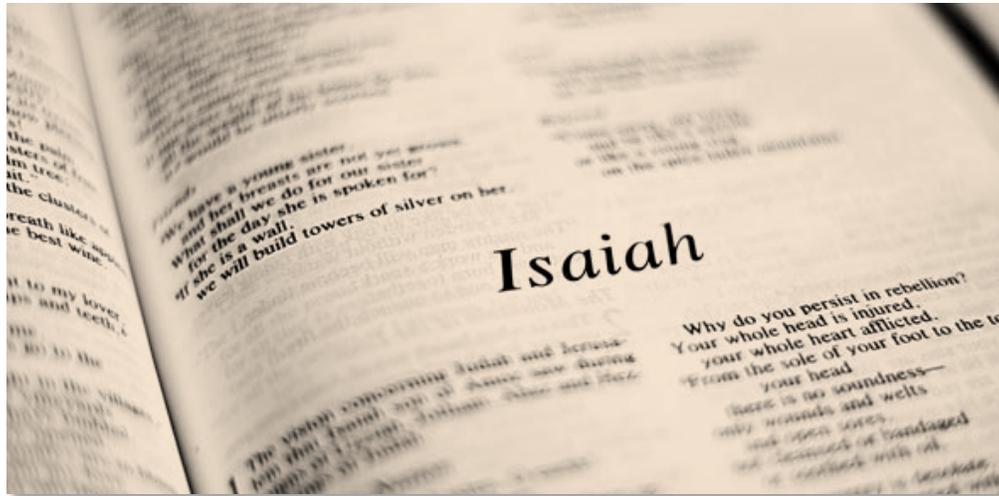


THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

ISAIAH'S REMIT: ISAIAH I-6



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

The Fellowship of Ailbe

Isaiah's Remit: Isaiah 1-6
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Susie Moore, Editing and Finishing
The Fellowship of Ailbe
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Introduction to *Isaiah 1-6*

The opening chapters of Isaiah outline the Lord's complaint against His people. Like the northern kingdom of Israel, the people of Judah and Jerusalem had turned away from God and were adopting all manner of pagan practices and ways. They still "worshipped" God, but theirs was strictly a religion of convenience, not obedience.

God calls Isaiah to deliver His message of warning and judgment to His people, but He lets His prophet know that the people will not listen, and judgment will fall in due course.

Nevertheless, God has a message of hope and restoration for those faithful Israelites who continue to look to Him through all their hardship and trial. Isaiah's eager response – "Send me." – sets an example for all believers, who have been sent by Jesus to proclaim His Kingdom to the world.

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1 Opening Argument

Pray Psalm 85.8, 9

I will hear what God the LORD will speak,
For He will speak peace
To His people and to His saints;
But let them not turn back to folly.
Surely His salvation *is* near to those who fear Him,
That glory may dwell in our land.

Read Isaiah 1.

Reflect.

1. Why was God upset with the people of Judah and Jerusalem? What specific charges does He set against them?
2. Does God offer them any hope? What must they do? What will He do?

Meditate.

We're going to be moving through the book of Isaiah in some fairly large chunks. Please read each assigned text, and meditate on the *Reflect* questions as you do. These will help you focus on the most important points of each passage.

Isaiah's ministry is toward the people of Judah and Jerusalem (v. 1). God has a case against them, and He will use Isaiah as His "lawyer" to present the case and call for justice against the sinful people.

And what sins they have committed (v. 4): Rebellion (v. 2), evildoing and corruption (v. 4), iniquity of all kinds (v. 13), the details of which God will present as evidence against them in ensuing chapters, as His case unfolds.

The effect of all this is that the land has come to ruin (vv. 7-9). The ancient promises of God have been forfeited, and the land is overrun by pagan people and powers and ways.

