

## Lesson 6

### Isaiah—He Foretold Salvation

Listen, O earth!

For the Lord has spoken.

How much we have heard as we have listened to prophets whom God sent to speak to us! You notice that we have learned much from the lives and examples of the prophets. But most important have been the *messages* to us, which God has made known through His servants.

God has spoken. He has sent His word. He has revealed Himself to us through His chosen ones. He has revealed Himself to us as the holy God who must judge sin, and yet, as the compassionate God who is like a father, showing tenderness to His children. We have found that He reaches out to us and wants to help us. He provides His Word to guide us. He will deliver us from guilt if we confess our sin, obey Him, and accept His revelations.

How much we have heard from the prophets! And yet there is more. In this lesson we will hear from Isaiah. His name means: **GOD IS THE SOURCE OF SALVATION**. His special message to us is this: Salvation comes on the basis of divine grace and power and not by our own strength nor by doing religious duties.

In this lesson you will study . . .

The Vision and the Call

The Warning and the Promise

The Redeemer and the Invitation

This lesson will help you...

Know about the prophet Isaiah.

Explain the meaning of sacrifice.

Describe the true Redeemer.

Recognize the truth of Isaiah's prophecies and their meaning for you personally.

### THE VISION AND THE CALL

We are not sure how many persons God has chosen to minister as His prophets. Surely there are several whose names we do not know. But no doubt exists concerning the office of Isaiah. He was one of the greatest of all prophets, especially selected by God to give to mankind God's message of hope and salvation.

It is probable that Isaiah came from a family prominent in government, for he was active in the life of the king's court throughout much of his life. He was a competent historian for several kings. A gifted writer, his style shows refinement and culture. His language is poetic and contains dramatic expressions. As a lover of nature and a keen observer of human behavior, he was able to write so that common people can understand. Yet, as a well educated statesman, he wrote in a manner that commands the attention of historians and scholars. He proclaimed God's words in speech

and writing for about sixty years and saw many of his prophecies come to pass in his own lifetime.

We have learned that God speaks to His chosen ones during times of great need and uses them to affect the lives of others. We have noticed that God speaks through His prophets when His people are in danger of destruction because of sin and idolatry. These conditions were true in the experience of Isaiah. People were at war with fierce enemies. Besides that, many of them were disobedient to God and even worshipped idols. They were thoughtless and unfair in their relations with others.

Worst of all, they refused to see their sin and their need. They kept on making animal sacrifices and performing ceremonial rituals and fasts in the name of religion. They were proud and acted as though God granted them special rights. Isaiah realized all this, and spoke out to the people, saying, "Listen, O earth!"

Then God allowed him to see a marvelous vision. "I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted," said Isaiah. "Above Him were burning ones, seraphs, each with six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. They were calling to one another: Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord Almighty; and the whole earth is full of His glory."

Isaiah was amazed. Then the doorposts and thresholds shook and the room was filled with

smoke. Isaiah knew that he was in the presence of the Holy One. He felt frightened and cried out, “Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the Lord Almighty.”

Then one of the seraphim flew to the altar, where a fire was smoldering. With tongs he lifted a live coal and touched it to the lips of Isaiah.

“This has touched your lips,” said the seraph, “and your guilt is taken away; your sin is gone.”

Then the voice of God said, “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?”

Isaiah said, “Here am I. Send me.”

“Go,” said God, “Go and give my message to the people. Go and warn them of the judgment which will come because of their evil ways. But tell them also, that God is with them, and He will send redemption to those who will open their ears to listen and their eyes to see the truth. He will send a redeemer whose name will be called IMMANUEL, which means, “God among us.”

