

Whom Shall I Send?

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Isaiah has just had a vision of God. He heard the praise from the seraphim but could only see the sin in his heart. After being cleansed and forgiven he was ready to serve. What did God use him for? Listen as Pastor Steve examines Isaiah 6:8-13.

INTRODUCTION

- Please take God’s Word and turn once again to Isaiah chapter 6
- Last time we looked at the vision in vv.1-4, the confession in v.5, and the cleansing vv.6-7
- And now we’re looking at the last part of chapter 6, vv.8-13
- This is the commission Isaiah received from the Lord
- Listen as I read [Isaiah 6:8-13](#) “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!” He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.’ “Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.” Then I said, “Lord, how long?” And He answered, “Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, Houses are without people And the land is utterly desolate, “The Lord 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 an oak Whose stump remains when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump.””
- All of us have been given a commission
- That commission is commonly referred to as “the great commission”
- The great commission is to make disciples
- We get that from the command in [Matthew 28:18-20](#), “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.””
- Before we can do this we, like Isaiah, must first be cleansed
- When Isaiah saw the Lord and He knew that the Lord saw his sin, this caused him to pronounce judgment on himself and confess his uncleanness

- According to vv.5-7, the Lord cleansed and forgave him as seen in one of the seraphim flying to him with a live coal and touching his lips
- After He was cleansed the Lord gave him a mission
- His mission was to go to the house of Israel and warn them of coming doom
- This is where the placement of Isaiah's call in chapter 6 becomes interesting
- As you read chapters 1-5, you hear Isaiah's message to Israel with the pronouncement of 7 woes
- One woe was for himself in [Isaiah 6:5](#).
- This message is much needed today but preachers have stopped preaching it
- Preachers have succumbed to the culture that they unwilling to offend
- They know if you start preaching about judgment, people will get offended and leave the church
- They also know if you preach about hell no one will come
- So they compromise in order to keep the peace
- Instead of worrying about offending lost people, they need to be concerned about offending a holy God
- It would be better to offend them now with the truth so they might do something about it now
- [Galatians 3:24](#), "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith."
- There is a reason why we need to preach the Law
- Paul said to Timothy in [1 Timothy 1:8-11](#), "8 But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, 9 realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers 10 and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, 11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted."
- The Law's purpose is to expose sin
- Paul said in [Romans 7:7](#) that he "would not have come to know sin except through the Law, for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, 'You shall not covet'"
- [Romans 3:20](#) concludes that "...through the Law comes the knowledge of sin"
- [Romans 4:15](#) adds that "...the Law [also] brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation."

- [Romans 3:19](#) says “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;”
- That’s the entire human race
- [Galatians 4:4-5](#) says “4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”
- So the Law brings about the knowledge and conviction of sin and reveals who the lawgiver is
- [Exodus 20:2](#), “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”
- The Legacy Standard Bible says, “I am Yahweh your God”
- That brings us back to [Isaiah 6](#).
- Verse 3 says “Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of hosts” or “Yahweh of hosts” (LSB)
- He who is called Yahweh in verse 3 and Adonai in verse 1 is Jesus according to [John 12:41](#).
- It is to Him the seraphim are singing about
- Israel rejected Him
- So have many after them
- But some were gripped with astonishment even in their unbelief like the French military and political leader Napoleon Bonaparte, who lived from 1769-1821
- He said, “I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison! Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires, and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist.... Everything in Christ astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and His will confounds me. He is truly a being by Himself. His ideas and sentiments, the truth which He announces, His manner of convincing, are not explained either by human organization or by the nature of things... The nearer I approach, the more carefully I examine, everything is above me—everything remains grand, of a grandeur which overpowers.... One can absolutely find nowhere, but in Him alone, the imitation or the example of His life... I search in vain in history to find the similar to Jesus Christ. Neither history, nor humanity, nor the ages, nor nature, offer me anything with which I am able to compare it or explain it. Here everything is extraordinary.”
- Another man who had an impact on Europe and the rest of the world was a man named C.S. Lewis.
- In his book, *Mere Christianity*, he said, “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man

