

Guest Preacher Mr. Joe Macphee

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Preacher: Mr. Joe Macphee

- [0 : 0 0] Let's turn again to the first portion of Scripture that we read, the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 6, reading again at verse 5.
- And I said, Woe is me, for I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.
- This is a remarkable vision that is given to the prophet Isaiah, a vision of God's holiness, a vision of God's glory.
- Isaiah reigned during the, or was a prophet rather, during the reign of the kings of Judah. We have that in chapter 1 and verse 1, the vision of Isaiah the son of Amos, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.
- He was given, of course, a vision of the holiness of God, as we see it in this chapter, but he was also given a vision, a vision concerning Judah and a vision concerning Jerusalem and a vision regarding the state of the nation.
- [1 : 3 9] The vision that he has been given here in terms of the vision of the holiness of God, the holiness of the Lord, the Lord of hosts, is a vision which represents his call to ministry.
- Some commentators differ in the sense of what this vision particularly meant.
- Was it his original call to ministry, or was it Isaiah being recommissioned? But I think the nature of the vision that he saw certainly leads to suggest that this was the original vision of his call to ministry, and what a calling it was.
- And the particular calling here shaped Isaiah's theology. It shaped his theology, it shaped his life, and of course it shaped his ministry.
- And our view of God, my view and your view of God, must shape our theology.
- [3 : 0 4] Some people think that that's not a particularly good word, but it is a beautiful word, and it's simply this, the study of God, knowing God.
- And we must have the right theology of God, because that will shape our lives. It will shape our walk and witness.
- Just as it shaped the calling of others, Abraham and Moses and Joshua and the disciples and the apostle Paul on the road to Emmaus, what a vision he saw.
- Who did he see? He saw Jesus. I am Jesus, whom you thou persecutest. I am Jesus.
- And it's very interesting when you look at this particular prophecy. After this particular vision that he has of the Lord, that he calls God repeatedly the Holy One of Israel.
- [4 : 1 0] The Holy One of Israel. And it's used repeatedly throughout this prophecy. He saw, first of all, that King Uzziah had died.
- King Uzziah, also known in the Scriptures, as you know, as Azariah. He died. He was a good king. And his reign and his rule was a good reign and a good rule.
- He was a strong ruler. He conquered the Philistines, rebuilt Jerusalem. But we read in the Scriptures in chapter 26 of 2 Chronicles.

And at verse 16, we read this. But when he was strong, he grew proud to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the Lord his God, and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. And of course, as you know, he was strictly forbidden to do that.

[5 : 30] Strictly forbidden to do that. He grew proud. Pride entered into his heart. His hand reached out for something that was specifically forbidden.

And it reminds us, does it not, of the root sin of pride, which makes us reach out, which made our first parents reach out to the forbidden fruit, despite everything that God had given them.

The one thing that was forbidden, they reached out in their pride. Despite all his success, despite all the good things that he did, Uzziah reached out, reached out.

Verse 19 of that chapter is interesting. Then Uzziah was angry. He was angry because, of course, the priests stood up against him. The priests protected the sanctuary of the Lord.

And so it must be to this day. The ministers of the gospel have to protect the sanctuary of God. It's part of their calling, as it is part of the calling of every elder in particular, and every office bearer in particular, to protect the sanctuary of God.

[6 : 55] And when they stood against him, he was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And when he became angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the Lord, by the altar of incense.

And I'll come back to that perhaps later. By the altar of incense. And all his life, what remained of his life, until he died, the judgment of the Lord fell on Uzziah.

And he was separated from the people, separate, house excluded, as it were, from the people and from the presence of God, from his office.

His reign came to an end in that manner. He died in that manner. He had violated the holiness of God.

He had violated the holiness of God. But Isaiah sees another king.

[8 : 10] Not only King Uzziah, but I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple.

I saw the Lord. He saw not a dead king, but a living king. A living king. Very much alive.

The word used here for Lord is Adonai. Adonai. Sovereign ruler. Sovereign king. Sovereign ruler over all creation.

Earthly rulers will pass away. Kings and queens and other rulers. But this king, the Lord, this Lord, His reign and rule is forever and ever and ever.

It has no beginning and it has no end. And Isaiah is given this remarkable vision of the Lord. He's transported to heaven, as it were.

[9 : 23] Transported to seeing this Lord sitting upon a throne. Sitting on a throne. He sees the vision of a king.

And he sees the vision of a judge. A judge. The train of his robe filled the temple. A vision of his majesty and his splendor.

1 Kings 8.27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? 2 Kings 9.27 Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you.