**1** Complete the sentences by writing in words which you choose from the list.

sin messenger redeemer

holiness God judgment

anger angels war

king Isaiah vision

**a** In his vision Isaiah knew that he was in the

presence of **b** The words of the seraphs reminded Isaiah that

an important characteristic of God is His

**c** This made Isaiah very conscious of his own and his people's **d** God's question showed that He wanted

someone to be a **e** God's purpose was to warn the people of the coming **f** God promised to send a **THE WARNING AND THE PROMISE**

When Isaiah said, "Here am I. Send me," he was accepting a call from God. He was saying, "I am willing to be God's messenger." God honored his obedience and willingness by giving him extremely important revelations. God allowed him to become one of the greatest prophets.

We learn much from Isaiah's vision and his call. First, we learn more about the concern of God for His people. He sees their sin and trouble. He is grieved because of their disobedience. He plans a way to help them, and, as usual, the plan requires a man through whom He can work. God asked, "Who will go," He wanted a willing man. God does not call people against their will. He will help and guide each of us if we are willing to receive what He offers us.

Also, we learn from Isaiah how we can respond to God's concern for us. Isaiah's vision first impressed upon him the holiness of God and the contrast of his own sin. He knew there was no way he could cleanse himself and make himself ready to

stand in God's presence. He just confessed his sin and accepted God's method of cleansing him. He did nothing but believe and accept God's provision of cleansing.

Isaiah was willing to be God's messenger because he loved and respected God and wanted to please Him. And there was another reason, too. That is, when he saw, in this new way, the holiness and love of God' he was amazed and sorrowful at the sin of his people. He realized that they had become blind and deaf to the reality of their religion. They were acting like rebellious children, Isaiah declared. They were like sons who would not obey their father nor respect his wisdom.

Isaiah wanted to warn them, for he knew they were bringing destruction upon themselves. They were caught in a trap of evil and were helpless. Isaiah was willing to be God's messenger because he loved God and he loved God's people. His office as a prophet was to help bring them close together.

#### FOR YOU TO DO

**2** Circle the letter of each correct completion for this incomplete sentence: Isaiah was willing to become a messenger for God because he

- a) loved God and wanted to please Him.
- b) wanted. to warn the people that sin would cause judgment to come upon them.
- c) knew that God loved the people and wanted them to be saved from judgment.

d) knew that the religious acts of the people would not save them.

**3** These are words from Isaiah's prophecies. You may wish to memorize them.

Woe to the obstinate children, declares the Lord  
...

children unwilling to listen to the Lord's instruction. . .

Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; He rises to show you compassion.

For the Lord is a God of justice.

Blessed are all who wait for Him!

In order to help people understand his warnings, the prophet told this story:

A man decided to plant a vineyard. He chose a fertile hillside. He dug it up, cleared it of stones, and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it, in order that he might guard it against anyone who would hurt the property or steal the fruit. He made preparations for the harvest and the use of the fruit which he expected to have. In other words, he gave every possible attention and care to his vineyard

What would he expect to receive as a result of this careful work? Of course, he expected a fine harvest of beautiful and delicious grapes. But imagine his disappointment when he took a bunch of the ripe fruit, bit into a juicy grape, and found it

sour and foul tasting! How could it be? What an empty, deprived feeling he had!

What do you think he would do? “I will take away the hedge from the vineyard,” said the man, “and it will be destroyed. I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it”

“This,” said Isaiah, “is an illustration of what has happened between God and His people.”

Isaiah went on to explain that the vineyard represents the people, planted and cared for by a loving God. He did everything possible to help them. He expected them to return love and obedience to Him, but instead they have been rebellious as children scorning their parents. What will God do about this? He sends a warning, Isaiah explained. This is what God says:

“Rebels and sinners will both be broken together, and those who forsake the Lord will perish.”

“You will be like an oak with fading leaves, like a garden without water. The mighty man will become tinder and his work a spark; both will burn together, with no one to quench the fire.”

God is grieved and disappointed, Isaiah continued, because the people failed in three ways:

1. They have acted in pride, depending upon their own ways and not upon God.

2. They have been greedy and selfish, taking all the good things for themselves and cheating the poor and helpless.

3. They have tried to make up for these evils by making animal sacrifices and doing rituals. They have not understood the meaning and purpose of sacrifice and prayer.

