

**Is. 6:1 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.**

The Hebrew for the word *sit* indicates to sit down, specifically as judge. The Hebrew for the word *throne* implies a place of covering. The word for *train* includes the idea of a skirt, hem, bottom edge, or train.

Recently, as I have been pondering the scene in heaven through my studies of Revelation, I am beginning to understand more and more the picture that was being painted through the instructions for the tabernacle and its contents. This specific verse brings to mind the *ark of the covenant* and the *mercy seat*. Isaiah is getting a vision of God on His throne in His heavenly temple. My understanding is that the ark with its mercy seat represented God's "throne" on earth.

*Exodus 25:18-22 And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.*

*2Samuel 6:2 And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baal of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims.*

*Psalms 99:1 The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.*

The fact that Moses was instructed to have the wings of the cherubim *covering* the mercy seat implies that the heavenly throne is covered by the wings of cherubim. Isaiah very definitely sees the Lord in the most exalted position, "high and lifted up," and clothed in the most magnificent garments. The train of the robe He wears "fills" the temple. I remember hearing one time that the length of a ruler's train represented his position of power—the longer the train, the more power and authority he wields. God's power is sovereign in all of creation as Isaiah will go on to share so beautifully in the later chapters. (Beginning with chapter 40 and following are probably my favorite scriptures in the whole of the Word.)

I think it is also significant that the Hebrew emphasizes that Isaiah is seeing the Lord in the position of judge since Isaiah is being used as God's mouthpiece about judgment to come upon God's people if they don't repent and return to Him.

**Is. 6:2 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.**

**Is. 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.**

The Hebrew for the word “seraphims” references “burning” ones. These created beings have six wings. It would seem that the covering of their faces and their feet are a sign of respect in the presence of holiness; mobility is necessary to their usefulness. This chapter in Isaiah appears to be the only place in scripture that uses the term *seraphim*. They are very similar to the cherubim as described elsewhere. One of their main functions is to praise the LORD. It’s always significant to me that this praise is done in threes to a triune God.

Isaiah’s vision also calls out for comparison to Ezekiel’s and John’s visions.

*Ezekiel 1:1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.*

*Ezekiel 1:4-21 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf’s foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning. Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went. As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.*

*Ezekiel 1:26-28* And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

*Ezekiel 10:1-5* Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne. And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight. Now the cherubims stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court. Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD'S glory. And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh.

*Revelation 4:2-8* And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Daniel also adds a bit to the description of the throne:

*Daniel 7:9* I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

I am sure there are more verses to consider when putting this picture together. Just considering these few, I can make the following observations:

- 1) The vision of the throne is associated with fire (Ezekiel 1:4, Daniel 7:9).
- 2) 4 beasts (Revelation 4:6), living creatures (Ezekiel 1:5) are in attendance.
- 3) The seraphim and cherubim appear to be similar but different; they are both associated with emphasizing God's holiness and praising Him.
- 4) Everything around the throne provides a picture of purity and beauty.

- 5) A rainbow is associated with His throne, which would represent God's mercy.
- 6) The sight of God on His throne makes the beholder very aware of his own unworthiness and sinfulness.
- 7) It's interesting that they are singing "holy, holy, holy" in worship of God manifest in three persons.

**Is. 6:4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.**

As the seraphim cry out praise of God to one another, the power of their voices causes the doorposts of the heavenly temple to shake. At first I immediately associated the smoke with the presence of the fire associated with the throne in Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation. When I looked up the Hebrew for the word *smoke*, it included the idea of anger, which would make sense when considering the actions of His chosen people. Maybe it is just a reference to the appearance of God's shekinah glory (which is often described as a cloud). The praise of God in heaven is never done with timidity; it is boldly and proudly proclaimed.

*Revelation 5:12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."*

*Revelation 7:10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."*

**Is. 6:5 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.**

The Hebrew for the word *woe* implies that the sound of the seraphim praising God filled Isaiah with a longing to be able to praise God in the same way. The sound of their praise rendered him speechless as indicated by the Hebrew for the word *undone*. He realized that his own lips were defiled, unclean, not capable of the same type of praise. Why? Because HE was a man of unclean lips living among a people of unclean lips. Yes, the Jewish people were sinful and disobedient before God, but this vision made him realize his own sinful state before YHWH. The more I think about it, the emphasis is made here regarding the sin committed by what the individual is *saying*—not his actions. As I examine my own life, I understand that significance. I may not be guilty of a lot of overt sins through my actions, but my mouth brings about conviction over and over and over again. James says it this way:

*James 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.*

**Is. 6:6 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:**

**Is. 6:7 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.**

In response to Isaiah's cry of woe, one of the seraphims takes a burning hot coal from the altar with a set of tongs. He lays this coal on Isaiah's mouth, or touches it to his lips, to indicate God's authority and unique ability to make atonement for Isaiah's sin. As I think about it, this is a confirmation of Isaiah's need for forgiveness—an atonement or purging that can only be provided by Almighty God. It's also interesting to me that the seraphim had to use tongs to handle the hot coal, but it was touched directly to Isaiah's lips to purify him. Fire is associated with purification. This coal came from the altar, the place of sacrifice, which is representative of what Jesus would accomplish at the cross. Isaiah didn't start running when he saw the seraphim approaching him with the hot coal; he knew his need and was willing to accept God's provision for him. I tend to think that the touch was painless to Isaiah, just as God's provision through His Son is painless to us.

