

ISAIAH'S SANCTIFICATION

BIBLE TEXT : Isaiah 6:1-13

LESSON 350 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Isaiah 6:1-13

¹ In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

² Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

³ And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory.

⁴ And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

⁵ Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

⁶ Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

⁷ And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me.

⁹ And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

¹⁰ Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Isaiah's Work

God had much work for Isaiah to do. God had called him to warn the Children of Israel of the judgment that would come upon them for their sins; and also to tell them about Jesus, the messiah, who would come to deliver what was left of the house of Israel. Not only was Isaiah to speak about Jesus' first coming, as he did when he wrote: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace"; but Isaiah also talked about the time when Jesus will reign upon this earth during the Millennium. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" (Isaiah 35:1). "Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. . . . and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying" (Isaiah 65:18, 19).

Preparation for the Work

Before Isaiah was ready to face the people with all these great prophecies, his own heart must be prepared. Of course Isaiah was saved before he began to prophesy. In that justified state he had already uttered beautiful prophecies, and had preached to the Israelites. But for the greater task that was yet to be done, Isaiah needed a deeper work — sanctification.

Isaiah had started his prophetic career during the reign of King Uzziah. This king had been faithful for many, many years; but near the end of his reign he disobeyed God, and became a leper. We have learned that usually when a king sinned, most of the people in his realm would follow his example. So we know that in the year that King Uzziah died, the morals of the Children of Israel were very low.

Praying for Israel

Isaiah went to the Temple to pray. Surely those Children of Israel needed much prayer. O God, help Israel to repent! Have mercy, Lord!

As he prayed, the glory of God came upon him and he saw a vision of the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the Temple.

When we faithfully carry a burden of prayer for others, or for the work of the Lord, God often draws us close to Him, and we feel a little of His glory. We feel a close communion with Him as we work for Him.

Think what Isaiah would have missed if he had said that all the Children of Israel were wicked anyway, and what use was there in praying for them. If they did not want to be saved, why should he worry about it. If he had felt like that, he would not have been in the Temple praying, and he would never have seen the glory of God.

No matter how hardhearted people are, it is the business of the Christian to pray earnestly to God for their salvation, and to have the power of God so much on their own lives that the sinner

their heart, and convert, and be healed.

¹¹ Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

¹² And the LORD have removed men far away, and *there be* a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

¹³ But yet in it *shall be* a tenth, and *it* shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance *is* in them, when they cast *their leaves: so* the holy seed *shall be* the substance thereof.

will recognise it. Revivals have been prayed down sometimes in places where people had almost given up hope that anyone would be saved.

"Be strong!

Say not, 'The days are evil. Who's to blame?'

And fold the hands and acquiesce --- oh shame!

Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name."

The Glory of God

Not only did Isaiah see a vision of the Lord, but he saw seraphim standing above the throne of God. They were creatures such as Isaiah had never seen before. Each had six wings. With two wings they covered their faces. They realised the holiness of God, and may not have considered themselves worthy to look upon Him.

When we begin to feel the holiness of the Lord, we feel how unworthy we are to be called His friends or brothers (**Hebrews 2:11** ¹¹ *For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,*). "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8:4). When we are in God's house we should remember to conduct ourselves in such a way as not to dishonour Him.

With two of the wings the seraphim covered their feet. With the other two wings they flew quickly to do the bidding of God.

As these seraphim hovered over the throne of God, they sang one to another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." If only men would praise the Lord, they would feel the glory that is present everywhere. His presence is in all the earth, and anywhere men want to pray, He will be right there to answer. God wants man to praise Him. All the heavenly creatures glorify God.

As the seraphim sang, the glory of God filled the Temple as with smoke. The very posts of the Temple moved with the power that was there. Can you imagine how Isaiah felt when he saw all that glory and power? He surely did not feel worthy. And the nation of Israel was so sinful at this time! Why should God manifest Himself in such glory to them? Isaiah felt his need of more purity in his own heart. He humbly called to God to help him.

When we see our need for help from God, then He can help us. When we come humbly to Him, He hears our cry and answers.

Purity of Heart

As Isaiah prayed, one of the seraphim took a live coal from the altar, and flew to Isaiah, and touched his lips with it, saying: "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

Isaiah's **sins**, the wrong things that he had done, had been forgiven when he was saved. But the nature of sin, which is usually spoken of in the Bible in the singular (sin), was still there. He needed to be sanctified. Sanctification purges, or cleanses, the heart.

When David had sinned he prayed that his transgressions should be blotted out. In other words, "Forgive the sins I have committed." Then he added: "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (Psalm 51:1, 2). That referred to sanctification, purity of heart.

Isaiah had heard the seraphim singing about the holiness of God. If he was going to worship God acceptably, he must be holy, too. Another name for sanctification is holiness.

God said, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16). God

expects us to be holy **in this life**. He made an oath to Abraham, "That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him **all the days of our life**" (Luke 1:73-75). Death does not sanctify.

The Presence of the Trinity

Let us notice that the Holy Trinity is taking part in this scene. The seraphim were singing, "Holy, holy, holy," praising the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. When the Lord spoke, He said, "Whom shall **I** send?" and then added, "Who will go for **us**?" There was more than one Person present.

Some will say that Jesus never existed until He was born in Bethlehem. But the Apostle John, when he spoke of this experience of Isaiah in the Temple, said that Jesus was there. John told about the miracles Jesus was doing while on earth, and he said that the people did not believe Him any more than the people had believed Isaiah many hundreds of years before. Isaiah had said: "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them" (John 12:40). John said: "These things said Esaias [Isaiah], when he saw his glory, and spake of him [Jesus]" (John 12:41). So the Spirit had revealed to John that Jesus had been in the Temple when Isaiah was sanctified, hundreds of years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Answering the Call

It was a glorious experience for Isaiah to be so especially favoured of God; but he was not to receive all this glory and blessing for himself. This was given to him to give him strength and wisdom to tell backslidden Israel about the Lord. No sooner had the blessing come to him, than he heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" He answered at once, "Here am I; send me." He still felt himself to be unworthy, but if there was work to be done he would do it.

It would not be easy. The people were not going to listen to Isaiah. He would often feel that his preaching was in vain. But God had told him to go, and he was obedient. The people, because of their desire for sin, would be unable to see any beauty in the Gospel. They would not be able to hear the joyful news of salvation. They would harden their hearts so that the Spirit of God could not come in. But still Isaiah must preach.

How Long?

Isaiah knew it would be a burden, and he asked, "How long?" How long would Israel have to suffer for her sins? How long would they reject God's message? The Jews have suffered for many hundreds of years since that day, and they are still asking, "How long?" How long will it be until they recognise their Messiah and he comes to bring them relief?

The Jews were scattered from the land of Palestine after they crucified Jesus. The rain stopped falling on their land, so there was little to eat. The houses fell into decay, just as Isaiah said they would.

"Yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return." Isaiah said that some would come back. Jesus said: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24).

The time of the Gentiles is almost fulfilled. Rain is falling again in Palestine, and the Jews are coming from all parts of the world again to inhabit the Holy Land. God's Word is being fulfilled.

QUESTIONS

1. Name some of the good things that Isaiah foretold.
2. What heart preparation did Isaiah need before his great work?
3. Where was Isaiah when he saw the vision?
4. What did Isaiah see?
5. How did he feel when he saw all that glory?
6. What did the seraphim do to Isaiah? and what did he say?
7. What is another word for sanctification?
8. How do we know that we can be holy in this life?
9. How do we know that Jesus was in the Temple at this time before He was born in Bethlehem?