And yet, the "religious life" of the people goes on as if nothing was wrong (vv. 11-15). The rulers and people think that, as long as they're worshipping, going through the motions of being the people of God, everything will be just fine. The evidence all around them suggests that their faith is futile. Indeed, God Himself finds their services of worship to be "an abomination" (v. 13). The people should be able to see, from the abundant evidence of decay and compromise all around them that they are "sick" spiritually (v. 5) and in need of renewal. But their religion was apparently good enough for them, just as it was.

Not so the Lord. He sent Isaiah to call the people to repent of their sins, turn from their wicked and compromised ways, take up works of mercy and compassion, and present themselves before Him and His Word (vv. 16-20). And He warns them that, "if you refuse and rebel," terrible judgment will ensue.

In the final section of chapter 1 (vv. 21-31) we see through the eyes of the Lord into the future. The city of the Lord is so compromised that it will not repent; therefore, He will remove it and "purge" it of all its sins (v. 25). There is a "soon and later" dimension to this, as we shall see.

But that's not all. Having purged His people of their sins, He promises to restore them to Himself and to

faithfulness. He Himself will redeem them “with justice” and “righteousness” (vv. 26, 27). But before this occurs, terrible judgment must fall on the “transgressors” and “sinners” to whom God sends His prophet with this Word of judgment (vv. 28-31). Such words set the stage for how God will accomplish this judgment and redemption in the long run.

In chapter 1 we see the short-term/long-term focus of Isaiah’s prophecy. Sin will bring judgment now, but God will restore and remove sin at some point in the future. When will that restoration be accomplished? It will begin “in the latter (last) days” (Is. 2.2), as we shall see.

Prepare.

1. The evidence all around them – burned cities, forfeited crops, occupied territories, sinful and compromised ways – all suggested that the religion of the people of Judah and Jerusalem was bankrupt. But they kept on “worshipping” God, going to church, as it were, and thinking this was good enough. Is there a lesson here for believers today about the nature of faith that is acceptable to God?

2. God found their worship services “an abomination”? Why? How can we know whether our services of worship – and all our religious practices – are acceptable or abominable to God?

3. A pattern of restoration is glimpsed in this chapter: God is going to restore, but the people must do something. Explain. What does this suggest about the nature of faith?

Let us become as clean as is possible. Let us wash away our sins. And the prophet teaches us how to wash them away, saying, “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean, put away from my eyes the evil of your souls.” ... See that we must first cleanse ourselves, and then God cleanses us. He first said, “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean,” and then said, “I will make you white.” ... The power of repentance is then tremendous as it makes us white as snow and wool, even though sin had stained our souls. John Chrysostom, (344-407 AD), On the Epistle to the Hebrews 12.4

I want my faith to be acceptable to You at all times, Lord, so help me to...

Pray Psalm 85.

This psalm looks forward to the days of Isaiah’s ministry. It also looks forward to our own day. Ask the Lord to search you: Are you captive to anything other than Him? Do you sense a need for revival? Are you eager to hear what He will speak and do what He calls you to do?

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 85 (*Lyons: O Worship the King*)

O Lord, You Your favor showed to Your land;
Your people You saved by Your mighty hand.
Their sins You forgave, all Your wrath You withdrew;
You turned back the anger which to them was due.

Restore us, O God, renew us in peace,
And cause all Your wrath against us to cease.
Will You evermore all Your wrath to us show?
Revive us that we may Your joy again know.

Lord, show us Your love; restore us, we pray!
And help us to hear the words that You say.
Speak peace to Your people; in truth let us stand.
We fear You; let glory and grace fill our land.

In Jesus God’s grace and truth are combined;

Isaiah's Remit: Isaiah 1-6

Both goodness and peace in Him do we find.
Truth springs from the earth as He walks in our midst,
And righteousness flows from the heav'ns as a gift.

The Lord by His grace will give what is good;
Our land will produce abundance of food.
And righteousness will go before the Lord's face,
And make of His footsteps a way in this place.

2 Then and Now

Pray Psalm 96.1-3.

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Sing to the LORD, bless His name;
Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.
Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all peoples.

Read Isaiah 2.

Reflect.

