

**“I saw the Lord ...”**

1. What are some of the specific kinds of cares, concerns and emotions you notice filling the thoughts of people around you these days?

In every age, our circumstances and our conclusions about them can completely fill our horizons; but there is One who can break through appearances and give us truth, direction and real hope.

**Invitation to Pray:** Begin the study of this remarkable section of Scripture by asking the Lord to show you what He has for you in this passage and to give you a responsive heart.

2. Scan the last verses of Isaiah 5, then **read Isaiah 6** and note your initial observations on a separate sheet. Notice how different it is from earlier chapters. Also, though not placed first in Isaiah's book, this chapter probably “happened” first.
3. Notice when this vision occurs, according to verse one.
  - a. Read and comment briefly on II Chronicles 26:1-27:2 concerning the reign and death of Uzziah (792-740 B.C.) and the situation after his passing.
  - b. What was happening “next door” in Israel at this time? II Kings 15:17-20 (743 B.C.)
4. Isaiah was a man who loved God and cared deeply about both his nation and Uzziah, his king and kinsman. With these things in mind, what concerns and emotions may have been filling his thoughts “in the year that King Uzziah died”? (Can you relate to this situation?)

What happened next changed everything. **Re-read Isaiah 6:1** and “see it” with Isaiah. (Note that the length of one's robe marked the ranking of one's authority.)

5. When you read the name “Lord” spelled this way, it is usually the name *Adonai*, translated literally as “sovereign.” Define this word.
6. With all of your background work in mind, carefully look again at verse one. What reality do you think is being revealed in this first part of the vision God gives to Isaiah?

Now **read Isaiah 6:1-4** together as one piece, seeing the vision unfold in your mind's eye. The seraphim ("burning ones") are real, moral creatures of awesome purity, wisdom and power who attend the divine throne. Look closely at the spontaneous, continual reaction of these incredible beings as they live in God's presence. (The verb tense in these verses indicates ongoing action.)

7. a. First, what do you think their specific physical actions in vv. 2 and 3a signify?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. The opening phrase of the great beings' verbal response to God's presence is highly significant (this type of repetition is very rare in Scripture). What are your thoughts?

The Hebrew word translated "holy" is *qados* (kadosh), from a root meaning to cut or separate. It not only speaks of God's utter separation from evil but also of His infinite "*freedom of all limitation in His moral perfection*" (Tyndale). Our English word "holy" also implies health, wholeness and beauty. *Because of His limitless holiness, all that proceeds from God's heart and Person—all He is and does, all His glorious attributes—is infinitely righteous and good.*

8. Do these striking details we have "seen" thus far in this passage enrich and change your personal understanding of God's holiness? Explain.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. The seraphim go on now to address their praise to Jehovah Sabaoth, the LORD of hosts or LORD Almighty.
  - a. As they use this title for God in v. 3, what truth would be emphasized to Isaiah?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Putting together the entire first line of praise in v. 3, why is it so good for Isaiah and for us to know the Lord's holiness and His might are inseparable?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. What is the seraphims' concluding shout of praise in v. 3? Notice it is said as a conclusion or result of what has come before.

"Glory" is the Hebrew word *kabod*, meaning heaviness, weight and worthiness. It is used in general to describe wealth, splendor or reputation. *Here it denotes the revelation ("uncovering") of who God really is, the demonstration ("shining out") of His Person and deity.*

10. Considering what you have learned thus far in this chapter, and as you read through v. 3 once again, what do you think is meant by “the whole earth is full of His glory”?
  
11. As your time permits, scan/comment briefly on Psalm 33, John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:13, 17-22, looking for some of the specific ways you see God’s glory shining out (His true holy nature, intentions and power revealed among us, before our very eyes).
  
12. Back in Isaiah 6:4—the surroundings looked imposing and unmoveable, yet notice what happens. What do you think this final scene description is telling us?

**For your own heart:** Think about the ways you’ve seen God’s glory personally, how He has acted and revealed Himself in your life and the lives around you. Now, think of all the concerns that have been filling your thoughts. Read again Isaiah 6:1-4 and write out all that comes to your heart as you see your LORD. (Remember, He had Isaiah write down this vision for you.)

**Read Isaiah 6:4-9a.** The physical surroundings are very strongly affected—and so is Isaiah!

13. Remembering how upright Isaiah must have appeared to others, explain each of his declarations in v. 5. See also Matthew 15:18-19 and Isaiah 64:6.

*Unclean: A strong Hebrew concept meaning “filthy; foul with sin; wicked; ceremonially impure” (Webster). Evil behaviors made people unclean, unfit for God’s presence—as did certain conditions and contacts—because they in some way pictured the grievous effects of sin. The judgment for uncleanness was usually isolation from the temple and other people, until cleansing was accomplished by ritual, and sometimes also by time and/or healing.*

14. Describe God’s response to Isaiah’s dismay (verses 6-7).

The coal brought by the seraph was from the altar where sacrifices for sin were offered. This looked forward to Jesus sacrificing His own life to pay for our sins and give us forgiveness.

15.
  - a. In light of what Isaiah had just realized and admitted back in verse 5, what do you think about God's actions in verses 7-8?
  - b. How would you describe Isaiah's response in verse 8? What would you say has made such a difference from the Isaiah we saw in verse 5?
  - c. Has the Lord used this section (vv. 4-9a) to give you some new help/insight? Explain.

**Read Isaiah 6:9-13.** Verses 9 and 10 are a dramatic picture God uses to show Judah's spiritual state and what Isaiah can expect as he obediently relays God's messages of love and warning.

16. What do you think God is making clear to Isaiah, and to Judah, in verses 9-10? (For more insight, see the Lord's use of these verses in Matthew 13:11-16.)
17. Note that Isaiah doesn't ask, "How come?" but, "How long?" Ultimately, Judah won't repent and will be taken into captivity in 586 B.C. What will the nation's final defeat by the Babylonians look like, according to verses 11-13a?

But there's hope, according to the last picture God gives in v. 13. The stumps of felled terebinth and oak trees are known for their constant sprouting and they picture the fact that, even in war and exile, God will preserve a line of faith, a "holy seed". That term also refers to the protected lineage that will eventually bring forth the ultimate Holy Seed, Jesus. Isaiah's writings would minister to those crucial groups of believing people, and then to people like us down through the ages as well. He was given some of the most clear and captivating pictures of the Father and of His Son Jesus Christ to be seen in all Scripture. What an amazing privilege, disguised perhaps for a time as a ministry that "failed"!

18. **To wrap up:** List all the ways you saw God work in this vision experience to prepare Isaiah for ministry. Finish by reading and enjoying Ephesians 2:1-10 and II Corinthians 5:14-21.