PANTEGO Studies for families in Belonging, Becoming, and going Beyond March 24, 2013 Volume 15 Number 12

#### HOW CHURCH WORKS

"HOW TO BOW" ISAIAH 6:1-8

#### This Week's Core Competency

**Worship** – I worship God for who he is and what he has done for me. Ps 95:1-7

- 1 Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
- 2 Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.
- 3 For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.
- 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him.
- 5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.
- 6 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;
- 7 for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture,

the flock under his care.

It's one thing to know about someone or something; it's quite another to *encounter* that person or thing. I knew about the Lincoln Memorial long before visiting Washington, D.C. I knew more or less where it was located and exactly what it looked like. I had seen many pictures of it and its surroundings. I even knew some interesting facts about it. I heard from someone that it was dedicated on Memorial Day

Holiness is the Lord's hidden glory: glory is the Lord's omnipresent holiness. – J. Alex Motyer in 1922 some 57 years after President Lincoln died. I read somewhere that the building is approximately 200 feet long and nearly 100 feet high with columns just under 50 feet tall. And I ran across this description of the statue of Lincoln on the web:

Daniel Chester French, the leading American sculptor of the day, created the famous statue of Lincoln which dominates the interior. The memorial plans originally specified a 12-foot bronze statue, but it proved out of scale for the huge building. The finished statue is 19 feet tall, carved of 28 blocks of white Georgia marble. French later had special lighting installed to enhance the figure. Visitors sometimes ask if the hands have special significance (such as forming the letter "A" in sign language), but there is no indication French intended it.

None of that information, however, prepared me for the *experience* of standing in the memorial in front of the statue of President Lincoln. Walking up the steps to the memorial was a rush. The building is indescribably beautiful. As I approached, up one stair and then the next, it loomed larger and I shrank smaller until I felt like I had been engulfed by its enormity. Standing below Lincoln's statue was unforgettable. I stood quietly for the longest time staring up at it intently; thoughts of slavery, the Civil War, emancipation, and what might have been had it not been for Lincoln all crossed my mind. Needless to say, my vision of Lincoln left a lasting impression on me.

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It's one thing to know about the Lord; it's quite another to encounter him face to face. Just ask Isaiah. He had just such an encounter, and it changed him forever. One glimpse of the Lord high and exalted, seated on a throne, left him with an overwhelming sense of God's absolute holiness and his profound uncleanness. Despair filled his soul and rattled his core. He thought he was doomed, but he quickly learned that the thrice-holy Lord is gracious and forgiving. In his moment of despair, the Lord sent a seraph to Isaiah to tell him that he had taken away his guilt and had atoned for his sin.

I can never experience firsthand what the prophet experienced. However, as I read Isaiah's words, I can experience vicariously what he experienced, and in doing so I am inspired to worship God for who he is and what he has done for me–and am again reminded of the power of scripture to transform me.

#### For Discussion

day

Isaiah 6:1-8

You have not seen Isaiah's vision; nevertheless, you have a vision of the Lord. Talk about how you see him and how your vision compares with his.

# **ENCOUNTER** – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "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 King, the LORD Almighty."

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"

And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (NIV(c)2011)

#### Cf. another translation

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. He

was sitting on his throne, high and exalted, and his robe filled the whole Temple. 2 Around him flaming creatures were standing, each of which had six wings. Each creature covered its face with two wings, and its body with two, and used the other two for flying. 3 They were calling out to each other:

"Holy, holy, holy!

The LORD Almighty is holy!

His glory fills the world."

4 The sound of their voices made the foundation of the Temple shake, and the Temple itself became filled with smoke.

5 I said, "There is no hope for me! I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is sinful, and I live among a people whose every word is sinful. And yet, with my own eyes I have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

6 Then one of the creatures flew down to me, carrying a burning coal that he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. 7 He touched my lips with the burning coal and said, "This has touched your lips, and now your guilt is gone, and your sins are forgiven."

