

STRENGTHENING YOUR GRIP

HOW TO BE GROUNDED IN A CHAOTIC WORLD

STUDY ELEVEN

Strengthening Your Grip on Missions

Isaiah 6:1–12

God asked Isaiah, “Whom shall I send?” Certainly, God could send angels to cover this earth with His message, but that wasn’t His plan. Isaiah replied, “Here am I. Send me.”

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

Most people’s lifestyles resemble a ride on a merry-go-round. Round and round, they spin through their daily routine. Their lives are busy but predictable. The same job. The same people. The same scenery. Then comes an unexpected phone call or an abrupt setback that knocks them off balance. An unsettling, God-ordained disruption brings their world to a standstill.

At first, they resist the invisible, interfering hand. The wrenching experience brings tears and questions . . . but then, in the stillness, they sense God’s presence. God opens their eyes to see a world beyond the familiar, a world they didn’t know existed.

Isaiah experienced God’s life-altering disruption when his merry-go-round routine came to a sudden halt, and he heard God’s call to leave the familiar and become His messenger. In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we’ll look at a remarkable divine interference in the life of this prophet who lived twenty-seven centuries ago and glean some principles for a stronger grip on missions.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Let the psalmist’s prayer guide your study:

*Give me understanding and I will obey your instructions;
I will put them into practice with all my heart. (Psalm 119:34)*



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Express in your own words the same earnest desire to know and obey God's Word.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Isaiah grew up during Judah's golden age when Uzziah was king. Faithfulness to God, along with prosperity, expansion, and a strong military, marked Uzziah's reign. But then, full of pride, Uzziah barged into the temple to burn incense—a sacred duty reserved for priests, and God struck him with leprosy. Uzziah remained a leper until he died around 740 BC (*2 Chronicles 26:16–19*).

Uzziah's death sent shockwaves through the vulnerable nation. With Assyria growing in power like a sleeping giant, the people feared a threatening invasion. Who would guide Judah's future now? Who would protect them?

The passing of Uzziah must have also shaken Isaiah to the core. They may have been related or personal friends.¹ At a time of grief, fear, and confusion over the loss of a king, the prophet Isaiah encountered Israel's true King in a vision.



Observation: Isaiah's Call

The all-important first step of *observation* focuses on finding what the passage says.² Dive into the biblical text as if you were reading it for the first time. Thoughtfully and even aloud, read *Isaiah 6:1–12* to get an overview of the passage. Place yourself in the temple sitting alongside young Isaiah and try to imagine what he saw. Let's examine the passage in five phases.

God Used Isaiah's Circumstances—Isaiah 6:1

It was no coincidence that Isaiah saw the Lord “in the year King Uzziah died” (Isaiah 6:1). What emotions do you think the king's death aroused in Isaiah?

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What contrast do you observe between the two kings and the two thrones—between the human king Uzziah and the King of Kings? How does Isaiah describe God on His throne?

God Revealed His Character—Isaiah 6:2–7

What did Isaiah hear, see, smell, and feel during his vision in *Isaiah 6:2–4*? What were God's essential attributes that the angels declared in their praise?

How did Isaiah respond when confronted with God's holiness in *Isaiah 6:5–7*? What was God's intervention?

God Gave Isaiah Hope—Isaiah 6:8a

The plan of God for Isaiah went beyond cleansing him. What does *Isaiah 6:8a* reveal about God's desire to use Isaiah? How would you describe the Lord's heart for the lost?

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God Expanded Isaiah's Vision—Isaiah 6:8b

God is sovereign, but He does not force us into missions out of blind obligation or religious duty. What do you notice about the question God asked in [Isaiah 6:8](#) and Isaiah's response? How had Isaiah's viewpoint changed from his initial grief and trepidation?

God Told Isaiah the Truth—Isaiah 6:9–12

Isaiah's vision of God gave Isaiah a vision for his life. He saw himself and his purpose in a whole new light . . . however, the path ahead would not be easy. Consider Isaiah's assignment in [Isaiah 6:9–12](#). How would you describe it in a sentence or two?

God used the unsettling times in Isaiah's life to turn his attention to His majestic throne, holy character, and eternal rule. At the sight of God's holiness, Isaiah recognized his flaws, received cleansing, and heard God's call. What does this ancient vision mean?



