

THE CALL TO DIVINE SERVICE

– MAY 14. – ISAIAH 6. –

"Then said I, here am I; send me."

LET US study today Isaiah's vision. The temple at Jerusalem, otherwise called the House of Jehovah, was the scene of the vision. But instead of the holy and most holy, the mercy-seat, the altar, the table of shew-bread and the golden candlestick, everything was changed – a glorious Throne was there, and upon the Throne the Lord. On either side of him, as representing the Divine attributes, stood the four seraphim, while the entire temple was filled with his train of followers. The temple was full of glory-light and two of the seraphim cried, "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of Hosts." The two on the other side replied, "Let the whole earth be full of his glory." Following this response the door-posts were shaken and an obscuring haze filled the temple, dimming the glory.

LET THE WHOLE EARTH BE FULL OF THE LORD'S GLORY

The signification of this vision we draw from the words of Jesus. He refers us directly to this vision. (John 12:41.) In fulfilment of the Divine promise Jesus appeared at his first advent and tentatively offered himself to Israel as their great King of Glory, the great Mediator of the New Covenant, promised them by Jehovah. (Jer. 31:31.) God knew that Jesus would be rejected; nevertheless the offer was made. Had he been received and had he then taken to himself his Messianic glory and power it would have meant that a sufficient number of the Jewish nation had received him with their whole heart, so as to constitute the complete number of the Bride class, to be associates in the spiritual Kingdom. In that event there would have been no offer made to the Gentiles of joint-heirship with Messiah in his glorious Kingdom – Israel would have gotten the entire blessing. The Kingdom would have been established forthwith and the nation

of Israel, accepting Messiah, would at once have become the channel of Divine blessing to all nations.

But when the voice declared, Let the whole earth be full of the Lord's glory, the unreadiness of the world to receive the message was indicated by the shaking of the door-posts and the darkness beclouding the glorious scene. The fulfilment of this we see in the fact that the Jewish nation, which is the doorway to this glory, was not in proper condition. A new doorway must be provided through which the glories of the King of kings will issue forth to the world. St. Paul declares that the shaking of anything, in a typical sense, represents its instability, its removal – that something superior may be established in its stead. The Jewish nation was removed from its favored position and a new nation, a new doorway, a new channel of access between God and men has since been in process of establishment.

"YE ARE A HOLY NATION"

No other nation in the world was found more worthy than Israel of the honored position. Consequently, God proceeded to make a new nation composed exclusively of saints. As St. Peter explains, "Ye are a royal priesthood, a holy nation." (I Pet. 2:9.) First of all, the saintly Jews were taken, to be the nucleus of the new Nation, spirit-begotten, heavenly. Subsequently, the selective processes having continued throughout this Gospel Age, with its close the Holy Nation will be completed by the power of the First Resurrection. Then everything will be in proper readiness, and the command, Let the whole earth be filled with the glory of Jehovah God, will go forth and the world will be blessed – natural Israel being promised a prominent share in connection with this grand work.

In the vision Isaiah recognized that the shaking of the door-posts and the obscuring mist signified an unpreparedness somewhere for the glory of the Lord and he cried out, recognizing his own imperfection and the imperfection of those with whom he dwelt. A glimpse of the Lord's glory showed his own defects and those of his neighbors.

This was the effect of Jesus' teaching upon all those who received his message. The Law shone out more resplendently than ever and they found that they violated it more than they had supposed – not only in deeds, but also in words and thoughts. The holy ones, as represented in Isaiah, took the matter to heart and humbled themselves before the Lord and acknowledged that they were not fit to be the teachers of men, but that the whole Jewish nation and all others were imperfect, and that any message which their lips could carry would be imperfect.

As Isaiah's lips were touched with a live coal from the altar, it illustrated how the saintly ones of Israel and from all nations during this Gospel Age have had the required blessing upon their lips and have proclaimed the Divine invitation, "Present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God." (Rom. 12:1.) This message, enkindled by the live coal from God's altar of sacrifice, has gone hither and thither throughout the world for eighteen centuries. It has not only taught a cleansing from sin, but a service to God.

"HERE AM I; SEND ME"

Isaiah continued to be the type of the holy people. God has desired to send his message of grace and the invitation to sacrifice to all who would have the ear to hear. And the sanctified, whom Isaiah typified, have throughout this Age said, "Lord, here am I; send me."

Our lesson further shows that the message of this Isaiah class would be unpopular. Few would hear; few would see; few would receive the blessing of forgiveness and begetting of the holy Spirit. The Master and his Apostles began this proclamation. It has continued the same to this day.

But we are not in this to be discouraged. Only the "little flock," the pure in heart, the followers in the footsteps of Jesus, will get this blessing and be prepared to constitute the Kingdom class, the new doorway or threshold connecting the Divine Holy with the world of mankind.

Israel's experiences are used as the measuring line to show when the completion of the Church will be accomplished and the glory of the Lord shine forth upon Israel, and through Israel to all nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues, for a thousand years. That measuring line [R4788 : page 91] tells of the desolation of Israel's land, of its becoming utterly waste and of their removal from the land. The last verse of the lesson tells of how in the end there will come a sprout out of the roots – a holy Seed, a holy people, under Divine providence, will be raised up. These holy ones of Israel, on this side the veil, will be the Ancient Worthies, who will be resurrected and enter into their reward as the earthly representatives of Messiah's Kingdom. (Heb. 11:38-40; Psa. 148:11.) To these Princes will be gathered the faithful, loyal, holy of the Jews, the nucleus, the beginning of the earthly phase of the Messianic Kingdom.

