

## THE MAJOR PROPHETS

### *Isaiah 6*

What follows is some factual information concerning the four Major Prophets taken from an earlier New Church publication, *Our Heavenly Father's Book* by William B. Hayden.

*Isaiah* was the son of Amoz, and lived at Jerusalem, where he had his visions and wrote his prophecies, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. He is supposed to have been born about the thirtieth year of King Uzziah's reign, or about seven hundred and eighty years B.C., and to have survived until the early part of the reign of Manasseh, or to about B.C. six hundred and ninety-five . . . His ministry as a prophet extends over a period of about sixty years. At different portions of his career he was contemporary with the prophets (minor) Amos, Hosea, Joel, and Micah . . . The book is usually regarded in three grand divisions. 1, The prophecies contained in the first thirty-five chapters. 2, The historical account of King Hezekiah, in chapters xxxvi to xxxix. 3, The series of prophecies beginning with chapter xl and occupying the remainder of the book . . . On account of certain allusions in it [this third part] to historical events which happened later than the lifetime of Isaiah, some critics conjecture that this part must have been written and added afterwards by some other author, called by them the "unknown prophet." This however is contrary to the uniform testimony of ancient tradition. It is alleged that these allusions to events then future, were by prophetic prediction. All the references also to it in the New Testament speak of Isaiah as the author of this portion. But to know who the human writer was, is not very important for us.

*Jeremiah* was the son of Hilkiyah, a priest, and was born at Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin, about four miles north of Jerusalem, where his family had landed possessions . . . Unlike most of the other prophets, he gives us many particulars of his personal history. His youth was passed in his native town, where, while still quite a young man, he was called to the prophetic office, and where, apparently on account of his Divine call, he was subjected to bitter persecutions . . . His first appearance was about one hundred and thirty years after that of Isaiah, and some seventy or more after the latest of Isaiah's prophecies. He exercised his office for a period of about forty-one years in his native land, under five successive kings of Judah—Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah—and after that, late in life, he prophesied in Egypt.

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*Ezekiel* was carried into captivity with Jehoiachin and the chief of the people, in the eleventh year before the destruction of Jerusalem, B.C. 599, into Mesopotamia, where the captives formed a colony by the River Chaboras (Chebar), a branch of the Euphrates. He had a house at Tel-abib, and was married. In the fifth year of his exile he began to prophesy, B.C. 593, and continued in that office till at least the sixteenth year after the destruction of Jerusalem, or upwards of twenty-two years. He was highly esteemed by his companions in exile, and the elders of the people applied to him for counsel. How long he survived, is uncertain. There is reason to believe that he did not continue all his life at the original place of exile, but removed, towards the close of it, to his fellow-countrymen in the Province of Babylon, where he probably died a natural death. In the middle ages his tomb was still shown at Kefel, some distance from Bagdad, and visited by numbers of Jews and Christians . . . He was in part contemporary with Daniel.

*Daniel* belonged to the royal family of Judah, being one “of the king’s seed and of the princes” whom Nebuchadnezzar carried captive to Babylon the third year of King Jehoiachin, 604 B.C. . . . He was the only Hebrew prophet who attained great worldly prosperity. His great powers, spotless life, and peculiar gifts, won him the royal favor, which he retained under successive monarchs.

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### Doctrinal Points

*Humility before the Lord and willingness to serve Him at whatever cost to oneself are necessary if one is to draw genuine truth from the Word.*

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### Notes for Parents

In our Bible there are seventeen books, beginning with Isaiah and ending with Malachi, which we call the Prophets. We divide these into the Major and the Minor Prophets, not because some are more important than others, but because the books of the Major Prophets are much longer than the others. There are four Major Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Jeremiah also wrote the book which is called Lamentations.

Isaiah prophesied in the kingdom of Judah during the reigns of four kings, the greatest of whom was Hezekiah. Jeremiah also

prophesied in Judah, but later than Isaiah. He prophesied during the last years of that kingdom and also after Judah was taken captive by Babylon, although Jeremiah himself was not carried away to Babylon. In his old age, his people took him against his will to Egypt, where he wrote the book of Lamentations. Ezekiel and Daniel were carried away by the Babylonians before they became prophets, and they prophesied in exile.

