

ISAIAH: Prophet in Perilous Times
THE GOD WHO SENDS

Tuesday, August 4

Reading: Isaiah 6

Isaiah 6:8 *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for Us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"* **9** *He said, "Go and tell this people: "'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.'"* **10** *Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."*

That Isaiah's call occurred "the year King Uzziah died" is important. Uzziah had followed the Lord for most of his 52-year reign and God prospered the nation. The only blemish on his record was toward the end of his reign when he arrogantly presumed to offer incense in the Temple - an act only the priests were allowed to do. For this the Lord gave him leprosy until the day of his death (2 Chronicles 26). The days of Judah's prosperity were over. Though Uzziah's son Jotham was faithful to God, "the people continued their corrupt practices" (2 Chronicles 27:1-2).

It is against this backdrop that a young man enters the temple to worship. There God gives Isaiah a majestic vision of the heavenly throne and the praise that surrounds the Almighty. Upon seeing this vision of God's glory, Isaiah realizes that he is a sinful man living among a sinful people. Unlike Uzziah, Isaiah comes before the Lord as a humble servant.

God responds by issuing a call which Isaiah humbly accepts. His message will be one that will not be well received. The people will not want to hear about God's judgment on them for their sins. But Isaiah was to keep preaching until God's judgment fell. Isaiah would not live long enough to see this destruction of Jerusalem that God foretold. Jewish tradition says that Isaiah was killed during the reign of Manasseh. But the prophet Jeremiah would pick up his message.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. When Isaiah saw God for who He really is, it caused him to see who he really was. Does your understanding of God's character and glory cause you to humble yourself before Him?
2. When Isaiah recognized his unworthiness before God, the Lord cleansed him, preparing him for service. We cannot effectively serve the Lord until we repent of any sin we are harboring in our hearts. Once Isaiah was cleansed, he was ready to say, "Here am I. Send me! Are you ready to answer God's call to serve Him?"
3. The message recorded in 6:9-10 is repeated 3 times in the New Testament (Matthew 13:15; John 12:40; Acts 28:27). And it still holds true today! Most people do not want to hear God's Word. But that does not mean we stop telling them! God ends His message with a word of hope: just as a stump is left when a tree is cut down, so there will be a few who will listen and be saved (6:13).