How much less this house that I have built. Heaven, not even the heaven of heavens, can contain this God.

2 Kings 9.27 And above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings. With two he covered his face. And with two he covered his feet.

[10 : 24] And with two he flew. And one called to another. He saw these seraphim. The burning ones, literally. Standing in the presence of the king.

Standing in the presence of the king. Above him stood the seraphim. Standing in the presence of the king. And if the seraphim and the angelic host have to stand in the presence of the king.

Surely that is something that is appropriate for the people of God. When they approach God in prayer. Standing in the presence of the king.

Ready to do his bidding. Shielding themselves. Faces and feet. Even the angelic beings. Could be overwhelmed by the presence of the holiness of God.

Faces and feet. To show their utter unworthiness to appear before him. And they didn't cover their ears or their mouths.

[11 : 32] Because they listened to this lord. To this king. And they praised this lord. And this king.

They praised him. That psalm that we were singing. Psalm 47. These wonderful words which we see. In that psalm.

And which we sang. God is with shouts gone up. The lord with trumpets. Sounding high. Sing praise to God. Sing praise.

Sing praise. Praise to our God. Sing ye. For God is king of all the earth. He is lord. Lord.

And these seraphim were praising him. Praising him. And they spoke. And they spoke. And one called to another and said.

[12 : 28] Holy, holy, holy is the lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory. Full of his glory. Emphasizing who exactly this king is.

God. That he is. That he is. That he is. That he is. That he is. That he is. That he is. Holy. His separatedness. It is what distinguishes God from all other beings.

John Piper says this. His holiness is what he is as God. Which no one else is or ever will be.

The Godness of God. And the whole earth is full of his glory. And God is gloriously working out his decrees.

Extending his kingdom. Extending his rule. Extending his throne room. Into the hearts of sinners. Is he on the throne of your heart?

[13 : 45] Is he? Has God moved in? And has he taken over your heart? Your life? The king and his kingdom.

Fulfilling his royal purposes. When we pray the Lord's Prayer. As you do every Sunday morning. And as we do in Stornoway. Thy kingdom come.

Thy kingdom come. Christ is building his kingdom. Bit by bit by bit. Moving in. And taking over.

And establishing his throne. On the hearts of sinners. And the very presence. Of that vision. And the very power of that vision.

The foundation of the thresholds shook. At the voice of him who called. And the house was filled with smoke. It's a vision of the throne.

[14 : 51] And the glory. And the majesty. And the splendor of God. It's also a vision of judgment. If you carry on singing or reading in Psalm 18.

You will see that. And Psalm 18 is one of these great messianic psalms. One of these great messianic psalms. If you read it through. You cannot but see Christ in it.

And you cannot but see in it. The glory. Of Christ's work. In taking to himself. The penalty.

And the punishment for our sin. And the judgment. That our sin deserved. Here is a vision of God. Who is a consuming fire.

I say I saw the Lord. But in verse 5. It tells us more. It tells us this.

[15 : 51] My eyes have seen the King. Yahweh of hosts. Or the Lord of hosts. And you'll notice the Lord capitalized.

As I'm sure you've heard. Time and time again. Yahweh. The covenant God. Holy. Holy. Holy. Is the covenant Lord of hosts.

The Lord. Who commands the whole host. The whole army of heaven. Whose glory fills heaven and earth.

And we see this vision of glory. We see in it. A realization as we have in the New Testament.

In John chapter 12. John chapter 12. And we read in verse 41. These verses.

[16 : 53] Speaking. In that particular passage. Are speaking about the unbelief of the people. Because of the judgment of God. And I'll come back to that. But it's speaking specifically.

At verse 41. Isaiah said these things. Because he saw his glory. And spoke of him. Who did he see?

All sitting on the throne. High and lifted up. He saw a vision. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. The pre-incarnate Christ.

This is a theophany. This is a revelation of Christ. One of the great revelations of Christ. In the Old Testament. The glory of Christ.

And who he is. The glory of Christ. As the mediator. Prophet. Priest. And king. It's a fulfillment of that.

[17 : 51] Prophecy. What was given at the very beginning. Genesis 3. 15. And the seed of the woman. Shall crush the head of the serpent. As a fulfillment of these passages.

Which you have. In the chapters that follow this. Isaiah 9. Chapter 6. Unto us a child is born. To us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder.

And his name shall be called. Wonderful Counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting Father. Prince of Peace. Unto chapter 11.

Of that remarkable narrative concerning Christ. There shall come forth a shoot. From the stump of Jesse. And a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. This vision that Isaiah saw. This blaze of holiness and of purity.

