

Put Me In Coach
Isaiah 6:1-8
March 10, 2024

I know a few of you are still rubbing the sleepers out of your eyes this morning from the time change. You need to do what I did. I replaced my rooster with a duck so I can wake up at the quack of dawn. Please open your Bibles today to Isaiah 6. Pew Bible. Last month during the Super Bowl, many of you witnessed Travis Kelce bumping and yelling at his coach, Andy Reid demanding that he be put into the game instead of sitting on the sidelines. Many of you have either played on a team, coached one or both and you're familiar with how eager some athletes are to get into the action. Today, we'll see an individual who tells the Almighty God to put him into the game.

Please stand if you are able as we read from Isa 6:1-8 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

What a privilege we are given to here caught a glimpse, through Isaiah, into the throne room of heaven. Let's understand that Isaiah's not telling a parable or spinning a yarn for he gives a historical reference for the timing of it. It's the year that King Uzziah died. Say Uzziah. Uzziah, also known as Azariah, became king of Judah when he was only 16 and ruled for 52 years. There were no term limits for kings in those days. Various commentators have established Uzziah's reign from about 792–740 BC. He was one of the best kings for during his reign, Judah enjoyed mostly peace and prosperity. He was successful militarily and collected taxes from conquered enemies. The Hebrews expanded into Philistia and desert areas were reclaimed through water conservation. Uzziah's reign marked the height of Judah's power. Those were good times in Judah.

Sadly, like most of us, Uzziah was unable to handle such blessing and 2 Chronicles 26:16 says, "But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense." As a result of his pride and disobedience, God struck Uzziah with leprosy and he lived out the rest of his years in isolation and was denied burial with the other kings. Beyond the Bible, we have this piece of archaeological evidence for Uzziah which is in the Israel museum. It is his burial plaque and is inscribed with a warning declaring that he was unclean because of his leprosy. It says, "Here were brought the bones of Uzziah, King of Judah. Do not open!" As Uzziah

began to fade, the Assyrian empire was rising. As they began to flex their muscle throughout the region, many in both Israel and Judah were getting nervous with good reason.

Enter Isaiah. As Uzziah is buried, sometime around 740BC, Isaiah experiences what we just read. Although it doesn't happen until chapter 6, many believe Isaiah 1-5 are an introduction to the book and this passage describes Isaiah's calling and commissioning as a prophet of Almighty God at the very beginning of his ministry. One mark of a true prophet was that he had received his commission directly from God and Isaiah certainly did here.

Isaiah had some sort of experience that was out of this world. It was supernatural for sure. Paul said that he was caught up to the third heaven, whether in the body or out of the body, he could not say. Here we see Isaiah with something similar. He sees God seated on a massive towering throne, high and lifted up. John also gives us a glimpse of God's throne room in Revelation 4. Both are incredible sights. The only thing I can vaguely compare it to was when I saw the northern lights one night about 40 years ago and the red colors went way up into the sky. Way up! I had to tilt my head back to see it all. Although God is spirit, at times He manifests Himself and this is one of those times. The throne indicates He is on the seat of power. As Isaiah was about to witness the rise of Assyria and decline of Judah, it had to be a great comfort to know that God was securely seated on the throne of the universe.

He still is! As we witness all manner of evil today, as we see wars and hear rumors of wars. As economists make dire predictions and pundits bemoan our future regardless of who is elected, it's a blessing to know that God has not left His throne. Neither the Democrats nor the Republicans have pushed Him off. Neither Putin nor Iran. God is not rummaging through His books trying to figure out how to fix things. He's in charge and He knows all that is happening and all that will happen. Sleep easy. God is on His throne!

And, Isaiah tells us, the train of His robe filled the temple. Say train. Remember that the temple on earth was a representation of God's sanctuary in heaven, so the whole place was filled with His robe. The world watched as the royal weddings took place in England and saw the lengthy trains of the brides' gowns reaching halfway back the aisle. That's nothing compared to this one! The literal meaning is the edge or the hem of His garment. With enough healing to go around and reach all. Keep in mind that we are told in Psalm 104:2 that God wraps Himself with light and I Timothy 6:16 tells us He dwells in unapproachable light, so the train of His robe is perhaps an incredible laser light show! Although it says Isaiah sees Yahweh, he obviously didn't comprehend all of His glory for 1 Tim 6:16 also says no one has seen nor can see God.

Then Isaiah describes the seraphs. Say Seraph. They are some type of angel about which we wish we knew more. We're told that instead of 2 wings, they have six. Two of them cover their faces in total humility, indicating their unworthiness to look upon their Creator. Two cover their feet in total modesty before God's great presence. And with two they fly revealing their ability to serve and be active.

They obviously have voices for they were calling out, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." God's Creation glorifies Him! John MacArthur says, "The earth is a worldwide display of God's immeasurable glory. The spring peepers, the mountains, the elephants, the butterflies. All of it glorifies God!! No wonder the devil has tried to write God out of Creation with the clever lie of evolution.

Revelation 4 says these angels never stop saying this! Day in, day out. This is the constant mantra of heaven. Why? Because though we praise Him for 10 million years, He is worthy of far more! Infinitely more! God deserves constant praise from all His creation! If the angels in His presence never stop praising Him, how much more should we who have been saved, born again, and set free praise our God! Let's try this. When I point to you, this side say, "Holy, holy, holy," and this side respond with "is the Lord Almighty." Then this side, "The whole earth is," this side, "full of His glory." Imagine all of heaven reverberating with this everlasting praise chorus!!