8 Then I heard the Lord say, "Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?"

I answered, "I will go! Send me!" (GNT)

### **EXAMINE** – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

\* Circle "the year" in v. 1.

- \* Underline "high and exalted" in v. 1.
- \* Highlight "Lord" in vv. 1, 8 with one color.
- \* Circle "seraphim" in vv. 2, 6.
- \* Bracket "holy, holy, holy" in v. 3.
- \* Highlight "LORD Almighty" in vv. 3, 5 with another color.
- \* Circle "glory" in v. 3.
- \* Circle "ruined" in v. 5.
- \* Box "for" indicating reason in v. 5.
- \* Circle "unclean" in v. 5.
- \* Bracket "your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for" in v. 7.
- \* Circle "us" in v. 8.

# **EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better day **2** understand what the passage means. Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help. 1. What do you learn about Uzziah (Azariah) from 2 Kings 15:1-7 and 2 Chronicles 26:1-23? 2. What do you infer about the Lord from the description of him in verse 1? 3. What do you infer about the Lord from the posture of the seraphim attending him? 4. Describe the song of the seraphim. 5. Explain the difference between "holy" and "glory" in verse 3. 6. "Woe" is an example of onomatopoeia, a word that sounds like what it means-like "hiccup." How so? 7. If Isaiah has "unclean lips," why doesn't he simply wipe his mouth? 8. Isaiah thinks he is doomed, but no! Who takes away his guilt and atones for his sin? 9. What could the people of Judah have learned from Isaiah's experience? 10. Discussion: Contrast how Isaiah sees himself in verse 5 with how he sees himself in verse 8.

# day **B EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

The commissioning of the prophet Isaiah found in Isaiah 6:1-13 raises a number of important questions that have sparked debates among interpreters (see John A. Martin, "Isaiah," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament, 1043, 44), one of which relates directly to the message of the passage. Why is it not found in chapter 1 where readers would expect to find it? After all, as one writer observes, "The topic of this chapter is the call of Isaiah, and for this reason alone it would be a fitting 'chapter 1' following the 'author's preface'" (J. Alex Motyer, Isaiah, TOTC, 68). There are two obvious answers to this question: 1) Isaiah ministered for a period of time before being commissioned, and 2) the chapter is out of order *chronologically* but in order *rhetorically*. Of the two, the second is more likely. I agree with the following commentator who writes: "I believe the first six chapters of the book are not in chronological order of their writing. Rather, they have been placed in this order so that Isaiah can make a theological point: If the 'people of unclean lips' (6:5) can have the same experience that he, the 'man of unclean lips' had, then the dilemma Isaiah sees in Israel, and which he expresses in chapter 1-5, can be solved. That dilemma is: How can the present corrupt, rebellious Israel (as expressed in Judah), defying God's instruction, ever become the promised clean, obedient Israel from whom all the nations will learn that instruction? By placing his call narrative in the unusual place where it is, Isaiah is holding it up as a model. Just as he was enabled to bear God's message to his people, so, by the same process, Israel will be enabled to bear God's message to the world" (John N. Oswalt, The NIV Application Commentary: Isaiah, 125). In other words, the thrice-holy LORD Almighty who took away the prophet's guilt and atoned for his sin is the only one who can do the same for the people of Judah-and us for that matter.

Isaiah 6:1-13 can be divided into two parts. The first part (vv. 1-8), which is the subject of this study, contains Isaiah's vision of the Lord (vv. 1-4), his cleansing by the Lord (vv. 5-7), and his presentation to the Lord (v. 8). The second part contains Isaiah's commission from the Lord. The image of the Lord conveyed by Isaiah's vision is captured in three words: *transcendence*, *majesty*, and *holiness*. He is "high and exalted." The Lord is above all that he has

created, and all that he has created lifts him up to extol his glory. He is "the king" (v. 6) seated on a throne, draped in regal regalia, the commander and chief of heaven's armies, surrounded by countless (v.4) awesome attendants eager to do his bidding. He is thrice holy. The Lord is the *one and only God* set apart by his deity from all that is common. He is unique in an absolute sense, the only being who is truly *other than this world*. He alone is the "wholly other" One. Commenting on the seraphs' antiphonal song, one perceptive writer concludes, "Holiness is the Lord's hidden glory: glory is the Lord's omnipresent holiness" (Motyer, 71).

