

**Conversations on
Isaiah 6:1–8**

Discuss this passage in light of the commentary below.

Idea! Watch together the scene from *Evan Almighty* (2007; PG) when God and Evan first meet. Discuss: How is Evan's response similar to Isaiah's response to God's call?

WHAT is important to know?

Jerusalem's royal temple is imagined as the earthly representation of YHWH's heavenly throne. Because the temple is the axial point at which heaven and earth come together, Isaiah can see from this location into the throne room above. Isaiah is surrounded by the smoke from burning sacrifices and incense, and by the noise from the festive throng of worshipers. The mythic imagery of the heavenly council is the antecedent of Trinitarian thinking: Christians are reminded that such a notion of God points to a mysterious divine-human encounter with sociopolitical consequences. (*Michael H. Floyd*)

- ✪ What is easy to understand or challenging to understand in this Scripture passage?
- ✪ What elements of worship do you see in this Scripture passage?
- ✪ How does the worship in your congregation reflect "a mysterious divine-human encounter with sociopolitical consequences"?

WHERE is God in these words?

From early times, Isaiah 6:1–8 has been viewed as pointing to what became the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Taken with other biblical passages (especially from the New Testament) it anticipates what the early church gradually came to understand as the Trinity. The vision and call of Isaiah is one illustration of the way the triune God has been at work in history, as attested by the Scriptures. The Isaiah passage is a witness, pointing to the triune God's revelatory actions in calling Isaiah, and in the biblical story of salvation. (*Donald K. McKim*)

- ✪ It has been said that the purpose of worship is to participate in God's own life. Is this the way you normally think about worship? Does this sound like an attractive description of worship? Why or why not?
- ✪ What is the relationship between loving God with our hearts and with our minds? How is worship an activity of both the heart and mind?

- ✪ How does the Isaiah passage point to the triune God that we know as the Trinity?

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

Isaiah's vision accentuates at least three characteristics of God's relationship with us: God encounters us in our historical context, God's word is revealed in our worship, and God calls us to serve. We should not be afraid to name the sins of our time, just as Isaiah did. Think of the image of the seraph cleansing Isaiah's lips with a live coal. That is how vibrant and powerful God's forgiveness is, drawing us into service and drawing our attention to the needs of the world beyond our own. (*Kristin Emery Saldine*)

- ✪ In what historical context does God encounter your congregation?
- ✪ How is God's word revealed in your congregation's worship?
- ✪ To where might God be "drawing [your] attention to the needs of the world beyond [your] own"?

NOW WHAT is God's word calling us to do?

The faithful frequently wonder about vocation. How does God call the believer? How does one listen for the call of God, and how do we know if what we hear is the voice of God? The Isaiah account invites the congregation to hear and see how God calls the believer: from an awareness of the mysterious and frightening presence of God, to conviction and confession of sin, to reception of forgiveness, and finally to surrender to God's direction. The verses that follow (vv. 9–13) get Isaiah into a mess of trouble. Rather than a call to a settled ministry, God summons Isaiah to prophetic engagement with faithless Israel. (*G. Lee Ramsey Jr.*)

- ✪ For Isaiah, worship leads to the call to serve. How do you hear that call in your congregation's worship?
- ✪ How does the story of Isaiah's call lead you to ponder your vocation or call and how you worship God?

Holy and Amazing God, thank you for the privilege of and responsibility to worship. Amen.