

Bible Study Notes - Isaiah Chapters 6 & 7

Chapter 6 Study Notes

Isaiah's Cleansing & Call - Verses 1-13

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.² Above him were seraphim, 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.⁵ "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."⁶ Then one of the seraphim 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."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!"

ISAIAH 6:1

The year that King Uzziah died was approximately 740 B.C. He remained leprous until he died because he tried to take over the high priest's duties (2 Chronicles 26:18-21). Although Uzziah was generally a good king with a long and prosperous reign, many of his people turned away from God. Isaiah's vision was his commission to be God's messenger to his people. Isaiah was given a difficult mission. He had to tell people who believed they were blessed by God that God was going to destroy them instead because of their disobedience. Isaiah's lofty view of God in 6:1-4 gives us a sense of God's greatness, mystery, and power. Isaiah's example of recognizing his sinfulness before God encourages us to confess our sin. His picture of forgiveness reminds us that we, too, are forgiven. When we recognize how great our God is, how sinful we are, and the extent of God's forgiveness, we receive power to do his work. How does your concept of the greatness of God measure up to Isaiah's?

ISAIAH 6:1-3

The throne, the attending seraphim or angels, and the threefold holy all stressed God's holiness. Seraphim were a type of angel whose name is derived from the word

for "burn," perhaps indicating their purity as God's ministers. In a time when moral and spiritual decay had peaked, it was important for Isaiah to see God in his holiness. Holiness means "morally perfect, pure, and set apart from all sin." We also need to discover God's holiness. Our daily frustrations, society's pressures, and our shortcomings narrow our view of God. We need the Bible's view of God as high and lifted up to empower us to deal with our problems and concerns. God's moral perfection, properly seen, will purify us from sin, cleanse our mind of our problems, and enable us to worship and to serve.

ISAIAH 6:5-8

Seeing the Lord and listening to the praise of the angels, Isaiah realized that he was sinful before God, with no hope of measuring up to God's standard of holiness. When Isaiah's lips were touched with a live burning coal, however, he was told that his sins were forgiven.

It wasn't the coal that cleansed him, but God. In response, Isaiah submitted himself entirely to God's service. No matter how difficult his task would be, he said, "Lord, I'll go! Send me." The painful cleansing process was necessary before Isaiah could fulfill the task to which God was calling him. Before we accept God's call to speak for him to those around us, we must be cleansed as Isaiah was, confessing our sins and submitting to God's control. Letting God purify us may be painful, but we must be purified so that we can truly represent God, who is pure and holy.

ISAIAH 6:8

The more clearly Isaiah saw God (6:5), the more aware Isaiah became of his own powerlessness and inadequacy to do anything of lasting value without God. But he was willing to be God's spokesman. When God calls, will you also say, "Send me"?

Verses 9-13

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."¹¹ Then I said, "For how long, 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.¹³ And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land."

ISAIAH 6:9-13

God told Isaiah that the people would listen but not learn from his message because their hearts had become hardened beyond repentance. God's patience with their chronic rebellion was finally exhausted. His judgment was to abandon them to their rebellion and hardness of heart. Why did God send Isaiah if he knew the people wouldn't listen? Although the nation itself would not repent and would reap judgment, some individuals would listen. In 6:13 God explains his plan for a remnant (holy seed) of faithful followers. God is merciful even when he judges. We can gain encouragement from God's promise to preserve his people. If we are faithful to him, we can be sure of his mercy.

ISAIAH 6:11-13

When would the people listen? Only after they had come to the end and had nowhere to turn but to God. This would happen when the land was destroyed by invading armies and the people taken into captivity. The "tenth" refers either to those who remained in the land after the captivity or to those who returned from Babylon to rebuild the land. Each group was about a tenth of the total population. When will we listen to God? Must we, like Judah, go through calamities before we will listen to God's words? Consider what God may be telling you, and obey him before time runs out.

Chapter 7 Study Notes

A Message For Ahaz - Verses 1-9

When Ahaz son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, was king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem, but they could not overpower it.² Now the house of David was told, "Aram has allied itself with Ephraim"; so the hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken, as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind.³ Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out, you and your son Shear-Jashub to meet Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Launderer's Field.⁴ Say to him, 'Be careful, keep calm and don't be afraid. Do not lose heart because of these two smoldering stubs of firewood—because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and of the son of Remaliah.⁵ Aram, Ephraim and Remaliah's son have

plotted your ruin, saying, ⁶ "Let us invade Judah; let us tear it apart and divide it among ourselves, and make the son of Tabeel king over it."⁷ Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "It will not take place, it will not happen ⁸ for the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people. ⁹ The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah's son. If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all."

ISAIAH 7:1

The year was 734 B.C. Ahaz, king of Judah in Jerusalem, was about to be attacked by an alliance of the northern kingdom of Israel and Aram. He was frightened by the prospect of the possible end of his reign and by the invading armies that killed many people or took them as captives (2 Chronicles 28:5-21). But, as Isaiah predicted, the kingdom of Judah did not come to an end at this time. The sign of Immanuel would be a sign of deliverance.

