

Isaiah 6:1-8 “Welcome to God’s Sight & Sound Theater” May 26-27, 2018
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Isaiah 6:1-8

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. ²Above 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. ³And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” ⁴At 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.” ⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” ⁸Then 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!”

Introduction

In April, 2017, members of the ministry staff went to district pastoral conference in Springfield Missouri. While there our group had the opportunity to attend the Sight & Sound Theater in Branson, MO. We took in the dramatic production of Moses. With a magnificent and changing surround set, live animals, dramatic sound, and great acting it was an experience of captivating, scintillating sight and sound. At the beginning, a member of the cast welcomed us to the Sight and Sound Theater. Today we as consider Isaiah 6:18 God says to us, **“Welcome to My Sight and Sound Theater.”**

1. ...Sights and Sounds Connected with God in His Temple

A) These sights and sounds are connected with a vision that Isaiah had in 740 B.C., the last year of King Uzziah’s reign. **1)** Isaiah saw the **temple of the Lord**, not the one in Jerusalem, but the one in heaven. There he saw **the Lord himself**, on his throne, high and lifted up – a reminder that he is Lord over all. The train or hem of his robe filled the whole temple. What a sight!

2) But Isaiah also saw **Seraphim**, possibly a special rank of angels, mentioned only here. They had six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. What a sight!

3) The temple was also filled with **smoke**. This was not because the place was on fire. This smoke was connected with the glory of the Lord. In the Bible God’s presence is often signaled by smoke and fire, thunder and lightning, and/or earthquakes. The smoke was probably not suffocating and must not have been so thick that one cannot see. What a sight!

B) But in connection with these sights, what **sounds** Isaiah heard. **1)** There was the sound of the seraphim calling one to another, kind of like a responsive chant, ***“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”*** These words emphasize that God is one but three distinct persons. As they used the name LORD they pointed to the fact that God is an eternal and unchanging God. Their ***“holy, holy, holy”*** emphasize that God is unique and set apart especially from sin. He does not make mistakes. As he is the Lord of hosts all, even the angels are subject to his rule. Maybe that’s why the seraphim covered their faces in the presence of God. The seraphim remind us that God is all-powerful. He has his own power and that of angels to destroy or to protect, provide and bless.

2) The seraphim stated that **the earth is full of God’s glory**. In Psalm 19 it is written that *the heavens declare the glory of God*. In Psalm 148 we are reminded that all of creation including the wind, the storms, the mountains, hills, trees and every living creature serve to praise the Lord. When we look at the moon and stars at night, or the sun and clouds in the day, we are reminded of the presence and power of God. When a baby is born, a flower

blooms or lightening streaks through the night-time sky we catch a glimpse of the glory of God. As the seraphim called to one another, what sounds Isaiah heard!

3) And what a sound he heard in **the shaking of the doorposts and thresholds** as a result of the voices of the angels. Isaiah must have been on the verge of sensory overload! He had to be filled with awe.

2.Sights and Sounds of a Sinful Man Before A Holy God

A) Isaiah was also filled with fear. **1)** As we take in the sights and sounds of Isaiah's vision of God and his temple **we see and hear Isaiah, 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."**

2) Why was Isaiah so afraid? He himself is sinful. He lives among sinful people. But God is holy. This is the God who told the priests and Levites who would carry the temple vessels from captivity back to Jerusalem, *"Touch no unclean thing (Is52:11)."* In addition, to the his sinfulness Isaiah reflects on his seeing God in view of what he probably knows about Moses from the Book of Exodus. In Exodus 33 Moses asked to see God's glory. God replied, *"You cannot see my face for no one may see me and live."*

3) In Lk5 :1ff recall how Simon Peter reacted when he realized he was in the presence of God in the person of Jesus. Peter exclaimed, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!"

4) Similarly I find it interesting that in talking with some **people who have stopped attending worship** their reason is that they have committed some sin that makes them feel so unclean they fear offending God by coming to worship. This is why early in our worship we generally have a confession of sins.

Don't you sometimes find yourself filled with fear as you think of being before a holy God in worship, at the end of life, or on Judgment Day? Don't you feel fear as you realize some sin – a lie, some lustful thought, hatred, greed, refusal to forgive, some hurt you have caused, something you should have done but didn't do? On the other hand, have you received a blessing and felt guilt because you were seeing the glory of a holy God being revealed to you and you know you didn't deserve blessing but rather curses?

What sights and sounds as we see Isaiah, a sinful man, before a holy God!

B1) But what a sight and what a sound as we see and hear Isaiah, **a sinful man, receiving forgiveness from a holy God.** *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."*

2) A coal ... a seraph took a hot coal and touched Isaiah's lips. You'd think that would hurt, wouldn't you? But this is a "cool coal," a cleansing coal. As heat cleanses of germs and cauterizes wounds this coal the seraph carried symbolizes the gospel which pronounces forgiveness in the Savior and heals the wounds caused by sin. *"Your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."* These words reached into the future and pointed to the forgiveness Jesus would win with his holy life and his innocent death on the cross. Isaiah himself would even write of this forgiveness, *"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all (53:5,6).*

3) We enjoy that same sound from that same gospel, *"He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us (Ps. 103:10-12)."* Or there are the comforting words of St. Paul, *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from*

God's wrath through him (Rom 5:8,9)!" Or as we take the bread and wine in communion we hear Jesus words, "This is my body, given for you ... This is my blood ...shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." What a sound!

3. ...Sights and Sounds f a Call to Serve

What a sight we see and what a sound we hear as we see and hear God calling Isaiah to serve and Isaiah responds to God's call.

A 1) All of the calls I have received to serve different places have come through someone calling or writing in behalf of the calling body who, guided by the Holy Spirit, decided to call. But never have I received a call directly from God.

2) But Isaiah did. . " 8) *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"* Isn't it interesting that the Trinity is again evidenced in pronoun "us." Imagine hearing the voice of God. Was it a Wizard of Oz voice or a whisper like Elijah heard at Mt. Horeb? We don't know. Whatever it sounded like, what a sight and what a sound for Isaiah to be called by God!

B 1) What a sight and what a sound to see and hear Isaiah accepting this call! If I were in Isaiah's sandals I might have been tempted to think, "I'm not sure if I want to work for God. He' got really high standards. There's too much accountability. He can be scary and the job at hand appears to be scary too."

2) But Isaiah is a better man than I am. He responded, *"Here am I. Send me!"* What moved him to accept? The love of God expressed in his forgiving Isaiah's sins. The assurance of God's presence and that of his holy angels move Isaiah. The Lord himself is calling Isaiah. What a sight! What a sound!

As God , in love, has made us his people God has called us to serve him with our lives in whatever station in life we may find ourselves – husbands, wives, parents, children, workers, students, students, neighbors, citizens, etc. He has given us talents and resources – time, money, property – that he wants us to use well. But God has also given us a gift or gifts to use in the gospel ministry of the Church – preaching, teaching, telling others about Jesus, comforting, encouraging, serving in a variety of ways, administrating, extraordinary giving, hospitality. To all of us God calls, *"Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"*

If you are gifted with a number of spiritual gifts you may not be able to use all of them to the fullest all the time, but in view of God's love for you, God's presence, God's forgiveness, and the privilege it is to serve God, in love for God respond, *"Here am I. Send me!"* (DRS)