

Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 1:12 PM  
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Isaiah 6

"And I heard a voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then I said, 'Here I am! Send me!'" (Isaiah 6:8)

Remember last week's lesson and where we've been?

Where Isaiah sang a song about his friend's beloved vineyard--where the owner invested great toil, with much love and care, and did everything he could do to produce the finest grapes, but later found that the vineyard produced only inedible ("sour") ones, which were only fit for dumping! And so, the owner decided to tear down its hedges and walls and remove the tower and wine vat he had built and allow the ground to be trampled down and briars and thorns to sprout up, and everything to be laid to waste! And after getting his listener's rapped attention of this sad story, he announced to their chagrin that the vineyard was the "house of Israel" and the owner, the LORD of hosts! Wow! Then he issued a series of six "woes" which described six groupings of sins of the people--including greed, covetousness; drunkenness, revelry, and fleshly-indulgence; carelessness, hardheartedness, and mockery; deception and perversion; pride and conceit; and injustice and corruption--with led to judgement for the people, and demise of the land! Wow! J. Vernon McGee called it "a picture of a nation giving itself in abandon to sin without shame or conscience, and an attempt to destroy God's standard of right and wrong"! And we couldn't help but see the clear connection between what was going on in Israel then and the culture we live in, in our world today!

And because these "people of God" rejected the very law of the Lord and despised the word of "the Holy One of Israel," Isaiah said that God would summon a distant nation (think Babylon!) to come "as a roaring lion" and the "pounding of waves on a seashore" to destroy the land, take the people into exile, and leave it with only "darkness and distress"! Wow! The final introductory chapter (after five chapters of judgment) from a prophet of God, called to deliver a message of doom to a people called and destined for so much more!

And so, we come to Isaiah 6! And it just so happened to be "in the year of King Uzziah's death"!

Uzziah had been king of the southern kingdom of Israel for 52 years and, according to II Kings 15:1-4, had basically "done right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father (King Amaziah) had done. Only the high places were not taken down; and the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places." II Chronicles 26 gives more details of his reign and notes that "when he became strong, his heart became proud and he acted corruptly and was unfaithful to the Lord his God, for he entered the temple to burn incense on the altar of incense" (contrary to the Levitical code that assigned only priests to do that)--and got so enraged with the priests (who told him to "get out of the sanctuary"! ) that leprosy broke out on his forehead and he remained a leper to the day of his death, living in a separate house, "cut off from the house of the Lord"!

And Isaiah writes, that on the day that Uzziah died, he "saw (apparently in a vision) the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train (or hem) of His robe filling the temple, with

Seraphim standing above Him...with one calling out to another, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory! And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke!"

Then Isaiah (probably with his face on the ground) responded: "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Then one of the Seraphim flew to him "with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs"! And he touched the lips of Isaiah's mouth and proclaimed that Isaiah's "iniquity was taken away and his sin forgiven"! (Sounds like Isaiah's conversion experience!) But there's more! Then Isaiah said he "heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' And Isaiah somehow found the words to say: "Here am I! Send me!" And Isaiah received his commission! "Go and tell this people!" And so, Isaiah is ready to serve! (Interesting that the "mouth" of the prophet was "touched" (and purified) and now ready to speak for the new "king" of his life!)

So, the question is raised about the timing of Isaiah's encounter with the Lord (realizing that the writings of the book of Isaiah are not always in chronological order)! Did it occur before or after all the things he wrote about in the first five chapters of his book? Seems clear it was before! And here's why:

- The references (in chapter 1, verse 4, and chapter 5, verse 24) to the "Holy One of Israel"! The name for God that was so profoundly connected with Isaiah's conversion and calling and which, Constable notes, would become the "trademark name" for God throughout the book (cited 25 times, and only six other times in the rest of the Old Testament)!
- The "six woes" in Isaiah 5! Wiersbe notes that anyone reading the opening chapters of Isaiah might be inclined to ask: "Who is this one who pronounces judgment on the leaders of our land and the many worshippers in the temple?" The answer is in Isaiah 6--in Isaiah's call to minister! When he received a new awareness of his own sinfulness and first proclaimed a "woe" on himself!
- The fiery judgments! The authority manifested! The "clout" and, yes, the "chutzpah," with which he delivered the prophecies and judgments in first five chapters which could only be delivered by one "touched on his lips" and commissioned by the Holy One of Israel!
- Constable notes that the three messages of chapters 1-5 provide the perfect introduction to the rest of Isaiah and that that was probably why he started out with them as he did!
- And Motyer writes that Isaiah "uses the messages he preached in Isaiah 1-5 after he was called as a prophet to express his understanding of the situation into which he came to minister"!
- And so, what was the nature of the message that Isaiah was commissioned to "go and tell"?

It wasn't an easy message to preach--or to hear! Most significantly, God let Isaiah know up-front that the people would not be receptive at all to what he had to say! In fact, they would "listen but not perceive...and their hearts would be insensitive, and their ears dull, and their eyes dim"! (Jesus would later make reference to these words (in John 12:38-42) in explaining to the

disciples why He spoke in parables to people who had hardened their hearts to His teaching, to the point they "couldn't believe!")

And so, Isaiah asked a logical question: "Lord, how long" (do I have to do this)? And the Lord answered: "Until cities are devastated and without inhabitants, and houses are without people and the land is utterly desolate..." and men from far away occupy the land! Wow! Devastation! Deportation! Desolation!

And yet! (Thank you, Lord!) "And yet (God said, and Isaiah prophesied!) there will be a tenth portion in it (a remnant!) ...and a stump (of an oak) will remain after it is felled"! Whew!

What gave Isaiah the strength to go on?

He saw that God was "still on the throne" and in control and had a plan, and "in it"!

And so must we!

On to Isaiah 7!

Have a great week, men!

Lowell