

Session 7

GOD IS HOLY

Isaiah 6:1-8

Memory Verse

Then I heard the voice of the Lord asking:

Who will I send? Who will go for us?

I said:

Here I am. Send me.

– ISAIAH 6:8, CSB



God is Holy

THEOLOGICAL THEME: In this passage we get a peek into the activity inside of God's heavenly throne room. Here we see created beings whose continual labor was to worship the God who is holy, holy, holy. This passage reminds Christians about the place of worship in their lives as a redeemed people.

 What are some things you know you were only able to learn through time and experience?

 Have your children ever asked questions about something that was beyond their ability and experience to comprehend? How did you answer them?

It's not unusual for children to ask questions. In fact, many parents have been driven to the edge of exasperation because of a line of questioning from their children. The problem with these Q and A sessions isn't necessarily that the parents want to withhold information from their children but that the children simply aren't able to comprehend the full answer because they are too young or too inexperienced to truly grasp the answer to what they are asking. So, parents have to try to answer as best they can based on what their children can comprehend. This almost always involves giving the information that is needed while omitting the information that won't be helpful to them.

This same thing happens in the Christian life. Those who follow Christ become interested in certain aspects of the spiritual realm. The Bible addresses issues such as angels, heaven, life after death, and the like, but it doesn't reveal everything about those matters. God has revealed all that we need to know about these things in the Scriptures. For instance, the Bible reveals all that we need to know about heaven, but it doesn't reveal everything there is to know about heaven. We have several accounts in the sixty-six books of the Bible describing heaven and this is sufficient for our needs. Scripture teaches that "The hidden things belong to the Lord our God, but the revealed things belong to us and our children forever, so that we may follow all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29). Today we will see Isaiah's vision of God. Isaiah's focus was not so much on what the place where God dwells is like as it was the proper response to being in God's presence.

Session Summary

Romans 3:23 makes it clear that all have sinned and fall short of God's glorious standard. This doesn't mean there is no hope for humanity. The message of the Bible is not that all have sinned and are doomed to condemnation but that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (See Rom. 5:8.) Those who are in Christ are enabled to worship our Holy God in spirit and truth. Those who have new life in Christ are no longer under the guilt and power of sin, but their battle against the old sin nature rages on.

Isaiah was given a glimpse of the spiritual reality that should motivate churches and believers to love and fear God and obey His Word. Isaiah found Himself looking upon a throne where an indescribably beautiful and glorious Being was surrounded by worshiping angels. Isaiah 6 is all about worship and the object of worship. All of creation and all of history has to do with worship; either worship of the one true and living God or the worship of some other unworthy thing. In this passage, Christians are given a great gift that helps them become better worshipers. Here they see the culmination of heaven and they are reminded of the nature of the object of their worship. Finally, they are encouraged to order their lives around the one Being that is worthy of their full attention and unceasing praise.

1. Worthy of Worship (Isa. 6:1-2)

People are intrigued by heaven. It isn't difficult to find all kinds of anecdotes, conjecture, and traditions about what heaven is like and how one might gain entrance there. Some people have even claimed to have visited heaven for a short time before they were revived

by doctors here on earth. Others say that they have had dreams about heaven in which God gave them a glimpse of that realm.

It makes sense that Christians would be interested in a place that is so shrouded in mystery but plays such a critical role in their eternity. Just as a person may find out all they can about a new city before they visit, knowledge helps build anticipation and remove some of the anxiety that comes with going to a new place. However, Christians aren't permitted to go beyond what has been revealed to them in the Scriptures. (See 1 Cor. 4:6.) The idea that a person should look to other sources besides the Bible to find out information about heaven is absurd and arrogant. Heaven is God's dwelling and the Bible is God's book.

? What stands out to you about these first two verses?