Face to face with the thrice-holy Lord, the desperate, derelict, soon-to-be prophet wrongly concludes that his life is over, "Woe to me!" he wails. "I am doomed because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips" (v. 5). In fact, his doom was due to more than his literal "lips." Here we have an example of a figure of speech that refers to one part of something to refer to the whole thing. What he means, of course, is "I am an unclean or sinful man, and I live among an unclean or sinful people." Had he used "heart" instead of "lips" the meaning of the *metonymy* would have been immediately obvious. So why did he use "lips"? Perhaps because they reflect what is in the heart (cf., Mt 15:18; Jas 3:9-12). Isaiah's individual problem was Judah's national problem, which is humanity's shared problem.

Isaiah wrongly anticipates his doom because he wrongly diminishes God's grace. "Isaiah sees his situation as being so hopeless that he does not even bother to ask for cleansing or deliverance. But here he underestimates the grace of God. God has not given him this vision in order to annihilate him, and he does not being the fire in order to destroy the offending lips. Rather, as would be true for the nation, he brings these terrifying things into the prophet's life in order that, having seen the truth of God and of himself and having received the gracious provision of cleansing fire, he might be delivered into his true vocation" (127). After touching Isaiah's offending "lips" with a live coal off the altar, the seraph, who must have been sent by the Lord, declares in no uncertain terms, "See" ("Behold" NASB), the Lord has taken away your guilt and

atoned for your sin.

Isaiah's cleansing immediately transforms his life. Before he was cleansed, he was unfit and, from every indication, unwilling to serve the Lord. However, everything changed when the seraph touched him. After he was cleansed, he was ready, willing, and able to be the Lord's messenger. "The process of becoming a servant of God begins in our recognition of the hopelessness of our situation. It continues in an adequate recognition of the character and nature of God. That will necessarily result in a shattering recognition of the impossible gulf between us and God–the gulf of our sinfulness. But that makes it possible to recognize and receive the incredible and undeserved grace of God that cleanses us. Then at long last we are ready to get a glimpse of the heart of God and to offer ourselves to him in service" (129).

The Message of the Passage The sovereign Lord is the only one who can cleanse you from your sin and transform you into his willing servant.



Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

#### • Journal your thoughts on the passage:

-Write about what God wants you to know . . .

-Write about how God wants you to feel . . .

-Write about what God wants you to do . . .

"How to Bow" (Use the space below for Sunday's message notes)

## **notes N study** – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 **the year** Uzziah, a.k.a. Azariah (2Ki 15:1-3; cf., 2Ch 26:1-3), who "did what was right in the eyes of the LORD" (2Ki 15:3; 2Chr 26:4), died c. 740 B.C. after reigning over Judah for 52 years (792-740) (dates for the Hebrew kings may vary between 1 and 10 years depending on the source consulted; see John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*, revised and expanded, 30). Isaiah probably received his commission before the king died (1:1). "By this time the Assyrian emperor Tiglath-Pileser III has clearly established himself as a military conqueror to be feared. But it seems likely that for Judah, as long as the powerful Uzziah was on the throne (even with his son Jotham acting as the front man), the immediacy of the threat was blurred. But when Uzziah was removed from the scene, the danger could no longer be ignored. Jotham was not strong man, and possibly Jotham's son Ahaz was already under the control of a pro-Assyrian party in the government. What could possibly be done? Isaiah's vision, at least for him, was a reorienting of his moral compass. The king was dead? Who is the king in this world anyway? 'My eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty!' (6:5)" (Oswalt, 126).