1. Chapter 2 expands on the message of chapter 1, looking far ahead and near at hand. What does God promise “in the latter days”?
2. In the near term, God will judge His people because they have become compromised with the surrounding nations. In what ways?

Meditate.

Isaiah 2.1-4 is a message of extreme importance. Isaiah’s contemporary, Micah, repeated this message almost verbatim in Micah 4.1-5. This is a promise for “the latter (or last) days.” These days, we know, began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2.14-18). While the Lord’s temple will shortly be destroyed, in the last days His house will command the attention and obedience of the nations, who will see in the people of this household such a compelling way of life, that they want to have it for themselves.

That is for then – our now. God will repeatedly return to this promise of restoration, to give His people pegs on which to hang their hope. For terrible judgment is about to ensue. The nation of Israel is God’s shot across the bow for Judah, as they are destroyed and carried away captive to Israel. But the people of Judah and Jerusalem are so compromised and content with their situation, that they don’t take prophets like Isaiah seriously.

But the prophet declares his message whether or not anyone hears. And the message is dire. Israel has forsaken God, so God has forsaken them (v. 6). They have incorporated the ways of pagan nations into their lifestyles and worship (vv. 7-9), and they have become right proud of themselves for being like their unbelieving neighbors (vv. 10, 11).

God will put an end to this rebellion; everything that is lofty and proud and exalts itself above the Lord will be “brought low” and abolished (vv. 12-18). The people who did not fear their God as Isaiah proclaimed Him will fear Him in that soon coming day, and will try to hide from “the terror of the LORD,” but to no avail (v. 19). Seeing at last that God meant business, they will try to repent and be done with their idols (vv. 20, 21), but it will be too late. God’s wrath will overwhelm all those who prefer their own ways and the ways of the unbelieving world to His covenant and Word.

The call to Isaiah is the call to the people of Judah and Jerusalem: “Sever yourselves (be done with, have no more to do with), such a man” – the man who believes he knows better than the Lord how to conduct his life.

Prepare.

1. According to Isaiah 2.1-4, why will the Lord’s “house” be so influential in the last days (note the causal

clause in v. 3)? Is this happening in your community?

2. Why is it so easy for God's people to *forsake* the Lord and embrace unbelieving ways of living and worshipping God? How can we know when we're beginning to do this? What should we do then (v. 5; cf. Ps. 119.59, 60)?

3. Why is it an act of justice for God to bring His wrath against proud, self-serving people, even those who claim to know Him? What would that look like if He did that in our day (cf. Heb. 12.3-11)?

[Isaiah] announces the wonderful and widespread demonstration of piety everywhere: idolatry will be destroyed, while the house of God will receive its due sign of universal respect.... After our Savior's appearing, idolatry will be shown and the beauty of truth will be unveiled. In this we will see the fulfillment of this announcement. Furthermore, by "last days" he means that time following incarnation. Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 2.2

Lord, show me the implications of Your promise for working my Personal Mission Field, for I want...

Pray Psalm 96.

This psalm expresses the hope that all the world might know the salvation of the Lord. Pray this concerning your own Personal Mission Field, the people and places where God sends you each day. Remember the promise of verse 13, and pray for the Lord's soon return.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 96 (*Mit Freuden Zart: All Praise to God, Who Reigns Above*)

Sing to the Lord! O, bless His Name! All nations tell His glory!

Salvation's tidings loud proclaim; let earth rehearse His story!

For God is greatly to be praised; His throne above all gods is raised –
fear Him, and sing His glory!

All other gods are idols vain – the Lord created heaven.

Splendor and strength with Him obtain; to Him be glory given!

All fam'lies, praise this mighty Lord! Give strength and glory to His Word;
exalt the Lord of heaven.

Bring offerings sweet to Him, our Lord, in holy garments praise Him!

Tremble before Him, all the earth; among the nations raise Him!

The earth is fixed, it will not move; the peoples will His justice prove –
exalt the Lord and praise Him.

Let heaven sing with lusty voice; let earth and sea sing sweetly!