The Bible has a lot to say about heaven, God, and the appropriate response of people to those realities. Isaiah 6 is one of these passages. This passage is a glimpse into the most significant events occurring in the universe. The curtain was pulled back for Isaiah to witness angels and their worship of the one true and living God in heaven. The overarching theme of this account is worship. The main point of this passage has everything to do with the only One who is worthy to receive glory, honor, and power.

? What did Isaiah describe concerning God's location and posture? What should that indicate to us?

Isaiah described the One who was seated on the throne. God being seated on the throne represented God's authority to be Ruler and Judge over all of creation. This symbol is used several times throughout the Bible. For example, in Revelation 3:21, Jesus said, "To the one who conquers I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne."

God resides in glory upon His throne from which He commands and rules His church and the entire world. All earthly thrones and authorities are under His jurisdiction and must give account to Him. God is the only being who may legitimately and possibly occupy the throne of heaven. God is God and there is none like Him. He is the chief and best of beings. He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

 **Application: Do you believe God is truly worthy of worship? In what ways do you worship God? Would you say your life is one of worship?**

2. Holy, Holy, Holy (Isa. 6:3-4)

When Isaiah saw the vision of God upon the throne, it may be that he barely lifted his eyes. He only described the hem of God's robe, which "filled the temple." This, of course, makes perfect sense. How could anyone look upon such power and glory? Isaiah was awestruck and feared greatly.

God is infinitely valuable and precious. There is no treasure in heaven and earth that doesn't fade into worthlessness when set beside the Creator of heaven and earth. Christians seek this great and precious prize "like a merchant in search of fine pearls. When he found one priceless pearl, he went and sold everything he had and bought it" (Matt.13:45-46). When Isaiah saw God Himself seated upon the throne, He was overcome by God's perfect nature—His eternity, immutability, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, wisdom, power, goodness, truth, love, grace, and mercy. Isaiah's description reveals to us that God is worth more than anything in all of creation. He stands above all we will ever know as supremely valuable.

 **How might a clear view of God's worth and glory affect the way we live?**

It's impossible to gain a clear view of God's worth and glory apart from being born again into God's family through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God the Son. Once a sin-dead person has been raised with Christ and indwelt by the Spirit, their eyes are opened to the infinite worth of God, the Father, Son, and Spirit. Paul stated it like this: "But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them as dung, so that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God based on faith. My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, assuming that I will somehow reach the resurrection from among the dead" (Phil. 3:7-11).

Once a Christian sees God's infinite worth, everything else becomes secondary. Nothing is worth keeping if it means detracting from knowing God. No sacrifice is too costly and no price is too high when the prize is as valuable as the One seated on the throne. Take note that God is not some trinket to possess and control, quite the opposite. This great treasure is our ruler and judge. He is the King and Authority over all, especially over the lives of those He has redeemed. Our response to His value isn't ownership or manipulation, but continual and uninhibited worship.



How did the angels describe God? How is this instructive?

The angels who were worshiping God simply described him as "Holy, Holy, Holy." It is worth noting that the seraphim in Isaiah 6 are the same creatures in Revelation 4 and in both instances they proclaim the holiness of God using the same refrain, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Not only is God infinitely worthy and valuable, He is supremely pure, sinless, spotless, and faultless. God is holy. There is no darkness in Him at all. No sin resides in his being. He is completely righteous. God Almighty, who is seated upon the throne in heaven, is continually praised and glorified and the proclamation that is repeated three times is that God is holy. The holiness of God stands in stark contrast to the sinfulness, corruption, and fallibility of mankind. Isaiah was struck with fear because of his own unworthiness.

Anyone who takes an honest look at themselves today should also be struck with fear. The fact of the matter is that all people have sinned against this great and holy God. It is proper for us to cry out along with Isaiah saying, “Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips” (Isa. 6:5).

Christians have no reason to despair because they are no longer people of unclean lips for they have been cleansed and their ruin has been reversed. Those who are in Christ cling to an incredible and wonderful hope and promise. Those who are in Christ have an advocate with the Father who intercedes for them. (See Rom. 8:34 and 1 John 2:1.) As the writer of Hebrews said, “For this is the kind of high priest we need: holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He doesn’t need to offer sacrifices every day, as high priests do—first for their own sins, then for those of the people. He did this once for all time when he offered himself” (Heb. 7:26-27).