The warning voice of God came to Isaiah, saying, “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.”

#### For You To Do

**4** Fill in the blanks to complete the following quotations.

a” will both be broken together, and those who  
will perish.”

**b** “You will be like an oak with fading leaves,  
like a **C** These people . . . honor me with their  
lips, but

Like a good father, who must be firm and definite with His children, God spoke His words of warning and His prophet Isaiah proclaimed them to the people. But the heart of God is filled with compassion. “My unending love for you will not be shaken,” He declared. So we see that along with the words of warning came many words of promise.

The people are like grass, Isaiah explained as God led him, “All their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our Lord stands forever.”

The word of God to His people at this time was the promise that God would reveal Himself as the redeemer of His people. Mere sacrifices of animals could not save them. Religious ceremonies could not save them. God pointed out their sin and warned them of the judgment to come. Yes, the people were as weak as grass blowing in the wind, and their hearts were fearful.

Yet, God told Isaiah to say to them, “Be strong. Do not fear. Your Lord will come. He will come to save you!”

We can almost hear Isaiah’s voice, loud with joy as he presented the words of God: “Lift up your voice with a shout; lift it up, do not be afraid. Here is God! See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power!”

Isaiah explained that the nature of God is like a conquering sovereign, who will save His people from the forces of destruction. But at the same time, He is like a tender shepherd who tends His flocks with care. He lifts the needy ones in His arms to carry them close to His heart. God knows that people need a powerful One ruling over them. But they need love, too, and comfort for the hurts of life. They need to know God is personal and gentle. No person is hidden nor disregarded by God, and He never gets tired of helping us.

He said, “Those who hope in the Lord *will* renew their strength. They will soar on wings as eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

Hear from the book of Isaiah these wonderful promises, which God spoke through the prophet:

I will strengthen you and help you.

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

For I am the Lord God, who takes hold of your f~, I will help you.

Do not be afraid, for I myself will help you, declares the Lord, your Redeemer.

Fear not, for I have redeemed you.

I have called you by name; you are mine.

For You To Do

**5** Read again the promises of God given in **this** lesson. You should memorize them, for they **are** a great comfort when you have them in your heart. Find in the promises answers to these questions.

**a** What is promised to those who hope in God?

130 We Hear From The Prophet:

**b** What promises are given by God, so that His people should not be afraid??

THE REDEEMER AND THE INVITATION

One of the most important ideas found in the promises brought to us by Isaiah is that God is our *Redeemer*. This word is used many times in the writings of the prophet. It had a special meaning in the laws and customs of the time in which he lived.

According to those laws, when a person was unable to pay a debt or was in some serious trouble, a relative should be his *redeemer*. The redeemer was responsible to pay debts or penalties on behalf of his kinsman. For example, if a person were sold into slavery, then the redeemer should buy him out of bondage. If a person were forced, because of poverty, to sell his ancestral land, then his redeemer was supposed to purchase it back in order to keep it in the family. The redeemer was a person with close family ties and the person responsible for bringing release and deliverance.

When Isaiah spoke of God as the *Redeemer*, he meant that God will keep his promises to man and that <sup>4</sup> God is as closely tied to man as any family obligations could bind kinsmen together. Also, he meant that God is willing to pay any price in order to rescue His people from their debts of sin. He will pay the penalties they owe. He will deliver them out of bondage.

In order to make plain to mankind the need to be redeemed, God used the ceremony of animal sacrifice. As we have found in our lessons, sin must be punished by death. God in holiness and justice cannot allow sin. But, in love and mercy, He offered a plan of redemption. When His people repented of their sins and asked forgiveness, God

accepted an animal sacrifice as a sign that the debt was paid. Most often the animal was a lamb, perfectly formed and without blemish. It took the punishment, and the shedding of its blood was a symbolic cleansing from sin. When the animal took the place of the person in this symbolic way, the horror of sin was illustrated. The ceremony helped people to understand that they could not save themselves from sin. They needed a *redeemer*.