Let fields and trees in Him rejoice, for He is coming swiftly

to judge the world in righteousness, the peoples in His faithfulness –
He comes; exalt Him greatly!

3 The Sins of Judah and Jerusalem

Pray Psalm 96.1-3.

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Sing to the LORD, bless His name;
Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.
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Bring offerings sweet to Him, our Lord, in holy garments praise Him!

Tremble before Him, all the earth; among the nations raise Him!

The earth is fixed, it will not move; the peoples will His justice prove –
exalt the Lord and praise Him.

Let heaven sing with lusty voice; let earth and sea sing sweetly!

Let fields and trees in Him rejoice, for He is coming swiftly

to judge the world in righteousness, the peoples in His faithfulness –
He comes; exalt Him greatly!

4 The Branch of the Lord

Pray Psalm 80.14-18.

Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts;
Look down from heaven and see,
And visit this vine
And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted,
And the branch *that* You made strong for Yourself.
It is burned with fire, it is cut down;
They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance.
Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand,
Upon the son of man *whom* You made strong for Yourself.
Then we will not turn back from You;
Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.

Read Isaiah 4.

Reflect.

1. What do the references to *cloud and smoke* and *flaming fire* indicate? What is God promising His people, even as He brings His judgment against them?
2. The short-term reference in these verses is to the cleansing that will occur while Israel is captive in Babylon. But how can you see that this cleansing points forward to a greater cleansing yet to come?

Meditate.

“In that day” in verse 2 corresponds to “In that day” of verse 1, as though the events described were coincidental. Verse 1 is a scene of desperation, while verse 2 offers assurance and hope.

Isaiah holds out hope for the remnant who will be left in Jerusalem after the judgment of God. He says their restoration is at hand, even amid the rubble of wrath. The branch of the Lord here refers to His vine, His people, of whom all that is left is but a twig (cf. Ps. 80.8-16). In a larger and further sense, the Branch of the LORD is that Branch of David Who will be known as “The LORD is Our Righteousness,” even our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Jer. 23.5, 6; Zech. 3.8).

He is not the primary focus here, however. Rather, God is addressing that remaining branch of His people, those left behind in Jerusalem (Jer. 39.10) on whom He will bestow restoration, making them a type of the Branch to come.

God considers His poor remnant beautiful and glorious, because they have come though His judgment and remain in the land of promise. He holds out to them the promise of blessing, shelter, and glory, for He will be present with them and tabernacle among them by day and by night. But they must believe His Word and return to trusting in Him, letting go of every sinful practice which was the occasion of His wrath and walking in all His ways, doing all His will, and trusting daily in His presence and provision.

The principle seems to be that restoration to the Lord and the blessings of His covenant are always available to those who repent of their sins, look to the Lord and His promises, and take up the daily work of obedience, trusting in Him and His presence to provide for and protect them, and to make His glory known. The remnant branch of Israel would know the glory of God again; and when the greater Branch came, then full restoration would begin.

Prepare.

1. Meditate on Jeremiah 39.1-10. The people left in Jerusalem and Judah by the Babylonians were the outcasts and poor of Israel. They would have been too great a burden to take to Babylon, so the Chaldeans rejected them and let them remain in the land. How did God feel about this “branch” of His people? What does it mean that they would be “called holy”? Should we as believers identify with them? Explain.
2. Of what would the promise of “a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night” have reminded this remnant? How did this *branch* realize that? How do we? Why, in the face of judgment, does the Lord point forward to a time of hope and restoration? Does He still do this?
3. God promises a *tabernacle* to provide shelter and rest for His people. How can you see that this promise points forward to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. John 1.14, where the word *dwelt* is, in the Greek, ἐσκήνωσεν, “He tabernacled”)?

The greatest cleansing is the spiritual washing that washes away the filth of the soul. The inspired word speaks of such a washing: “The Lord shall wash away the filth of the sons and daughters of Israel and shall wash away the blood from their midst.”
Clement of Alexandria (150-215 AD), *Christ the Educator* 3.9.48

Cleanse me of all my sins, Lord, and bring fuller restoration to me in Jesus, so that I can...