**Is. 6:8** 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.

Isaiah now hears the voice of the Lord. We don't know how he knew it was the Lord, but it is very clear that he has no doubt about who is speaking. The term *Lord* here is the word Adonai, which indicates Isaiah's submission to God as his master. The Lord's question, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The two pronouns do not appear in the Hebrew, so I assume their use is determined by the form of the verb being used. This is one of those times when I wish I knew the original languages. Assuming that the Hebrew supports it, I am not at all surprised by the usage. It would clearly be a reference to "God in three persons, the trinity." A similar passage would include the creation account in Genesis.

*Genesis 1:26-27* And God said, Let us make man in **our** image...So God created man in **his** own image...

God is seeking a willing vessel, someone to serve Him. Isaiah is soooo ready at this point to volunteer—and he does.

Sometimes I meditate on what it would be like to have a vision like Isaiah or Ezekiel or John and then have to return to the reality of serving here on earth. I used to think that the experience would make me a better servant here, but now I think it would be even harder to be that earthly vessel after that experience. I would think you would never want to leave His presence. That is something with which I struggle quite a bit at this stage in my life. I so want to be the vessel He would have me be while here on earth, but I can't wait to experience His presence. I know it will be very humbling—but for the first time I will be able to worship God with complete abandon and purity of heart, and my heart almost explodes with the anticipation of that opportunity. My head knows that I should be able to worship that way now, but my flesh is continually in the way. It's almost impossible to block out worldly distractions--except sometimes in the wee small hours of the morning when I have special fellowship with Him. I am so

looking forward to never having to deal with the sin nature again, and being able to serve and worship Him with a pure heart and absolutely no distractions.

**Is. 6:9** And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

**Is. 6:10** 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 their heart, and convert, and be healed.

The Apostle John paraphrased these verses while in context connecting them to a vision of Jesus.

*John 12:40-41* 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. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

These verses have always been hard verses to me, so I resorted to reading some commentaries on these particular verses to see if they shed any light. The only one that really helped was Jamieson, Fausset and Brown. The people were obviously capable of hearing and understanding the words that Isaiah spoke, but because they were not *acting* in accordance with God's revealed will for them, they were not responding to the message. John tells us that our understanding is impacted by our obedience.

*John 7:17* If any man **will do his will**, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

Ezekiel tells us the following truth:

*Ezekiel 33:11* Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live...

Verse 10 in this chapter of Isaiah seems to contradict that truth, and I know that God does not contradict Himself. The following verses help.

*Romans 1:28* And even as **they did not like to retain God in their knowledge**, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.

*Ephesians 4:18-19* Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, **because of the blindness of their heart**: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

*2Thessalonians 2:10-11* And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; **because they received not the love of the truth**, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.

Isaiah is to be faithful in continuing to present God's message to the people. As they hear the word over and over again, they will become more and more

desensitized to it. Their hearts will become more hardened as they continue down a path of willful disobedience. They will finally reach a point of no return. These verses represent a prophecy regarding the response of the people (or lack thereof) to Isaiah's ministry among them. This also makes me think about another aspect of God's character and His love for us. The fact of His omniscience doesn't stop Him from doing everything possible to draw His children back to Him.

The word *convert* carries the idea of returning to the starting point. In other words, they had become a nation through faith and obedience, and their healing could only be accomplished by returning to God in faith and obedience.

I liked the following quote from JFB regarding the use of the words *heart*, *ears* and *eyes* in verse 10. "It is from the *heart* that corruption flows into the *ears and eyes* (Mark 7:21, 22); but through *the eyes and ears healing* reaches the heart (Romans 10:17), [BENGEL]."

*Mark 7:21-23 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*

*Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

**Is. 6:11** 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,

**Is. 6:12** And the LORD have removed men far away, and *there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.*

I think what Isaiah is asking here is how long he should keep repeating God's message. In God's grace, He tells Isaiah not to stop proclaiming His truth as long as there is even one man left in Jerusalem. In this answer there is also prophecy regarding the response (or lack thereof) of the people. They would continue to incur God's judgment until God sends them into captivity and the land becomes desolate and forsaken.

**Is. 6:13** 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.*

This verse seems to indicate that a tenth of the people will return to Judah only to be taken over again. Isaiah is comparing the people of Judah and Jerusalem to strong trees that have been cut down, yet the stump still has life in it. God is faithful and will fulfill His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. A remnant will be preserved.