

Survey of the Bible part 108 **Isaiah 6 - 8:13-15**

As we continue through the book of Isaiah the recurrent theme will be God's condemnation of the nation that calls itself, the people of God, while they pursue other gods. God promises that He will judge them, but adds that He will call out from among the nation a remnant to faithfully follow Him.

Isaiah demonstrates how God will do this as He justifies, sanctifies and then glorifies that remnant.

In Isaiah chapter six we see how God justifies His people.

Isaiah 6:1-3 ^{NAU} In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. ² Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

This is a part of the continuing vision that the Lord is showing to Isaiah and in this part of the vision Isaiah is shown the throne of God in the present heaven.

The Seraphim are serving the Lord as they declare the praises of God. The Seraphim are a class of heavenly animals who surround the throne of God along with the Cherubim.

By the way, these Seraphim are the same one's described in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 4:1-9 ^{NAU} After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." ² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. ³ And He who was sitting *was* like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. ⁴ Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones *I saw* twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. ⁵ Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning

before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; ⁶ and before the throne *there was something* like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. ⁷ The first creature *was* like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle. ⁸ And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *is* THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME." ⁹ And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever,

You'll notice that in both Isaiah and in Revelation these creatures have six wings and in both passages their function is to worship the Lord as they declare, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

The difference between the two passages is that in the book of Revelation they are not called Seraphim, and in the book of Isaiah they are not identified as creatures as we see in Revelation. But they are undeniably the same.

What is interesting is that in the book of Revelation the Greek word for creatures, as it relates to the Seraphim, is *zoon* which is where we get our English word zoo.

And what is a zoo?

It's a place where animals are kept and cared for. In most of our translations we don't get a flavor of what these creatures are because the translators weren't fully convinced that they are animals surrounding the throne.

Everyone's translation here has the word creatures for that reason. However, the translators of the KJV saw the Greek word *zoon* for what it was and translated it beasts.

^{KJV} **Revelation 4:6** 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.*

The Seraphim are animals that God created for the special purpose of ministering to God around His throne who have the ability to speak, to worship and to serve. The Seraphim are part of a class of

animal that is not unlike another heavenly animal that worship and serve God around His throne.

This group of animal is found in the book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 1:3-6 ³ the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and there the hand of the LORD came upon him.) ⁴ As I looked, behold, a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like glowing metal in the midst of the fire. ⁵ Within it there were figures resembling four living beings. And this was their appearance: they had human form. ⁶ Each of them had four faces and four wings.

We know that these creatures are a little different from the Seraphim because of their appearance, one main difference in the amount of wings they possess. In this case they have four wings unlike the Seraphim which has six wings.

These creatures are identified by Ezekiel as Cherubim.

^{NAU} **Ezekiel 10:15** Then the cherubim rose up. They are the living beings that I saw by the river Chebar.

By the way, the phrase, “living beings” that is used in most of our bibles is the Hebrew word chayyah.

Anyone want to venture a guess as to what this word literally means?

Animal.

The Greek translation of the O.T. is called the Septuagint and in this particular passage in Ezekiel they use the exact same word in Greek as does John when describing these Cherubim, which is *zoon*. It's clear that the Seraphim and the Cherubim are both a type of heavenly animal that serves around the throne of God day and night.

Does anyone remember when we see the introduction of the Cherubim in Scripture for the first time?

Genesis 3:24 ²⁴ So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

For an in-depth look into these mysterious creatures go to my study on the Cherubim and Seraphim.

http://www.growupinchrist.com/images/docs/CHERUBIM_AND_SERAPHIM.pdf

So, back to our text in Isaiah. Isaiah is shown a glimpse of the throne of God and is approached by a Seraphim who does something to him after he realizes that he cannot stand before the throne because he is unrighteous.

Isaiah 6:5-7 ⁵ Then I said, "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." ⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. ⁷ He touched my mouth *with it* and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven."

The word iniquity in the Hebrew could also be translated, guilt, along with the punishment that goes along with that guilt.

But what is the significance of the Seraphim taking a coal from the altar and touching the mouth of Isaiah with it?

It is inferred from the text that the coal is hot as the Seraphim takes it from the altar with tongs.

But what is the significance of the altar around the throne of God?

It is the place where the sacrifice takes place. It is the same place where Moses and Aaron would offer sacrifice unto the Lord for the forgiveness of sins.

Remember that what God instructed Moses to construct on earth was merely a copy of what already existed in heaven.

This is what the Lord showed to Moses as he was given this pattern to follow.

Exodus 25:40 ⁴⁰ "See that you make *them* after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain.

Was the pattern just dreamed up in the mind of God on the mountain, or was it already in existence for Moses to copy? The writer of Hebrews answers this.

Hebrews 9:22-24 ²² And according to the Law, *one may* almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. ²³ Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

The altar that Moses constructed was a copy of the true one in heaven which is the place where the risen Christ resides as the perfect sacrifice. But prior to Christ's earthly ministry it appears that this altar was in place as the focal point that pointed to the perfect sacrifice to come.

And Isaiah is given a glimpse of this altar that apparently was burning hot, and the Seraphim takes one of its coals and places it on Isaiah's lips.