Pray Psalm 80.

This is a psalm seeking the Lord to lift His judgment from His people and restore them to His salvation and glory. Pray for the people of God all over the world today, that the Lord would restore us, and look favorably upon us, that we might realize more of His great salvation.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 80 (*St. Theodulph: All Glory, Laud, and Honor*)

O God of grace, restore us, and shine on us Your face!
O save us, Lord, work for us; renew us by Your grace!
Give ear, O gracious Savior, Who leads us as Your flock:
Stir up Your pow’r and favor, our King and Lord and Rock!

How long will You ignore all Your people’s fervent prayer?
Shall bitter tears fall ever? O Lord, renew Your care!
Our neighbors mock and scorn us, they laugh at our distress;
Renew, O Lord, and turn us, look down on us and bless!

You set us free from sin, Lord, and planted us in grace;
We rooted in Your strong Word have spread from place to place.
Our shadow covered mountains, our branches reached the sea;
Your grace flowed like a fountain of life, abundantly.

Now You in wrath have spoken and bruised Your chosen vine.
We languish, Lord, are broken by wrath, deserved, divine.
Once more, Lord, hear our pleading; return and heal this vine!
Look down on us, so needy, and show Your love divine!

Though we be burned and perish because of Your command,
Revive us, Lord, and cherish this son of Your right hand.
Then let us not return to our sinful, selfish ways,
But call on You and learn to surround You with our praise.

5 Song of Woe

Pray Psalm 80.14-18.

Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts;
Look down from heaven and see,
And visit this vine
And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted,
And the branch *that* You made strong for Yourself.
It is burned with fire, it is cut down;
They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance.
Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand,
Upon the son of man *whom* You made strong for Yourself.
Then we will not turn back from You;
Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.

Read Isaiah 5.

Reflect.

1. How had the people of Judah and Jerusalem failed in their calling as the people of God?
2. How does bringing judgment against His people cause the Lord to be exalted (v. 16)?

Meditate.

This chapter is composed as a song. God frequently uses song to communicate with His people. Song engages both the mind and the heart, as well as bodily strength, and can thus be quickly learned and easily recalled. God wanted to make sure His people understood why they were being taken away into captivity (v. 13), and this song of lament and woe would have done the job.

The people would have sung this song on their journey into captivity and upon arriving in Babylon. This song – of lamentation, woe, shame, and punishment – is a far cry from that which the faithful but persecuted Cherokee sang – “Lead On, O King Eternal” – as they were force marched from Georgia and Tennessee to Oklahoma along the Trail of Tears. That song gave hope, while the song of Isaiah 5 brought only condemnation and woe.

God expands on the vineyard image which He used in chapter 4. He was looking for specific fruit from His people, and He got just the opposite instead (vv. 1-4). What else could He do but to clear the ground and let it return to thorns and waste (vv. 5-7)?

Instead of multiplying the fruit of righteousness unto the Lord, the people had occupied themselves with material gain, leisure, and sensual diversions (vv. 8-12). Having become captive to sin and self-indulgence, God would send them into captivity to Babylon, depriving them of the blessings of His land and presence, and turning them over to their own choices (vv. 13-17).

Verses 18-22, with their repetition of “Woe,” make it clear that this sojourn in Babylon is not going to be a vacation on the Tigris. The people have rejected God and His Law (v. 24); therefore, He will reject them as His people (v. 25). They will fall into the hands of a powerful, pitiless foe, and be transplanted into the land of darkness – an appropriate place for those who chose darkness rather than light, and captivity to lust rather than the freedom of God’s Word.

Prepare.

1. Why does God use song at times such as we have seen in Isaiah 1-5? How does song contribute to or affect your faith? Can you give an example?
2. God was seeking the fruit of righteousness from the vine of Israel. What fruit is He seeking from us (Jn. 15.1-8)? Will He sit idly by if that fruit is lacking?
3. Meditate on Hebrews 12.3-11. Should we expect God to discipline His people today? Why? To what end? How does this exalt and glorify Him?