who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

- What do you say about Him?
- Isaiah’s vision reveals who He is
- So did He
- He said that “God was His Father” ([John 5:18](#))
- He said He was the “I AM” of [Exodus 3:14](#) ([John 8:58](#))
- He said, “I and My Father are One” ([John 10:30](#))
- He said He was the “Alpha and Omega” ([Revelation 1:11](#))
- He could say all this because that’s what the Scripture says of Him
- In [Matthew 1:21](#) He is called “Immanuel, God with us”
- In [Romans 9:5](#) He is called “the eternally blessed God”
- In [2 Peter 1:1](#) He is called “Our God our Savior”
- In [1 John 5:20](#) He is called “the true God and eternal life”
- In [Hebrews 1:8](#) the Father called Him “God”
- In [John 20:28](#) Thomas boldly exclaimed “My Lord and My God”
- In [Titus 2:13](#) He is called “our great God and Savior”
- In [Titus 2:10](#) and 3:4 He is called “God our Savior”
- Last in [Romans 10:13](#) which is a quotation of [Joel 2:32](#) He is again called “Yahweh”
- That is His name in [Isaiah 6:3](#).
- This is the Jesus who came that Christmas morning born of lowly parents in a lowly place
- Even His bedding was with the animals as Mary and Joseph placed Him in a feed trough or manger
- But what do you do with what you know about Him?
- You tell the world!
- When Isaiah was cleansed He was ready to go and preach God’s message

- The same is true today but we learn the priority of the great commission from the shepherds in [Luke 2](#).
- After the angels gave them the good news about Jesus and after went and saw Mary and Joseph and the Baby, [Luke 2:17](#) says after they left “...they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.”
- They were the first New Testament evangelists
- They went everywhere proclaiming the news that the Savior, Israel’s long-awaited Messiah, had been born (MacArthur)

· So Isaiah gives us...

LESSON

I. The Vision (vv.1-4)

II. The Confession (v.5)

III. The Cleansing (vv.6-7)

· and now...

IV. The Commission (vv.8-13)

· Up to this point only the seraphim and Isaiah had spoken

· Now verse 8 says, “Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying”

- Having seen Him (v.1), Isaiah now hears Him (LC)
- We’re not sure which member of the Godhead is speaking
- Since this is Jesus on the throne ([John 12:41](#)) it could be Him speaking or it could be the Father
- Either way we are hearing in verse 8 inter-trinitarian conversation
- The Lord asks, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”
- Some say the switch from the singular to the plural is referring to the Lord and the seraphim
- I believe the plural “us” is referring to the Trinity
- Others agree like Jerome, who lived in the 3rd century, that “it indicates the ‘sacrament’ of the Trinity.
- Spence says “The plural form is best explained by the light which ver. 3 throws on it, as indicative of the doctrine of the Trinity.”

- The phrase is like [Genesis 1:26](#), which says, “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...”
- It’s also like [Genesis 3:22](#), which says, “Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us...”
- It even occurs in [Genesis 11:7](#) at the tower of Babel, when God says, “Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.”
- R.C. Sproul says, “The Lord permits Isaiah to listen in on the sessions of the royal, heavenly court (“us”).”
- After hearing the question from the heavenly court, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!” (v.8)
- Now having been cleansed Isaiah was ready for service
- We can’t say that is true for others
- Luther said “Moses begins, as it were, a wrangling and disputing with God, and will not accept this office.” (Lang)
- Lang says “Jeremiah refuses because he feels himself really too young and made of too tender stuff. Ezekiel, too, appears inwardly at least to have had no relish for undertaking the commission. For he is exhorted not to be disobedient ([Ezek. 2:8](#)), and, though he does not express them, his doubts and fears are disarmed ([Ezek. 2:6–3:9](#)). Jonah, the most rebellious and self-willed of all Prophets, actually flees from the Lord.”
- Now that Isaiah volunteers to go, the Lord says in verse 9, “Go”
- And here’s what you need to “tell this people”
- “Keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand” (v.9)
- These words come at a time of judgment on Judah
- Isaiah had just pronounced a series of curses on the people for their drunkenness, debauchery, immorality, dishonesty, injustice, and hypocrisy
- While Isaiah was preaching his message of doom, King Uzziah died (6:1) and the nation was plunged into some of its darkest days
- They were on the verge of captivity by Babylon as part of God’s judgment; yet they refused to turn to Him for mercy and help (MacArthur)
- So Isaiah’s message was to be God’s instrument for hiding the truth from an unreceptive people
- Centuries later, Jesus’ parables were to do the same (MacArthur)
- R.C. Sproul says, “The prophetic word closes the way of God to those who are rebellious, proud, and hypocritical (29:13–16; 65:1–7), but opens it to the deaf, blind, humble, and poor (29:18, 19).”