Then God began to teach His people, through the messages of the prophets, that the animal sacrifice was a temporary symbol. Remember how God Himself provided the sacrifice to redeem Abraham's son from the plunge of the knife? Surely it was a tremendous sacrifice! It was a beautiful picture of the truly great sacrifice that would be provided to redeem all of humanity. That perfect sacrifice, that Redeemer, would one day appear among men as a revelation of God to mankind.

Of course, God knew from the beginning of time that He would reveal Himself as the true Redeemer of His people. This is the good news which came through the lips of Isaiah. Isaiah did not understand the details of this awesome mystery, but he cried out faithfully the messages of promise and comfort, saying, "Burst into songs of joy together, for the Lord has comforted His people. He has redeemed them. And all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of God."

Isaiah prophesied that God would make the Redeemer known by sending another messenger.

This person would be the announcer, or conformer. He would be the voice of one calling in the desert, "Make straight the way of the Lord." He would prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of the Messiah.

### FOR YOU TO DO

Circle the letter of the best ending for each of the following statements:

**6** A person needs a redeemer when he **a** owes many debts.

**b** owes a debt he is unable to pay.

**7** A redeemer is one who

**a** excuses people from paying their debts.

**b** pays the debts which are owed by others. **8**

The purpose of an animal sacrifice is to

**a** illustrate redemption from sin.

**b** provide a religious ceremony.

God told Isaiah that He wanted all mankind to know that He, God, would provide redemption for His people. So He allowed the prophet to receive many words of description concerning the redeemer, his characteristics, and his actions.

Isaiah received revelations of a time when people who had walked in darkness would see a great light. That is, the mysteries of God's relationship with His people would be gradually cleared away. The plan and the will of God would begin to show forth as nature is seen in the rays of

the morning sun. The covenant which God made with Abraham, Moses, and David would be fulfilled in a glorious new way. The light of hope would come to a people waiting in the shadows of despair.

Isaiah saw that this new time of light would begin with the birth of a child to a virgin. The child was called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty, Everlasting, and Prince of Peace.

Isaiah saw, also, that this redeemer, who is known in some of the prophecies as the *Servant* would appear in very humble circumstances. He would not be presented as a grand king, but as a lowly child, and a rejected leader. Let us examine a few of the statements which Isaiah makes concerning Him.

He is despised and rejected by men. He is a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. He has no violence or deceit in Him. He is righteous, but He is willing to be sacrificed to pay for the sins of others. He becomes a guilt offering for us all. His suffering is for others.

He suffers for others, for all mankind; Isaiah says, for us. He suffers for us. Then the amazing truth comes through the words of the prophet. It is that the true Redeemer takes upon Himself the sins of us all. He is punished instead of us, paying the penalty of sin like a lamb for sacrifice.

Because the perfect and blameless One is willing to be sacrificed as a substitute for sinful mankind, peace can be restored between God and

man. He pays the price of humiliation on our behalf. Thus we are freely pardoned from the debt of sin. The judgment is carried out. We are free now! The mercy of God has made for us a way to find spiritual rest and security. The uncertainty and longing which we feel in our hearts can be turned into confidence and joy if we accept what He offers us.

### FOR YOU TO DO

**9** Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences. Isaiah's description of the Servant helps us to understand what we can expect from Him. For example, we can expect to receive guidance, because He is called Wonderful Counselor.

**a** We can expect to receive power, because He is called

**b** We can expect Him to understand our grief, because He is called

**c** We can expect Him to save us from sin, because He was willing to

After he had described the true Redeemer and helped people to understand the deliverance which could be expected from Him, Isaiah then cried out to the people in a great invitation. "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters." He explained to them that it was their responsibility to accept personally the salvation which was offered.