Interpretation: God's Calling Explained

Interpretation helps us discover the meaning of Scripture as the original readers would have understood it. Isaiah saw the Lord in heaven during a time of national insecurity and personal grief on earth. The earthly throne may have been empty, but not the heavenly throne. The King of Kings still reigned supreme.

Find the definition of the word [sovereignty](#) in the *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*. Write the significance of this vision in Isaiah's present situation.

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You will never fully understand what we call “the call of God” until you see Him high and lifted up, until you see Him filling your circumstances, until you read Him in all of the empty places. Then you’ll say, “I understand.”
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

According to [Isaiah 6:2–4](#), seraphim attended the Lord on either side of His throne, causing the foundation of the temple to tremble with their antiphonal chorus. Explore the term [holy](#) in the same dictionary. How would you summarize the meaning of “God is holy”?

Read Isaiah’s response to God’s holiness in [Isaiah 6:5](#) in the NET and the Living Bible translations. Write a phrase that encapsulates Isaiah’s reaction.

I’ve never seen a missionary with a halo. I’ve never met one with an aura about him or her. I find human people there, broken people, at times confused, sometimes doubting, occasionally downright disobedient.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Lord did not abandon Isaiah in his sinfulness. Read about God’s action in [Isaiah 6:6–7](#) in the NET and NASB translations. Explain the significance of God’s purifying touch.

You think God can’t handle that thing you’re using to keep you from Him? He’s not running low on seraphs, you know. The fire hasn’t gone out on the altar.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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God's plan to reach the lost through us shows His unfathomable grace. Read [Isaiah 6:8–12](#) carefully again. How would you explain *missions* in your own words? Why must we focus on obedience rather than success?

The infinite and sovereign God chooses whom to send, when to send them, and where to send them to carry out His operation to rescue the world. The infinite God chooses to use finite beings to impact lives for eternity.



Correlation: God's Calling to Go

Correlation enables us to see the big picture—the many exhibits of God's calling. God called Moses to carry out the Israelites' rescue mission from Egypt ([Exodus 3:1–10](#)). He pulled him up from the desert of Midian, where he worked as a shepherd for forty years, and asked him to go stand before a world leader to demand he release his entire workforce. What an uncomfortable move! Moses felt overwhelmed and gave many excuses.

Hear Moses' protests and God's responses in [3:11–4:16](#). What do these verses emphasize about God's plan and His desire to use people? What can you learn about God's provision for the mission?

God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, on a mission to rescue the world from sin. See how Jesus spoke of His mission in [John 6:38](#). How would you describe His attitude?

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Before Jesus went back to His Father, He appeared to His disciples and spoke these words in [John 20:19–21](#). Compare them to [Matthew 28:16–20](#); [Acts 1:6–8](#); [8:1–4](#); and [Ephesians 6:19–20](#). How was the Great Commission carried out by the early Christians?

The Lord never expected His followers to fulfill their mission alone. What did Jesus emphasize in [John 15:1–5](#)? How important is abiding to obeying God's call?



Application: Responding to God's Call

As we abide in Christ, we see more clearly what Isaiah saw—God's holiness—and we find strength to go wherever He leads. Do you feel God calling you to take a specific action? Let's formulate what we studied into five principles we can apply.

God uses circumstances to make you aware of His presence. Have you experienced a God-ordained disruption in your life? What happened? How has it made you aware of God's presence?

God reveals His character to make you see your need. God's holiness revealed Isaiah's greatest need. What needs has God revealed in your heart?

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God gives you hope to make you realize you are useful. Isaiah never imagined himself being used by God until God called him. Could God be calling you? How might He use you?

God expands your vision to make you evaluate your availability. Having seen the exalted Lord, young Isaiah joined his voice with the angels' voices and boldly declared, "Here I am, send me!" Are you equally available for whatever the Lord calls you to do for Him? What would you like to express to Him?

God tells you the truth to make you focus on reality. The path won't be easy. What can you do to stay close to Him while you follow God's call?

You see, friend, the mission call is not, "Where can I go to be successful?" but "Lord, what do You want me to do?" —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



A FINAL PRAYER

Holy Father, thank You for sending Your Son into the world to demonstrate to us Your love. Thank You for speaking to my heart. I surrender all that I am to You. My answer is, "Here am I. Send me." Be glorified. In Jesus' name. Amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Herbert Lockyer, *All the Men of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), 157.
2. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2025 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 1981, 2025 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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