[18 : 57] And of light. Is a vision of the pre-incarnate Christ. And he saw himself.

Isaiah saw himself. In the light of that light. And it penetrated him. To his very core.

To his very core. And he speaks. And he says. Woe is me. For I am lost. Or I am undone.

As the AV has it. He was overwhelmed. With a sense of his own sin. And sinnership. It's as if he was saying.

I am as good as dead. As good as dead. I am lost. I am undone. I am unclean.

[19 : 56] The Bible is full of examples of others. Who saw a glimpse. Of the glory of God. What did Job say? In chapter 42.

At verse 5. But now my eye sees you. And I abhor myself. I abhor myself. What did Peter say?

When he realized who was standing in front of him. Depart from me Lord. For I am a sinful man. The apostle Paul.

Oh wretched man that I am. Who can free me from the body of this death? He saw his sin. Isaiah saw his sin.

He saw his sinnership. He had never seen himself like this before. He had never been measured by such a rule. He had never been weighed by such a balance.

[21 : 00] Woe is me for I am lost. For I am a man of unclean lips. And though he speaks of his lips. It is speaking of his whole nature.

This is speaking of his nature. Not just a list of his sins. But it is speaking about the corruption of his nature. The corruption of his original nature. A nature which is radically corrupt.

As we are by nature. And it is not because my conduct is defective. My conduct is defective.

Because my nature is defective. It is corrupt. I am undone. My nature is undone. I am by nature lost. Lost.

I am a ruined. Guilty. Sinner. Sinner. Sinner. And the use of lips. Is symbolic.

[22 : 03] It is symbolic of his heart. And his whole being. But it is also symbolic in the sense. Of what the seraphim did. He saw his own.

Wretchedness. And not only that. He saw the wretchedness of the people. And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. And we can only see ourselves. As I said. In light of who Christ is.

And what Christ has done. And he was very much. In the midst of a people of unclean lips.

If you read chapter 1. And chapters 2 to 5. You will see there. Particularly chapter 1. Which many commentators. Agree on.

[23 : 04] That it is like a commentary. On the whole of the prophecy of Isaiah. These are chapters. And chapter 1 should be.

I think familiar. If you are not familiar with it. If you are a Christian. You must be familiar with it. The whole head is sick.

And the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot. Even to the head. There is no sound as in it. But bruises and sores. And raw wounds.

And the judgment that God declares. On this sinful nation. Look how Isaiah 1.

2 begins. Hear O heavens. And hear O heavens. And give ear O earth. For the Lord has spoken. It's the Lord who is pronouncing the judgment. He is speaking.

[24 : 00] Ah. Sinful nation. A people laden with iniquity. Offspring of evildoers. Children who deal corruptly. They have forsaken the Lord.

They have despised the Holy One of Israel. They are utterly estranged. Not only did Uzziah violate the holiness of God.

The people also had violated the holiness of God. They rejected God. They turned away from God.

They were unresponsive to God's voice. And to God's promises. And to God's warnings. They rejected the light. They rejected the light. The end of chapter 5.

And it's just something for noting in the passing. When you come across these great chapters. It's always good to read the narrative in the previous chapter. And it says this at the end of chapter 5.

[25 : 00] And if one looks to the land. Behold darkness. And distress. And the light is darkened by its clouds. If we are to approach God.

If we are to plead with God. If we are to come into God's presence. If we are to pray to God. We must approach Him on His terms.

And any holiness that falls short. That falls short of God's holiness. Will not be able to stand in the presence of God.

We ought to be reminded often. Of what the letter to the Hebrews says. In writing to those Christians.

Who had come to know the Christian faith. But somehow had started to desire. To go back to the other things.

[26 : 10] That they had themselves. In their Judaism. And Hebrews is called. By none other than the great John Owen.

The Hebrews epistle of warning. And it's full of warnings. To those Christians. It's full of warnings. To the Lord's people. What does Hebrews 12.14 say?

It says this. Strive for peace with everyone. And for the holiness. Without which. No one will see.

The Lord. Strive for the holiness. Without which. No one will see. The Lord. In our forgetfulness.

In our struggles with temptations. In our struggles with sin. And the way that sin presents itself to us. It can present itself so.

[27 : 12] So. Perfectly. Plausible. And edible. And you've got to have it. Struggles with our temptations.

Coming at us from all angles. We can so easily forget. Forget. The priorities that ought to be ours. We can so easily forget.

Our eternal home. And the priority of being with God. Instead of the priorities. Of this world.

Of this world. Holiness. And time won't allow us to go into. More detail on that.