See then how very bad sinning is, that they may be delivered to Satan, who holds captive the souls of those forsaken by God—though God does not forsake without cause or judgment those whom he has abandoned. For when he sends the rain for the vineyard and the vineyard bears thorns instead of grapes, what else will God do except order the clouds not to sprinkle rain on the vineyard? Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD), Homilies on Jeremiah 1.4

Lord, I know You are seeking fruit from me today, so help me to...

Pray Psalm 80.

Since the focus of this chapter continues on the Lord's vine, we'll pray Psalm 80 again, seeking the Lord to revive us and restore His vine to fruitfulness.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 80 (*St. Theodulph: All Glory, Laud, and Honor*)

O God of grace, restore us, and shine on us Your face!
O save us, Lord, work for us; renew us by Your grace!
Give ear, O gracious Savior, Who leads us as Your flock:
Stir up Your pow'r and favor, our King and Lord and Rock!

How long will You ignore all Your people's fervent prayer?
Shall bitter tears fall ever? O Lord, renew Your care!
Our neighbors mock and scorn us, they laugh at our distress;
Renew, O Lord, and turn us, look down on us and bless!

You set us free from sin, Lord, and planted us in grace;
We rooted in Your strong Word have spread from place to place.
Our shadow covered mountains, our branches reached the sea;
Your grace flowed like a fountain of life, abundantly.

Now You in wrath have spoken and bruised Your chosen vine.
We languish, Lord, are broken by wrath, deserved, divine.
Once more, Lord, hear our pleading: return and heal this vine!
Look down on us, so needy, and show Your love divine!

Though we be burned and perish because of Your command,
Revive us, Lord, and cherish this son of Your right hand.
Then let us not return to our sinful, selfish ways,
But call on You and learn to surround You with our praise.

6 Isaiah Called

Pray Psalm 115.1.

Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us,
But to Your name give glory,
Because of Your mercy,
Because of Your truth.

Read Isaiah 6.

Reflect.

1. Isaiah's calling to serve the Lord was pretty dramatic. Are all callings like this? Do all believers have a calling from the Lord?

2. How did God prepare Isaiah for his calling?

Meditate.

In chapters 1-5, God set forth His case against the people of Israel. He also declared that His judgment would fall on them, and that a time of restoration would come, when a remnant of His people would be redeemed and restored to Him. These are the primary motifs of the book of Isaiah, and we shall see how God unpacks more of the details of each theme as the prophet's book unfolds.

Now God needs someone to represent Him and to make known His will to His people. The calling of Isaiah marks the formal beginning of the prophet's work.

Uzziah has died, and now Jotham is on the throne (2 Kgs. 15.32-38). He himself did what was right before the Lord, but the people continued to transgress against the Word and will of God, and Jotham seems to have gone along with at least some of their idolatrous behavior. This would leave the door open for his son, Ahaz, to pursue outright rebellion against the Lord (2 Kgs. 16.1-4).

Isaiah's call begins with a powerful vision of the Lord (vv. 1-4). God knows that, unless we see Him clearly and experience being in His presence, we will not be likely to go out to serve His will (cf. Mk. 3.14, 15). Isaiah's response to the holiness of God is, appropriately, fear, humbling, and confession of sinfulness (v. 5). God's response is to cleanse Isaiah and thus to prepare him for his calling (vv. 6, 7).

Let's consider Isaiah's calling in broad outline, so that we can better see our own calling in the light of his. First, God declares His intention to *send* someone (v. 8). Similarly, Jesus has declared that He is sending us to the world in the same way He Himself was sent (Jn. 20.21). Without knowing what he's being sent for, Isaiah stands forth: "Here *am* I! Send me!" And only after his willingness to go is determined does God unfold the details of his calling. We can see that Isaiah's response was to *the One Who called him*, and not to any of the particulars of *what he was being called to do*.