v. 1 *the Lord* "The sight of the throne emphasizes that God is the ruler and that he is in sovereign control. That is further emphasized by the word *Lord* (*Adonai*) which means the 'sovereign Master.' It is used again in verse 8 and 11. A different word–the name *Yahweh*–is used in verses 3, 5, and 12" (Alfred Martin and John Martin, *Isaiah*, 46).

v. 1 *throne* "God is both king and judge. He is ready to exercise His kingly prerogative of pronouncing judgment upon the people in whose midst he had appeared" (Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 1:237, 38).
v. 1 *high and exalted* "The reference here also is best taken as (not to the throne but) to the Lord, high in his own nature, and exalted or 'lifted up' by the acknowledgment of his supremacy" (Motyer, 71).

v. 2 *seraphim* "Seraphs, literally 'Burning Ones', are mentioned only here. Fire is the chief symbol of the holiness of God (Ex. 3:2-5; 19:18). Suitably, therefore, in this context Isaiah gives the heavenly attendants a title that matches their situation: with their down-folded and up-stretched wings they look like huge flames surrounding the throne of the Holy One. *Covered* . . . *covered*, like *were flying*, are verbs of continuous action. The wings covered their eyes (for even they must not pry into the divine, cf. Ex. 19:21) but not their ears (for their role is to wait for the divine word and obey it, Ps. 103:20). Their feet are the organs of activity, of directing life towards goals (Ps. 18:33; Pr. 1:15-16; 4:27). It is impossible to be sure, but perhaps they covered their feet to disavow choosing their own path" (Motyer, 70).

v. 3 *calling to* Theirs "was a continuous and unbroken antiphonal song. One set commenced, and the others responded, either repeating the 'Holy, holy, loly,' or following with 'filling the whole earth is His glory'" (F. Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, vol. 7, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes* by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, 192).

v. 3 *holy, holy, holy* "Hebrew uses repetition to express either a superlative, as when 'pure gold' in 2 Kings 25:15 translates 'gold gold' or a totality, as when 'full of tar pits' in Genesis 14:10 translates 'pits pits'. But here for the only time in the Hebrew Bible a quality is 'raised to the power of three', as if to say that the divine holiness is so far beyond anything the human mind can grasp that a 'super-superlative' has to be invented to express it and, furthermore, that this transcendent holiness is the total truth about God." The holiness word-group may mean 'brightness', the unapproachable God (1 Tim 6:16; Ps. 104:2) or 'separatedness', i.e. the quality which marks off the divine nature, setting God apart from all else, making him the Being that he is" (71).

v. 3 *LORD Almighty* Cf., "Yahweh Sabaoth" (NJB); "LORD of Hosts" (NRSV, NKJV, ESV); "LORD of Heaven's Armies" (NLT); "the LORD who commands armies" (NET). "The title 'the LORD Almighty' is a favorite of Isaiah's as well as several of the other prophets. Literally it is 'the LORD of Armed Hosts' and denotes Yahweh as the leader of a mighty heavenly army. Thus it speaks of God's incomparable power (see 2 Kings 6:17)" (Oswalt, 126).

v. 3 *glory* The LORD's holiness and glory are related. God's invisible holiness, i.e., "his eternal power and divine nature" (Ro 1:20), is made visible in the glory of creation. "God's glory is his manifested holiness" (Delitzsch, 192).

v. 5 **ruined** "In one word, *nidmeyti*, Isaiah expressed his thought: I have been made to cease, I am cut off, undone, doomed to die" (Young, 247); cf., "It's all over! I am doomed" (NLT); "There is no hope for me! I am doomed" (GNT); "Too bad for me! I am destroyed" (NET).

v. 5 *unclean lips* Cf., "for I am a sinful man" (NLT). "The technical literary device used here is metonymy, where the name of one part is used to designate the whole" (Oswalt, 127). Perhaps he refers to his lips in preparation for the personal cleansing that must precede his prophetic commissioning.