But I wonder if our problem is not. I wonder if our problem is not. That we don't really understand sin. And the exceeding sinfulness of sin. I say I came to realize it.

[28 : 20] And what a realization. What a realization. Is not a realization. But friends. Our attitude to sin.

Is vitally important. Vitally important. And what do we see then. In this remarkable vision.

Was Isaiah left. In this condition. Of being undone. And unclean. Lost and unclean. No.

There was an altar. There was an altar. Then one of the seraphim flew to me. Having in his hand a burning coal. That he had taken with tongues.

From the altar. There's a vision here. Of King Uzziah. And King Uzziah's. Sin.

[29 : 18] There's a vision. There's a vision. There's a vision here. Of the glory. And the holiness. Of God. There's a vision here.

Too. Of the grace of God. There was an altar. There was an altar. The throne. And the altar.

Are connected. And just as Isaiah was brought. In his personal experience. To experience.

The depths of his own sin. And the depths of his own depravity. He was taken into contact. In his experience. With the altar.

And the sacrifice. Through the fiery messenger. That came. With a live coal. To touch his lips. This wasn't a fiery messenger.

[30 : 16] Of divine judgment. That had already been applied. To the sacrifice. But here was divine. Forgiveness. And divine. Cleansing. The coal was taken. From the altar. The altar. Of burnt offering.

Or the altar. Of incense. They were separate. Of course. But both. Representative. Of the one. Substitutionary.

Sacrifice. To take. Away. Sin. Listen. To what. The voice.

Said. Behold. This has touched. Your lips. Your guilt. Is taken. Away. And your sin.

[31 : 17] Atoned for. Your guilt. Is taken. Away. The inward. Corruption. And the guilt. Arising. From it.

Is taken. Away. And your sins. Atoned for. There is no. Reconciliation. What. Are the altars.

In the bible. What do they speak of? The altar. Is a meeting place. A meeting place. Of the holy God. And sinful man.

How can they be reconciled? How can they meet? Only on the altar. Of sacrifice. Only on the altar. Of sacrifice. Where. There is a.

Substitutionary. Sacrifice. To take away sin. To remove it. And to make. Reconciliation. Your guilt.

[32 : 18] Is taken away. And your sin. Atoned for. Or your sin. Forgiven. Reconciliation.

Forgiveness. Without. Without. Shedding of blood. There is no. Forgiveness. Of sin. Here. Is. A sacrifice.

For sin. Here is. My friends. A picture. For you. And me. Of what Christ. Came. To do.

Here. In this prophetic. In this prophecy. Is a prophecy. Of Christ's coming. To deal. To deal. To deal. With sin. To deal. To deal.

With the inward. Corruption. Of our very beings. Our very natures. To deal. With our sins. To make atonement. To make. Reconciliation.

[33 : 12] And to establish.

sin. And the guilt. Which the throne. Detects. The altar. Removes. Here is a picture. Of Calvary.

A picture. Of Calvary. Of the Lamb of God. who takes. Who takes. Away. Sin. And he comes.

Into personal. Contact. With the all. Sufficient. Savior. Uzziah. Had tried. To do.

The work. Of a priest. By the altar. Of incense. I think. It's quite symbolic. That these details. Are included. In scripture. But there was only one.

[34 : 12] Who could. There was only one. Who could. The all. Sufficient. Savior. The mediator. The God.

Who became man. The God. Who became man. And who offered. Himself. Once. He who is.

The sacrifice. The altar. The priest. The only one. Who can save us. We need to see this vision.

For ourselves. Not that you should look for a vision like this. The vision you have. Is a vision that is contained. In the word of God.

You've got it. Here's the vision. Here it is. In black and white. A more sure word of prophecy. A more sure word of prophecy.

[35 : 12] You have the full light. Of the New Testament. You have the full light. Of the preaching of the word. Better than any visions.

Or seraphim. The reality of the vision. And the emblems. Brought before us. Here. Are in Christ.

Jesus. Himself. The central work of Christ. Is.

To deal with sin. To deal with sin. My sin. Your sin. If you will accept him as your savior. Here is God.

God in our nature. God coming down. To deal with sin. And there must be. In our experience.

[36 : 11] In every one of us. A realization of. Our sinnership. And our sin. Sin. You must. Know. Conviction.

Of sin. However you might know that. Quietly. Powerfully. Before the Lord. Or perhaps not so quietly. For some. But you must come to know.

The sickness. That is in your heart. By nature. Sin. Sick. People. In a sin. Sick. World. This is a vision of grace.

It's a vision of the gospel. It's a vision of Christ. And in the remaining verses of this. Chapter.