ISAIAH 7:3

Shear-jashub means "a remnant will return." God told Isaiah to give his son this name as a reminder of his plan for mercy. From the beginning of God's judgment he planned to restore a remnant of his people. Shear-jashub was a reminder to the people of God's faithfulness to them.

The "aqueduct" may have been the site of the Gihon Spring, located east of Jerusalem. The Gihon Spring was the main source of water for the holy city and was also the spring that emptied into Hezekiah's famous water tunnel (2 Chronicles 32:30)

ISAIAH 7:4-8

Isaiah predicted the breakup of Israel's alliance with Aram (7:4-9). Because of this alliance, Israel would be destroyed; Assyria would be the instrument God would use to destroy them (7:8-25) and to punish Judah. But God would not let Assyria destroy Judah (8:1-15). They would be spared because God's gracious plans cannot be thwarted. Ahaz, one of Judah's worst kings, refused God's help, and instead, he tried to buy aid from the Assyrians with silver and gold from the Temple (2 Kings 16:8). When the Assyrians came, they brought further trouble instead of help. In 722 B.C., Samaria, the capital of Israel, the northern kingdom, fell to the Assyrian armies, thus ending the northern kingdom.

The Sign of Immanuel - Verses 10-25

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹ "Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test." ¹³ Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you^[e] a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and^[e] will call him Immanuel.¹⁵ He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, ¹⁶ for before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. ¹⁷ The LORD will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah—he will bring the king of Assyria." ¹⁸ In that day the LORD will whistle for flies from the Nile delta in Egypt and for bees from the land of Assyria. ¹⁹ They will all come and settle in the steep ravines and in the crevices in the rocks, on all the thornbushes and at all the water holes. ²⁰ In that day the Lord will use a razor hired from beyond the Euphrates River—the king of Assyria—to shave your head and private parts, and to cut off your beard also. ²¹ In that day, a person will keep alive a young cow and two goats. ²² And because of the abundance of the milk they give, there will be curds to eat. All who remain in the land will eat curds and honey. ²³ In that day, in every place where there were a thousand vines worth a thousand silver shekels,^[g] there will be only briars and thorns. ²⁴ Hunters will go there with bow and arrow, for the land will be covered with briars and thorns. ²⁵ As for all the hills once cultivated by the hoe, you will no longer go there for fear of the briars and thorns; they will become places where cattle are turned loose and where sheep run.

ISAIAH 7:12

Ahaz appeared righteous by saying he would not test God with a sign ("I wouldn't test the LORD like that"). In fact, God had told him to ask, but Ahaz didn't really want to know what God would say. Often we use some excuse, such as not wanting to bother God, to keep us from communicating with him. Don't let anything keep you from hearing and obeying God.

ISAIAH 7:14-16

Virgin is translated from a Hebrew word used for an unmarried woman who is old enough to be married, one who is sexually mature (see Genesis 24:43; Exodus 2:8; Psalm 68:25; Proverbs 30:19; Song of Songs 1:3; 6:8). Some have compared this young woman to Isaiah's young wife and newborn son (8:1-4). This is not likely because she had a child, Shear-jashub, and her second child was not named Immanuel. Some believe that Isaiah's first wife may have died, and so this is his

second wife. It is more likely that this prophecy had a double fulfillment. (1) A young woman from the house of Ahaz who was not married would marry and have a son. Before three years passed (one year for pregnancy and two for the child to be old enough to talk), the two invading kings would be destroyed. (2) Matthew 1:23 quotes Isaiah 7:14 to show a further fulfillment of this prophecy in that a virgin named Mary conceived and bore a son, Immanuel, the Christ.

ISAIAH 7:18

Flies and bees are symbols of God's judgment (see Exodus 23:28). Egypt and Assyria did not at this time devastate Judah. Hezekiah followed Ahaz as king, and he honored God; therefore, God held back his hand of judgment. Two more evil kings reigned before Josiah, of whom it was said that no other king turned so completely to the Lord (2 Kings 23:25). However, Judah's doom had been sealed by the extreme evil of Josiah's father, Amon. During Josiah's reign, Egypt marched against the Assyrians. Josiah then declared war on Egypt, although God told him not to. After Josiah was killed (2 Chronicles 35:20-27), only weak kings reigned in Judah. The Egyptians carried off Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, after three months. The next king, Jehoiakim, was taken by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. Egypt and Assyria had dealt death blows to Judah.

ISAIAH 7:20

Hiring Assyria to save them would be Judah's downfall (2 Kings 16:7, 8). To "shave" Judah's hair was symbolic of total humiliation. Numbers 6:9 explains that after being defiled, a person who had been set apart for the Lord had to shave his head as part of the cleansing process. Shaving bodily hair was an embarrassment—an exposure of nakedness. For a Hebrew man to have his beard shaved was humiliating (2 Samuel 10:4, 5).

ISAIAH 7:21-25

Judah's rich farmland would be trampled until it became pastureland, fit only for grazing. No longer would it be a place of agricultural abundance, "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8), but a land with only briars and thorns.