v. 6 *live coal* "The live coal thus encapsulates the ideas of atonement, propitiation, satisfaction, forgivingness, cleansing and reconciliation, and of these spiritual realities Isaiah, the erstwhile doomed sinner, is left in no doubt when the seraph explains: 'Behold, as soon as this touched your lips your iniquity went, and, as for your sin-paid by ransom!'" (Motyer, 72).

v. 7 *taken, atoned* Examples of *divine passives* that imply the Lord's action.

v. 8 **us** Some see in the plural pronoun an allusion to the Trinity, some an allusion to God's majesty, some an allusion to the seraphs and perhaps the rest of the heavenly assembly.



Connect the **FAMILY**. Kids Kindergarten

thru 6th grade receive Kid Pix tokens for discipleship activities completed during the week.

#### **Family Talk**

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Next Sunday in PantegoKids, your child will be hearing the story of some of the events that took place in Jesus' life the week before His resurrection. We will be focusing on the triumphal entry in Matthew 21:1-11. We will cover key events ending with the last Passover meal He celebrated with His disciples. It is important for kids to have a chronological perspective of what happened during that week. We will not be focusing on the crucifixion this week or next. Right now it is enough to know that Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. His death and resurrection made a way for us to have a relationship with God and that is good news indeed! The weeks surrounding Easter are a likely time when your child may have questions about Jesus' death and resurrection. It is exciting to see them beginning to grasp the concept of God's great love for us. There is a great resource available from Focus on the Family that will help walk you through talking to your child about this important and life-changing topic. You can view it at:

http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/holidays/celebrating\_the\_easter\_season/do\_your\_children\_understand\_easter.aspx Note: We will have full children's programming on Easter Sunday. We are looking forward to celebrating our Risen Savior with your child in a fun and age appropriate service!

#### What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Matthew 21:1-11

 What instructions did Jesus give His disciples?
 What was the reaction of the people when Jesus came into town?
 Fill in the blank. Verse 10 -When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was \_\_\_\_\_ and asked, "Who is this?"

#### What Do You Think

1. What do you think it means to be "stirred"?

2. Why do you think so many people came out to see Jesus?

#### What R U Going To Do

This was a moment of great celebration for the city of Jerusalem. Jesus had arrived. Make party hats for your family to wear one night at dinner this week. When they ask what the celebration is about - tell them Jesus is alive!!

#### **MEMORY TIME**

Core Comp

Worship – I celebrate God for who he is and what he has done for me.

Memory Verse

Matthew 28:6 - "He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay."

I memorized CC _	KIDPIX COUPON         and Verse Family completed Say Think Do	
Child's name	Grade Parent's signature	
Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page. Questions: Kids@pantego.org		

# **30** CORE COMPETENCIES

### **10 CORE BELIEFS**

**Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14* I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

**Personal God** *Psalm 121:1-2* I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

**Identity in Christ** *John* 1:12 I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

**Church** *Ephesians* 4:15-16 I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

**Humanity** *John* 3:16 I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**Compassion** *Psalm* 82:3-4 I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

**Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19* I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

### **10 CORE PRACTICES**

Worship *Psalm 95:1-7*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.
Prayer *Psalm 66:16-20*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.
Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

**Single-mindedness** *Matthew* 6:33 I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

**Spiritual Gifts** *Romans* 12:4-6 I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes. Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world. **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians* 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians* 6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

**Giving Away My Life** *Romans* 12:1 I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

#### **10 CORE VIRTUES** Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

**Peace** Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

**Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4* I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

**Self-Control** *Titus* 2:11-13 I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

**Humility** *Philippians* 2:3, 4 I choose to esteem others above myself.

**Love** *1 John 4:10-12* I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

**Patience** *Proverbs* 14:29 I take a long time to overheat and

endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

**Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15* I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

**Gentleness** *Philippians* 4:5 I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

#### About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.