Application: How does your response compare with the response of the Angels in this passage? What would it look like for you to respond to God in this way?

3. A Living Sacrifice (Isa. 6:5-8)

Isaiah’s worship of God resulted in his obedience to God. In fact, we must be careful not to draw too sharp a line between those two ideas. Isaiah’s service and obedience to God was worship. We would be correct in saying that the theme of Isaiah 6 is the worthiness of God. It may be more precise to say the theme of this passage is the preeminence of worship. Don’t forget that this chapter doesn’t describe what will happen sometime in the future. No, this passage described what was happening then when Isaiah was alive, it describes what is happening now, and what will happen forever. It is a picture of the right and constant activity in heaven. Heaven—all of creation—is centered on the worship of the one true and living God.

Worship of the one true and living God, the Creator of the heavens and earth cannot be an afterthought, a Sunday morning activity. It must be a priority of the first order in the lives of all those who claim to be children of God. Worshipping

God ought to have the highest priority in the lives of Christians. This doesn't mean Christians spend all of their time singing hymns and sitting in a pew. But it does mean they live their lives knowing, treasuring, and responding to the infinite worth and beauty of God.

? How does a person worship God in the normal day-to-day activities of life?

? What is the connection between right worship and obedient living?

Paul urged the Christians in Rome, saying, “Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship” (Rom. 12:1). This means worship is more than an activity in which Christians engage. Rather, the Christian life ought to be always worshipful, in all things. Paul also exhorted the Colossians saying, “Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:17).

Thus Christians are to be living sacrifices in worship to God, giving Him glory at all times in all things. Thankfully, Christians aren't left to their own devices to figure out what gives God glory and what does not. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commands” (John 14:15). Those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb glorify God in all of their lives by living in accordance with the Word of God.

? Application: How do you worship God in song, prayer, and Bible study as well as in obedience to His Word in everyday life? What needs to change based on today's study?

Conclusion

What Isaiah witnessed wasn't a vision of the future or only a special occasion. He was given a glimpse of the ongoing worship of God by the angelic beings that have worshiped God since the unknown past; they were worshipping God when Isaiah saw the vision and are worshipping God now. One day, those who are in Christ will join them. What we learn from this passage is that we can join in this worship even now because of Christ's work on our behalf. Christians have access to God's throne and are enabled to worship God in spirit and truth.

 When you think of worship, what comes to mind? How has today's lesson challenged your understanding of worship? What might hinder your worship?

 How should the collective worship of the church change our relationships with one another?

 Why is sharing the gospel with others the natural result of a lifestyle of worship?

CHRIST CONNECTION: Christians are able to join in true spiritual worship of the one true and living God because of the redeeming work of Christ on their behalf. The great rescue that God the Son completed on behalf of believers is the means of their worship as well as the occasion for it.

MISSIONAL APPLICATION: Christians are both a missionary people and a worshipping people. Christians go, preach, share, and plant for the ultimate purpose of being used by God to bring groups of people to repentance and faith so that they would know, treasure, and rejoice in God through Christ.



FOR NEXT WEEK

God is Generous

Main Passages

- Matthew 20:1-16

Session Outline

1. The Wisdom of the Master (Matt. 20:1-7)
2. The Sincerity of the Master (Matt. 20:8)
3. The Generosity of the Master (Matt. 20:9-16)

Memorize

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord asking:
Who will I send? Who will go for us?*

I said:

Here I am. Send me.

- Isaiah 6:8, CSB

Daily Readings

- Monday - Isaiah 6:1-8
- Tuesday - Galatians 2:20-21
- Wednesday - Exodus 15:11
- Thursday - Psalm 96:9
- Friday - Revelation 4:8
- Saturday - Revelation 15:4