When the Seraphim places the hot coal on Isaiah's lips the implication must include the idea that not just the coal is cleansing Isaiah from his sin, but what has touched the coal, which is the reason for the existence of the coal, according to the pattern that was given to Moses on the mountain.

In the case of Moses' copy of the altar what would have touched the coals that made atonement for the people?

A sacrifice. In fact, when Aaron and his sons were being consecrated to the priesthood we also see the consecration of the altar itself.

Exodus 29:35-37 ³⁵ "Thus you shall do to Aaron and to his sons, according to all that I have commanded you; you shall ordain them through seven days. ³⁶ "Each day you shall offer a bull as a sin offering for atonement, and you shall purify the altar when you make atonement for it, and you shall anoint it to consecrate it. ³⁷ "For seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and consecrate it; then the altar shall be most holy, *and* whatever touches the altar shall be holy.

What would have touched the hot coals during the process of making atonement in the midst of Moses and the people?

The fat, the blood, the drippings of the sacrifice.

This is the intent of what the coal would have accomplished for Isaiah, in that, because of where the coal came from, that is from the altar which is the place of atonement, his iniquity was taken away and his sin forgiven.

The burning coal itself would not have been the primary thing that purified Isaiah, but the role of what the burning coal played in the process of atonement.

The point is that very early on in the book of Isaiah, though the nation of Israel has abandoned the Lord, the Lord has not abandoned His true people, and the means by which they would be justified, which is the shedding of blood through the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

And because Isaiah is forgiven of sin through this sacrifice on his behalf he is the one who can share the gospel with the rest of the people.

Isaiah 6:8-10 ⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" ⁹ He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' ¹⁰ "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."

And so, again, the theme of Isaiah is to approach a sinning people with both the warning of God's coming judgment and the hope of forgiveness for those who will be given ears to hear and eyes to see the gospel found in the sacrifice.

In chapter seven of Isaiah, the prophet reassures King Ahaz, the king of Judah, that the King of Israel, who is going to attack Judah, will not prevail.

But it seems that Ahaz is not fully comfortable with this and the Lord Himself will reassure Ahaz.

Isaiah 7:10-17 ¹⁰ Then the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying,
¹¹ "Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; make *it* deep
as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor
will I test the LORD!" ¹³ Then he said, "Listen now, O house of
David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men,
that you will try the patience of my God as well? ¹⁴ "Therefore the
Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with
child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. ¹⁵ "He
will eat curds and honey at the time He knows *enough* to refuse
evil and choose good. ¹⁶ "For before the boy will know *enough* to
refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread
will be forsaken. ¹⁷ "The LORD will bring on you, on your people,
and on your father's house such days as have never come since the
day that Ephraim separated from Judah, the king of Assyria."

This is a portion of Scripture that we are all familiar with and yet it is interesting that it is in the context of King Ahaz fearing an attack from neighboring Israel.

What do you suppose the significance is of such a prophecy, in light of Ahaz's concern?

Keep in mind what Ahaz is contending with. He is contending with those who would try to destroy him and Ahaz needs a deliverer.

But what God has shown Ahaz is that despite the immediate need of being delivered from your enemies the bigger need is deliverance from God Himself who has promised to deal with Israel, the aggressor in this case, and all who forsake Him.

All of the enemies of Ahaz can be destroyed with the edge of the sword, but you still need deliverance from your sin to be reconciled back to God and the only way that will happen is to have God come to your rescue with a Savior.

Isaiah 7:14 ¹⁴ "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

This would be an amazing sign, that a virgin will bear a child and that child's name will be ***God with us***.

Matthew 1:19-25 ¹⁹ And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. ²⁰ But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of

David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." ²² Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "**GOD WITH US.**" ²⁴ And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife, ²⁵ but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

The name Immanuel doesn't signify that God will simply be with us as if He is on our side, but rather that He will be with us in that He will live among us forever as King and Lord. This is what Jesus meant in John 14:23.

^{NAU} **John 14:23** Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

And so, what Isaiah, and the angel speaking to Joseph, and Jesus Himself are saying, is that when the child who is born of a virgin accomplishes His plan of redemption, the final expression of that plan will point to a place in time where God Himself will come back to this earth, the new earth, and set up His kingdom among His people forever.

Revelation 21:1-4 ^{NAU} Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "***Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,***" ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

This will be heaven on earth, literally.

But as we will see, Isaiah will now return to the flip side of the theme we're continually experiencing and that is just as God promises to redeem a people for Himself, He most assuredly promises to bring judgment on those who continue to reject Him.

In chapter eight Isaiah has a child whose name is used to remind Israel that God will deliver them into the hands of other nations as punishment for their wickedness.

Isaiah 8:13-15 ¹³ "It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, And He shall be your dread. ¹⁴ "Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, *And* a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁵ "Many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught."

Many years later the apostle Paul would confirm how God would be true to His word and what precisely that Rock represents.

Romans 9:30-33 ³⁰ What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; ³¹ but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at *that* law. ³² Why? Because *they did not pursue it* by faith, but as though *it were* by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³ just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

This world may be cursed and full of sin and may sap our strength at times, but we know that this world is not our home and we have nothing to be disappointed about, because the promise of Immanuel is close at hand.