He used an illustration, saying just as thirsty people go to take water, and hungry people buy bread, so must we be active in seeking and

receiving what we need from God. We know that the body needs water and food, but deep inside us there is another thirst, another hunger.

Isaiah said:

Seek the Lord while He may be found;  
call on Him while He is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way  
and the evil man his thoughts.

Let him turn to the Lord, and He will  
have mercy on him, and to our God,  
for He will freely pardon.

And, after the great invitation, the prophet adds  
another beautiful promise

You will go out in joy

And be led forth in peace.

### CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

**9 a** Mighty.

**b** man of sorrows.

**C** e sacrificed for us.

**I a** God.

**b** holiness.

**C** Sin.

**d** messenger.

**e** judgment.

**f** redeemer.

**8 a)** illustrate redemption from sin.

**2** All are correct.

**7 )** says the debts which are owed by others.

**3** Repeat the words of Isaiah if you chose to memorize them.

**6 b)** owes a debt he is unable to pay.

**4 a** Rebels and sinners forsake the Lord. **b** garden without water.

**C** their hearts are far from me.

**5 a** They will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings.

They will run and not grow weary.

They will walk and not be faint **b** I will help you.

I have redeemed you.

I have called you by name.

You are mine.

## LESSON TEST

As you prepare to take the lesson test, please locate the *STUDENT REPORT ANSWER SHEET* in the back of your study guide for Lesson 6. Be sure to record your answers for multiple choice and true-false items in the spaces provided for them.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

If your answer to each of the following questions is

YES, blacken space A. NO, blacken space B.

1 Have you carefully read Lesson 6?

2 Have you completed all the *For You to Do* sections in this lesson?

3 Have you checked the answers you gave in the *For You to Do* sections with those at the end of the lesson?

4 Have you reviewed the lesson objectives to see if you are able to do what they suggest?

5 Have you reviewed the material before taking this lesson test?

#### MULTIPLE CHOICE

6 Isaiah's vision of the Lord Almighty demonstrated the

- a) power of God and weakness of man.
- b) holiness of God and impurity of man.
- c) justice of God and injustice of man.

7 The parable of the vineyard shows that God expects people to

- a) return love and obedience to Him for His provisions.
- b) earn the right to be His children by doing good.
- c) show some kind of response for His care.

**8** People, who are weak before the temptations of evil, need a revelation of God's

- a) mercy, which emphasizes His tenderness.
- b) sovereignty, which saves from destruction.
- c) justice, which surely punishes sin.

**9** While God in holiness and justice cannot permit sin, in love He made a way for the repentant sinner to obtain forgiveness by

- a) requiring repeated performance of ritual worship.
- b) accepting an animal sacrifice as a sign that the debt was paid.
- c) the payment of an appropriate penalty.

**10** Through the prophets God revealed that animal sacrifice was

- a) an accommodation for man's incurable sin problem.
- b) the ultimate sacrifice for sin.
- c) just a temporary symbol of the coming perfect sacrifice.

#### TRUE OR FALSE

**11** Isaiah, who was one of the greatest prophets, appealed to a broad section of people because he came from a very humble family.

**12** Isaiah's vision of the Lord affected him greatly for he saw the holiness of God contrasted

with the corruption of man, which called for certain judgment.

**13** The message of judgment which Isaiah proclaimed revealed the nature of God as a father whose goal is the punishment of his erring children.

**14** Animal sacrifices were a temporary symbol pointing to a truly great sacrifice, the Redeemer, who would appear among men and rescue all mankind from the clutches of sin.

#### FILL IN

**15** To warn His people of coming judgment, God needed a

**16** The redemption of God is available, Isaiah says, for those who will accept the

**17** Isaiah knew that the religious acts of people would not them.

**18** The purpose of animal sacrifice was to illustrate from sin.

**19** Isaiah prophesied that the light of hope would rise to replace the darkness of despair with the coming of the Redeemer, who would be born of a

**20** Because of the Servant's willing sacrifice, peace can be restored between and man.