forgiven.
 - Ps 51:13-15 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You. Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

Isaiah is commissioned for his work

6:9-10 He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not know.' "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."

- He said. Yahweh speaking.
- this people. No longer "My people".
- Keep on hearing, but do not understand
 - Isaiah would bring God's word to the people.
 - This word would be light but the effect of the light on their unregenerate hearts would be hardening.
 - The very truth which could save them would prove to harden them past the point of no return.
 - Thus Isaiah is God's means to harden most of the people to reject his message. But a remnant would receive his words and be encouraged.
 - Here is God's election: some He chooses to save; they love Him and come to Him. Those not chosen hate the light and flee from Him.
 - As Pharaoh
 - Ex 11:10 Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart...
 - Ex 13:15 Pharaoh hardened his heart...
 - Ro 9:17-18 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND IN ORDER THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.
- Go, and tell.
 - Isaiah is to be faithful to proclaim Yahweh's word in spite of the outcome.

Isaiah is concerned for his people

6:11-13 Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He said, "Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, Houses are without people, And the land is devastated to desolation, And Yahweh has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. "Yet there will be a tenth portion in it, And it will again be subject to burning, Like a terebinth or like an oak Whose stump remains when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump."

- Isaiah's question: Lord, How long?
 - Not challenging God
 - Showing concern for his people: How long must we endure the judgment until the promised glory is achieved?
 - Pastor's heart
 - Here is the problem faced by all true ministers of God: speaking the truth in love
 - faithfulness requires a clear presentation of the entire word of God. This must be done in love, not condemnation.
 - Many will reject the truth
 - affection toward the hearers may tempt to softening or omitting the hard parts, however the whole truth must be proclaimed.
 - False compassion that avoids hard issues is self-serving.
 - Genuine love demands the entire truth.
- God's response:
 - Until (1) Land devastated to desolation.(2) People removed. Then burned again. Dt prophecies would be fulfilled
 - Tenth portion. Remnant left
 - Again be subject to burning. The remnant would be afflicted but not removed.
 - Holy seed.
 - A remnant of true believers culminating in Christ
 - Would fulfill the promise to Abraham: all nations to be blessed through his seed
 - The believing remnant will be a recurring theme in Isaiah's prophecy. King Uzziah died as an outcast leper. He symbolizes a nation that had received God's word and rejected it, and are now cursed and separated from God. But within the nation there would be a believing remnant that would accept God's word and live by faith. For them, there would be light beyond the coming darkness.

Application

- The order of events in ch 6 is important:
 - Death of the king (earthly hope gone)
 - Vision of God
 - Conviction of sin
 - Salvation
 - Possibility for service recognized
 - Offering of self

What happens if these are taken out of order? How can this be fixed?

References

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