

## THE TRAUMA OF HOLINESS (Isaiah 6:5-8)

- I. The Holiness of God Is Traumatic to Unholy People
  - A. Calvin noticed a pattern in Scripture of human responses to the presence of God
    - 1. The more a person is described as righteous, the more he trembles when he enters the immediate presence of God
    - 2. We see this, for example, in the experiences of Habakkuk and Job
  - B. Isaiah's response to the vision of God's holiness
    - 1. Isaiah was a man of extraordinary righteousness
    - 2. Isaiah responded to the vision by crying out in terror, "Woe is me, for I am undone"
- II. The Oracle of Doom—"Woe Is Me"
  - A. The concept of the oracle
    - 1. Even as the priest's task is to speak to God on behalf of the people, the task of the prophet was to speak to the people on behalf of God
    - 2. The oracle was a summation of God's message to the people
  - B. The two forms of an oracle
    - 1. The *oracle of weal* was an announcement of divine favor
      - a. The formula is "Blessed..."
      - b. Examples are the Beatitudes from Matthew 5
    - 2. The *oracle of doom* was a pronouncing of judgment
      - a. The formula is "Woe..."
      - b. An example is "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees..." (Mt. 23:13)
- III. The Object of the Oracle of Doom
  - A. Isaiah pronounces judgment upon himself
    - 1. When he finds out who God is, he sees more clearly who he is
    - 2. He describes his condition as being *undone*
      - a. He experiences *disintegration* when he sees God
      - b. All illusions of righteousness vanish in the presence of holiness
      - c. We will be judged by the standard of God's perfection
  - B. Isaiah is acutely aware of his dirty mouth
- IV. God's Response to Isaiah's Reaction
  - A. A hot coal is placed on Isaiah's lips
    - 1. In this painful process, God cauterized the wound and healed him
    - 2. His guilt was removed and his sin forgiven
  - B. This is based upon Isaiah's repentance
    - 1. True repentance is always a painful process
    - 2. Our only justification as servants of God is our experience of the

forgiveness of God