Isaiah is called to *preach to a people who will not bear him*, and will neither understand nor believe his message (v. 9). Indeed, his preaching will only make the people harder of heart and more determined in their rebellion against the Lord (v. 10). Naturally, Isaiah wants to know how long he is to pursue this calling (v. 11). God's response is: Until the judgment you proclaim begins to occur (vv. 11, 12). We note that Isaiah's persistence in his calling has *nothing to do* with people responding favorably, and *everything to do with obeying the Lord*.

His calling also includes the promise of restoration for some, even though they will look as dead and

unpromising as an old stump (v. 13).

Without a vision of God, and that experience of His presence and cleansing, it is doubtful Isaiah would have taken up such an "unpromising" call. But because he *saw the Lord*, because he *experienced the presence of God* and *understood the Lord's will*, he could do nothing other than to embrace his calling and carry it out faithfully.

The same must be true for us.

Prepare.

1. Meditate on John 20.21. Why was Jesus sent to the world? Why is He sending you to the world? Can you say that this calling guides and motivates all you do? Explain.
2. How important were Isaiah's *vision* and *experience* of God to his taking up God's *calling* for him? What does this suggest for us about fulfilling the calling appointed to us?
3. How would Isaiah measure the success of his calling? How should we measure our success in fulfilling the calling to serve God in our Personal Mission Field?

Do you desire to learn how the powers above pronounce that name; with what awe, with what terror, with what wonder? "I saw the Lord," says the prophet, "sitting upon a throne, high, and lifted up; around him stood the seraphim; and one cried to another and said, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" Do you perceive with what dread, with what awe, they pronounce that name while glorifying and praising him? But you, in your prayers and supplications, call upon him with much listlessness; when it would become you to be full of awe and to be watchful and sober! John Chrysostom (344-407 AD), Homily Concerning the Statues 7.9

Show me Your glory, Lord, radiating out from Your Word, and send me today to...

Pray Psalm 115.1-18.

We glorify God when we daily fulfill the calling He has appointed to us. Working at our calling is not always pleasant, nor does it always yield abundant fruit for the Kingdom. Offer your calling to the Lord for His glory, and seek His strength to carry it out faithfully today.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 115 (*Plainfield: Nothing But the Blood of Jesus*)

Not to us, O God, not us, but unto Your Name give glory!
For Your love and faithfulness, ever to Your Name be glory!
Why should the nations cry, "Where is their God on high?"
You rule us, Lord, on high: Ever to Your Name be glory!

Idols made by men's own hand – ever to Your Name be glory –
see nor hear nor understand – ever to Your Name be glory!
They neither feel nor walk, nor can they speak or talk;
All those who serve them fall, but unto Your Name be glory!

All who trust in Jesus yield – ever to His Name be glory –
find in Him their help and shield: Ever to Your Name be glory!
O Israel, trust the Lord! He helps us evermore!
Fear Him obey His Word: Ever to Your Name be glory!

Blessings from our gracious Lord – ever to Your Name be glory –
will attend us evermore: Ever to Your Name be glory!
Bless all who fear You, Lord, all who obey Your Word,

Isaiah's Remit: Isaiah 1-6

All who Your Name adore: Ever to Your Name be glory!

Grant us, Savior, great increase: Ever to Your Name be glory!

Bless us with eternal peace: Ever to Your Name be glory!

Heaven and earth are Yours; let every soul adore

And bless You evermore: Ever to Your Name be glory!

7 "Send Me."

Pray Psalm 146.1, 2.

Praise the LORD, O my soul!
While I live I will praise the LORD;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

Review Isaiah chapters 1-6.

Reflect.

1. Do you see any parallels between the spiritual condition of Judah and Jerusalem in Isaiah's day and the spiritual condition of churches in our day?
2. Does God still bring His judgment to bear against His people in our day? What forms does this take?

Meditate.

The problem God exposed with the people of Judah and Jerusalem was that they were not taking His Word seriously. They practiced the outward forms of religion – going to the temple, offering sacrifices, observing feast days, and the rest – but they lived each day a religion of convenience rather than obedience.