We have Isaiah's commission from the Lord. As the heading in the Bible. States. Isaiah never stopped telling.

[37 : 20] Unholy people. He never stopped telling them. That there was a way to be reconciled. To a holy God. Never stopped. Never stopped.

But he realized. That there was a judgment. That God had pronounced a judgment. For his people. Who had rejected him. For that continued rejection.

Of the gospel. God judged them. God withdrew his light. From them. From their understanding. To the point that repentance.

Was not possible. If you think that judgment. From God comes. In some fire. Descending. Or some catastrophe. Descending.

You're wrong. You're wrong. You're wrong. I remember reading. Once in the. Cover of the.

[38 : 15] Evangelical times. Many. Many. Years ago. The greatest. Judgment. That God. Can inflict. Upon man. Is to leave him. To his own.

Will. What say. The scriptures. Romans 1. 28. And since they did not see fit. To acknowledge God.

God. Gave them up. To a debased mind. To do. What ought. Not. To be done. God. And no wonder.

Isaiah. Went out. To preach. War. No wonder. He went out. To preach. And he preached. War to you. War to you.

The danger. Of rejecting. God. And rejecting. His holiness. And rejecting. His presence. And his power. God. Rejecting.

[39 : 16] His. Call. To obedience. Rejecting. His call. To prayer. You would think. That successive generations. Would have learned.

But oh. In that great chapter. In the New Testament. Matthew 11. Woe. Unto thee. God. As. Woe. Unto thee.

Beth. Sider. If the things. That had been done. In you. Had been done. In Tyre. On Sidon. They would have repented. In sackcloth. And ashes. But you didn't.

What about our generation? What about us? What about this congregation? What about you? What about you? Personally? What about your own life?

The reason I read the last. Reading that we read in Revelation 20.

[40 : 15] 11 to 15. Was for a very specific reason. Which I'm sure some of you. Have already worked out. In that particular passage.

we have the king. We have the king. King who? King Jesus. King Jesus.

We have a throne room. We have a throne room and a room of judgment. But what don't we have?

There's no altar there. There's no altar there. When it comes to appearing before the judgment seat of Christ as every one of us must, there's not going to be an altar there to take away the guilt and to atone for sin.

It's an absolute tragedy to have the throne without the altar, to have judgment and damnation and absolute, unmitigated conviction of your sin and no appeal to an altar for cleansing or forgiveness.

[41 : 40] There is no grace and no mercy there. Unmingled judgment, the claims of the throne and of the king will be on you.

The books will be opened, every person according to his work. and if anyone's name is not found written in the book of life, they will be thrown into the lake of fire.

will you not come to Christ? Will you not look at the scriptures and you and say, thank you Lord for the vision you gave me.

Thank you Lord for letting me see the truth as it is in Jesus. Thank you Lord for coming into my heart and dealing personally and powerfully with me, for taking away my sin and my guilt and making that reconciliation so that there is now peace.

because the alternative is too awful to consider. Too awful to consider. Will you not come?

[43 : 09] Amen. May the Lord bless these thoughts on his word. We'll sing now in conclusion. In Psalm 43, again from the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 43, verses 3 to 5, four stanzas. Page 264 of the blue psalm book.

O send thy light forth on thy truth.

Let them be guides to me and bring me to thine holy hill even where thy dwellings be. Then will I to God's altar go, to God my chiefest joy, yea, God my God.

Thy name to praise my harp I will employ. Why art thou then cast down, my soul? What should discourage thee? And why with vexing thoughts art thou disquieted in me?

[44 : 30] Still trust in God. For him to praise good cause I yet shall have. He of my countenance the health, my God that doth me save.

These verses to God's praise. O send thy light forth for thy light truth.

Let them be guides to me and bring me to thy holy hill in where thy dwellings be.

Then will I to God's altar go, to God my chiefest joy.

yea, God my God, thy name to praise.

[45 : 52] My heart, thy will, am I. My heart, thou then cast out my soul.

What should discourage thee? And why with vexing thoughts are doubt is why O times when me Getting why with vexing thoughts Taken ahí.

Othnos areh all shall have he of my God and the health my God that David said we'll pray in conclusion yeah God my God that these words would be true of every person here may that witness be ours and what a privilege to call God my God oh forgive us forgive us our gracious God for how little we see of how gracious you really are all because of that once for all sacrifice for sin bless us together bless us as we part bless your day and oh gracious one cause each day to be a Lord's day in our experience by the Holy Spirit revealing

Christ to us hear us we pray cleansing us and forgiving us in Christ's precious name amen amen amen ministry around me my friends I