- The people kept on hearing, but they did not understand; and they kept on seeing, but they did not perceive, because they had intentionally closed their eyes and their ears to God and refused to understand with their heart and return to Him in order for Him to heal them
- Because they chose to ignore God and His word, God judicially locked them up in their unbelief so that they would fear His judgment (MacArthur)
- Verses 9–10 are so important that they are quoted six times in the New Testament ([Matt. 13:13–15](#); [Mark 4:12](#); [Luke 8:10](#); [John 12:40](#); [Acts 28:25–28](#); [Rom. 11:8](#)) (Wiersbe)
- When Jesus quoted [Isaiah 6:9-10](#) in [Matthew 13:13-15](#), the context tells us the audience was the scribes, Pharisees and the crowds
- [Matthew 11:20](#) says they would not repent but [Matthew 13:14](#) says “they wanted to destroy Him”
- After he healed a “demon-possessed man who was blind and mute” ([Mat.12:22](#)), the Pharisees said, “This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons” and therefore blasphemed the Holy Spirit
- This group was not interested in Jesus being the Messiah, they were only interested in “signs” ([Mat.13:38](#))
- In the parallel passage in Mark, Jesus told His disciples that those “outside” the kingdom “get everything in parables, so that while seeing, they may not see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they might return and be forgiven” ([Mk.4:11-12](#))
- We hear in John’s account that Jesus said this to those who had seen “so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him” ([John 12:37](#))
- After Paul arrived at Rome in his appeal to Caesar, [Acts 28:17](#), “After three days Paul called together those who were the leading men of the Jews”
- After “testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe” ([Acts 28:23-24](#))
- It was here when Paul quotes from [Isaiah 6:9-10](#).
- This phrase refers to those who refuse to believe
- Just like Israel they were blind, dumb and without understanding because God had given them over to the hardness of their own hearts
- John Walton said, “The description of eyes and ears that do not function as they should or a heart that is hard or heavy matches that which occurs elsewhere in medical texts or in contexts of fear
- In [1 Samuel 25](#) Nabal suffers some sort of paralysis, stroke or heart attack, and his heart becomes as stone

- In a Babylonian wisdom hymn a sufferer describes his fear-induced paralysis as resulting in eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear (IVPBBC OT)
- Isaiah is to ‘Go, and *proclaim truth* to a corrupt and sensual people, and the *result* will be that they will not hear; they are so wicked that they will not attend to it; they will become even *more* hardened; yet go, and though certain of producing this effect, still proclaim it’ (Barnes)
- The same is true today
- The truth is there are many people who have been judicially hardened
- Paul says in [Romans 1:18](#) that this is how “the wrath of God is revealed”
- Listen to what Paul says in [Romans 1:21-32](#).
- If you do not give up your sin you will be given over to it
- If you refuse God you have ears that are “dull” or “stupid” (Barnes)
- [Your] “eyes [are] dim” which literally means “to besmear their eyes” or “seal them up”
- Such sealing has been employed by Oriental monarchs as a punishment (Spence)
- If they weren’t “insensitive...ears dull...eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed” (v.10)

• **Isaiah asks in verse 11, “Lord, how long?”**

- Does “how long” refer to the length of time Israel’s judgment will last or how long he will have to preach this?
- I think the answer is both
- Verse 11 says, “And He answered, ‘Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, houses are without people and the land is utterly desolate, the LORD has removed men far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land”
- In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, annihilated the Egyptian army, effectively controlling all of Palestine to the Egyptian border
- In 597 B.C. Jerusalem was attacked by the Babylonians
- Jehoiachin the king was carried into captivity
- Eleven years later the city of Jerusalem was destroyed and nearly all the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine were carried away as captives to Babylon ([2 Kin. 25:1–21](#)). (NNIBD)
- Only the poorest were left in Judah ([2 Kings 24:1-25:21](#)) (CBWW:BH)
- Verse 12 says “The LORD has removed men far away”
- [2 Kings 24:14](#) tells us that Nebuchadnezzar “led away into exile all Jerusalem and all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land.”

- But the glimmer of hope is in verse 13
- God promised “a tenth portion” would be redeemed but they would also “be subject to burning” or “be further purified by suffering” (Sproul)
- God describes them “like a terebinth or an oak whose stumps remains when it is” cut down
- The Middle Eastern terebinth and oak trees can produce new shoots even when they appear to have been cut or damaged beyond all hope (Sproul)
- That glimmer of hope is found in the future promise of the Messiah
- This is a foreshadowing of the messianic promise of 11:1
- The messiah will come from the remnant of Israel and fulfill Israel’s obligation to the covenant in a way that they never could (FSB)

CONCLUSION

- Praise God the Messiah has come!
- His name is Jesus
- His coming was prophesied and fulfilled on that Christmas morning
- The angel told Joseph that Mary would “bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”” ([Mat.1:21](#))
- God had to judge sin
- He did that in the Lord Jesus Christ
- [2 Corinthians 5:21](#), “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
- As you celebrate this Christmas day, let this be a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas and why God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world
- It’s not about the gifts we share with one another but God’s gift to us
- Don’t be like Israel, repent and acknowledge your sin
- Hear and heed His warnings
- Let’s conclude our time this morning by remembering why Jesus came as we celebrate the Lord’s Supper
- Let’s pray