

# WEEK 02

## ISAIAH 6

God judges the rebellious by hardening the hearts of the wicked and rendering them blind to truth.

## Preface

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In the previous week, we learned that we are all guilty of the injustices in our society when we ignore the cause of those who are oppressed and powerless. Our sins have caused significant pain and suffering and it can only be settled through God's grace. God in His sovereignty may use our sins' consequences to refine us as His people and teach us obedience as we are being made clean from sins.

Isaiah 6 was written at a significant turning point in Israel's history, when they shifted from a relatively good king, Uzziah, to a wicked king, Ahaz. This was also the period when Assyria became an international world power.

A significant question the interpreter will have to answer is whether this is Isaiah's original call or some revised re-commissioning of the prophet for a new task. For the context of our study, we see this as a re-commissioning, when Isaiah is given a new mission because Israel is facing a new political situation with a new unbelieving king.

## Observation

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1. What is the overall mission that God is calling Isaiah into? (Isa. 6:9-10)
2. Compare and contrast the responses of the seraphim, Isaiah, and the people upon seeing God. (Isa. 6:2-3, 5, 9-10)

*Leaders' note: The seraphim responded in reverence and worship, and Isaiah responded by pronouncing judgment upon himself ("Woe to me!"). Both the seraphim and Isaiah expressed their unworthiness to look upon the Lord. However, the people were described as "be ever seeing, but never perceiving".*

3. What were the consequences of the people's unwillingness to honor God? (Isa. 6:9-13)
4. How long will the people be deadened in their senses? Has this been fulfilled? (Isa. 6:11-12)

## Interpretation

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1. Why do you think Isaiah responded to God in the manner that he did in Isa. 6:5?
2. Why do you think Isaiah responded to God's call in the manner that he did in Isa. 6:8 and 11? How do you think Isaiah viewed his own people and viewed God?

3. What prompted such a severe punishment from God?

4. What does God's punishment teach us about God's justice and fairness?

*Leaders' note: We cannot judge God's decisions and we may never be able to fully understand the reasons behind them. This question aims to prompt a lively discussion on God's fairness.*

## Application

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1. How would you respond if God gave you the same mission as He did to Isaiah (to pronounce judgment on his own people)? Why?

2. Has God ever called you to do something hard? How did you know it was His calling and how did you experience God's provision as you obeyed Him?

3. What were your experiences like when you came across others who are unresponsive when you share the gospel?

4. How can we live a life that matches Isaiah's reverence for God's holiness?

### Optional Follow-Up Exercise: Testimony Sharing and Evangelism

Our study this week reminds us of our calling in this world to share the gospel and make disciples of all ethnic groups (The Great Commission). Sharing the gospel with strangers can be scary and difficult. However, if we truly believe in the gospel, we should be grieved when we see others being overshadowed by the impending judgment, and we should be moved to share the grace that we have received from God even when we did not deserve it.

An essential component of sharing the gospel is to engage in a spiritual conversation that leads us to share the testimony of God's active and transforming grace in our lives. We are called to be God's witnesses, not His attorneys or salespersons. However, we also need to be equipped and well-versed in sharing the gospel in a way that is understandable for those who have never heard it before.

*Put it into practice:*

- 1. Commit to a specific timeframe with your group to be accountable for engaging in spiritual conversations with a non-Christian friend or colleague, or choose a specific time and location to do street evangelism.*
- 2. Practice sharing your testimony in your small group. Reflect and share about: "What was your life like before you met Jesus?" "How did you commit your life to Jesus?" "What difference has Jesus made in your life?"*
- 3. Familiarize yourselves with the gospel message. Several useful tools are the resources from Cru, called "Knowing God Personally" or "Four Spiritual Laws".*
- 4. Pray earnestly for God to soften the hearts of the people that you are going to talk to. Trust God that His presence goes before you and He will bring the right people.*
- 5. This week, think of one person to have this conversation with.*
  - o Helpful tip: Begin by asking them about their views of God and their purpose in life. Try using a tool called "Perspective Cards" by Cru if you would like to have more inspiration on what to talk about.*
- 6. In your small group, share what the experience was like and pray that God will continue to grow the seed of the gospel in the hearts of the people you talked to.*