It suited their interests and purposes to ignore much of the teaching of God's Law and to make room in their lives for practices and morality imported from the surrounding pagan nations. To curry friendship with their unbelieving neighbors, the people of God set aside most the daily practices that were meant to distinguish them as a people holy unto the Lord. Instead, they lived more like their unbelieving neighbors, seeking their own interests, taking advantage of others, not caring for those in need, giving in to many fleshly desires, and adopting everyday pagan religious practices.

The situation had become dire, as the people of Judah and Jerusalem had all but lost their identify as the people of God. They were rapidly becoming like the nation of Israel to the north, which was so badly compromised in all aspects of life, that God would shortly remove them as a nation altogether.

As we shall see, what happens to Israel is intended as a warning to Judah: Repent and return to the Lord, that your sins may be forgiven and you may be saved and restored. But the people to whom Isaiah was sent would be no more receptive to the Word of God than the people of Israel had been to the prophets sent to them.

The judgment of God must fall. He would be faithful to His Word and covenant, even if His people were not, and that would mean bringing judgment as He had promised when the people turned from Him. But God was not finished with His people. Part of Isaiah's remit was to hold out the hope of a remnant, of restoration and revival, of a renewed covenant relationship with God, and a new world to come.

God raised up Isaiah to warn His people, call them to repentance, and point toward the hope of restoration in the coming blessings of the Lord. God called Isaiah, and his response – "Here am I! Send me." – is an example to every one of us.

Prepare.

1. Why did God have to bring His judgment against His people? Why couldn't He just continue loving them and taking care of them?
2. The writer of Hebrews warns against neglecting our great salvation (Heb. 2.3). In what ways were the

people of Judah and Jerusalem neglecting their salvation?

3. Meditate on 1 Peter 4.17. What did Peter mean? Is it time for “judgment to begin at the house of God” in our day? Explain.

“Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?” O divine secrets of Scripture! As long as Isaiah’s tongue was treacherous and his lips unclean, the Lord does not say to him, Whom shall I send, and who shall go? His lips are cleansed, and immediately he is appointed the Lord’s spokesman; hence it is true that the person with unclean lips cannot prophesy, nor can he be sent in obedient service to God. Jerome (347-420 AD), Homilies on the Psalms 41 (Psalm 119)

Show me Your glory, Lord! Cleanse me of all my sins! And send me into my Personal Mission Field to...

Pray Psalm 146.

This is a psalm of hope. Use it to call on the Lord to revive His people, to provide for our needs, open our eyes to His truth, and raise us up as His witnesses in this day when His churches have drifted from His great salvation.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 146 (*Hallelujah! What a Savior! Man of Sorrows*)

Praise the Lord, my soul, give praise! While I live, His Name I’ll raise,
and exalt Him all my days – God forever reigns in Zion!

Trust we not in prince or man – no salvation’s in their hand;
death shall take them, breath and plans – God forever reigns in Zion!

Blessed are they whose hope resides in the Lord, Christ at His side.
By Him heav’n and earth abide – God forever reigns in Zion!

He is faithful evermore; He gives justice to the poor,
feeds the hungry from His store – God forever reigns in Zion!

Jesus sets the pris’ner free, heals blind eyes that they may see,
lifts those burdened painfully – God forever reigns in Zion!

He the righteous loves the best; wand’rers in His grace are blessed;
needy ones in Him find rest – God forever reigns in Zion!

But the wicked who defame His eternal blessed Name,
them He brings to ruin and shame – God forever reigns in Zion!

Isaiah's Remit: Isaiah 1-6

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. How would you describe the spiritual condition of the people of Judah and Jerusalem in Isaiah's day? How did that happen?
2. God threatened to judge His people severely. Why? Should He have simply forgiven them, and then just moved on?
3. How would you summarize Isaiah's remit? In what ways is his calling a model for your own?
4. In the short term, Isaiah could not expect much in the way of "success" from his preaching and teaching. What about in the long term? Which term is more important for your calling? Why?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Isaiah 1-6? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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