And they must have bass voices for verse 4 says that as they did this the doorposts and thresholds shook. They didn't need sub woofers. The place was rocking! Talk about praise music! And the temple was filled with smoke. Maybe this is where they get Biblical permission for fog machines. But this wasn't artificial, it was real and powerful. And Isaiah is overwhelmed.

Instead of snapping a few selfies with God, Vs 5 describes Isaiah's response, "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." Isaiah is so humbled, so moved, that we can see him falling on his face there before the throne in wretched humility. "I am ruined," he cries! I am undone the KJV says. Completely exposed and laid bare. The Hebrew word means to fail or to perish, to be destroyed, cut down, brought to utter silence. Have you ever had an experience that caused your knees to buckle, to turn to jelly? Your whole body to just go limp? That was Isaiah! Isaiah knows how utterly unworthy he is to be where he is.

He says his lips are unclean. Say unclean. He knows he's a sinner. The word also means polluted or foul. And we all are! Some of you are familiar with clean rooms like operating rooms where they try to eliminate all possibility of infection, all bacteria. Many of them even have positive air pressure to blow away any germs. I've heard that the rooms where they make microchips that are even cleaner. Unbelievably

sterile. Isaiah realizes he is in the presence of the totally perfectly pure, clean, holy God. The cleanest of clean rooms. And he's the opposite. Like waltzing into the OR having just slipped in the hog lot or the chicken house. As we remember from Queen Esther, appearing improperly before a king in those days could lead to death. How much more before a perfect, holy, holy, holy God! It's impossible to eliminate all bacteria from our bodies no matter how long we scrub. How much more impossible to rid ourselves of the multitude of our sin that clings to us and is most manifest in our tongue and speech and lips no matter how hard we work to do so! It's not just what we do or say, it's who we are! Sinful human beings! Isaiah says, "I don't deserve to be in your presence, to play on your team, to even be associated with you, Oh God!" He certainly didn't bump into Him like Kelce did Coach Reid.

He knows he's about to be vaporized into oblivion any minute for having appeared as a sinful polluted man before the eternally holy and pure God. But...Vs 6 Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." Every year, on Day of Atonement, a censor of burning coals was carried into Holy of Holies along with blood from a sacrifice to sprinkle on the Ark of the Covenant, the Mercy Seat. The blood of the Lamb had not yet been shed on Calvary, but God, in His grace, purged away Isaiah's sin enabling him to become God's mouthpiece and spokesman. Did Isaiah end up with 3rd degree burns on his lips? Not that we know of. But it did take care of his sin.

And then in Vs 8, the question booms forth from the throne. "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" God needed someone to tell His message to Judah. And to the world's masses. Isn't there someone willing to represent Him? To go for Him? And Isaiah says, "Here am I. Send me! Pick me! Put me in Coach! I'll carry your ball, I'll tell Your story. I'll be your man!" What an incredible heart for God! We talked last week about the importance of accepting God's call and saying, "Yes!" and Isaiah is doing exactly that! Without hesitation! What a great example for all of us! How will you answer when God calls you? Will you say, "Put me in Coach?" Or "Find someone else?"

Isaiah actually said yes before he knew the full deal. Vs 9-12 God 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. 11 Then I said, "For how long, O Lord?" And he answered: "Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, 12 until the Lord has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken."

Oh my---not exactly an attractive job description. How would you like his assignment? Isaiah should've read the contract before he signed it. God said, "You're going to beat your head against the wall until it bleeds. Nobody's going to pay attention to you. They're not going to listen! Tell them anyway." "Put me in coach!" "They will drive you back, sack you, and take your head off." "Uh, let me rethink that." Not Isaiah. He said, "Send me," God did and Isaiah went! And as a result he was privileged to carry some of the most incredible prophecies about the Messiah in all the Bible. Wonderful, counselor, the Mighty God. Behold a virgin shall conceive. The suffering servant of Isaiah 53, etc. And the Messiah Himself would quote from this very passage of Isaiah 6 several times in the New Testament about His own generation rejecting His message.

Should the probability of rejection, insult, or even persecution keep us from sharing Jesus? Absolutely not. It didn't stop Isaiah, or Jesus, or most of the other prophets who continually encountered fierce opposition. We won't be judged on what people do with the message, we'll be rewarded or not based on whether we shared it. When God asks today, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" What is your answer? Will you jump up like Isaiah and say, "Put me in Coach!" Or will you lay back on the bench hoping He doesn't make eye contact with you. It could be a call to the full time ministry. It could be to be a missionary. It could be to teach as SS Class or help with Blast. It could be across the street to tell you neighbor. How will you answer? Or how have you already?

We said earlier that the mark of a true prophet was that he had stood in the divine council and received his mission directly from God. This experience certainly validated Isaiah's calling and his prophecies! And his willing answer! And our calling has been validated as well. For Jesus Himself has given us the Great Commission-directly from God! He validates our calling and our message. It only remains for us to answer. Will we say, "Here am I send me," or "There is her, send she?"

Ultimately, Isaiah reminds us of Jesus. When the Father asked, "who will go and love these sinners? Who will warn them of their sin and save them from it? Who will give up His life on a cross so they don't have to go to hell forever? Jesus said, "Here am I Father, Send me! I will go. I will be the perfect sacrifice that atones for all sin and purifies all who will receive it. Put Me in Dad." And He did, and Jesus went and He died to atone for your sin and to purge away your uncleanness and make it possible for you and I to be in His presence now and evermore. Not with a coal of fire, but with His own blood. And everyone said? And then He rose again and He lives forevermore. And today it's our privilege to tell others about Him! Who shall He send? Who will go? You must first be cleansed before you can be sent! Just like Isaiah, there's nothing you can do to earn it! But as you receive His cleansing of sin, you can then go for God!