The book of Isaiah contains many familiar and beautiful passages, especially prophecies of the Lord's Advent, and is referred to frequently in the New Testament. In the Greek of the New Testament [KJV] the Hebrew name *Isaiah* becomes *Esaias*.

Our special assignment for today is the story of Isaiah's call by the Lord. The words which the prophets spoke were not their own, but were dictated to them by the Lord, and our story shows us some of the qualities which must be found in a man if he is to become a true servant of the Lord. First he must recognize the Lord. It is easy to understand that the Lord cannot be represented in the world by an unbeliever. Then he must be humble and conscious of his own shortcomings. If we are full of self-satisfaction, we will not even listen to the Lord ourselves. And finally he must be willing to serve the Lord. We should all want to do the Lord's work in the world and should always be ready, when opportunity comes, to say as Isaiah did: "Here am I; send me."

The cleansing of Isaiah's lips by the live coal from the altar is a beautiful picture of what a touch of the Lord's unselfish love does for our lives. Just think how much of our wrongdoing and how much of our unhappiness can be directly traced to our own selfishness! It is when we are not thinking of ourselves at all, when we are eagerly trying to help someone else, to bring happiness to some other person, that we are happy and at peace ourselves. And it is then that we can be truly useful to the Lord.

The mission of the prophets was twofold. They pointed out the evils of their times, warning men of the inevitable results of wrongdoing, and they encouraged the good by assuring them of the Lord's protection and help and of their final happiness.

And the prophets whose prophecies were, under divine providence, recorded in the Word of God are sent to us, to everyone in all times. Through the books of the Prophets the Lord is speaking to us. Let us not be like those whose ears were made heavy and whose eyes were shut.

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### Primary

Concentrate on Isaiah's vision, which gives even the little children a vivid picture to hold in mind. They should learn if possible the names of the four books known as the Major Prophets and should know what the mission of a prophet was. In describing the vision, point out especially Isaiah's humility and his willingness to be used by the Lord as soon as he was assured that he was made worthy.

Do you know what a prophet is?

A prophet is one who speaks for the Lord.

The Lord has always sent prophets to speak for Him.

They told the people what they were doing that was wrong.

They told them what would happen to them if they did not change.

They also told them what was right and how happy they would be if they did right.

Do you remember the great prophet Elijah who built the altar to the Lord, and how the Lord sent down fire from heaven on Elijah's altar to show the people that Elijah's God was the true God? Elijah was a prophet in the kingdom of Israel.

The Lord used some of these prophets to write books which are in our Bible. The prophets did not make up their books out of their own heads. The Lord told them just what words to write. So you see the Lord Himself is really speaking to us when we read the books of the Prophets.

Sixteen of the books of our Bible are called by the names of prophets.

There are four long books and twelve short ones.

The four are called the Major Prophets and the twelve the Minor Prophets.

The prophet Jeremiah also wrote the book of Lamentations.

Can you remember the names of the four Major Prophets?

Our story today is about how Isaiah was called to be the Lord's prophet. Isaiah did not prophesy in Israel, as Elijah did. He was

sent to the kingdom of Judah, and he prophesied during the reigns of four of the kings of Judah.

What did he see first in his vision?

Can you tell something about the seraphim who were above the throne of the Lord?

Why did Isaiah feel himself to be unworthy?

What did the seraph do for him?

Do you remember what he said when the Lord asked, “Whom shall I send?” Are you always eager to do the things your parents ask you to do? If you are not, try next time to remember Isaiah.

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### Junior

These children will be interested in some of the historical data regarding the four prophets. It is a good time to show them on a map the relative positions of the great Bible countries: Canaan, Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon. Have them look up the Bible references mentioned in their notes. They can also get something of the meaning of Isaiah’s vision.

Into what two great parts is the Bible divided?

Jews today, as long ago, use only the first part, the Old Testament. They divide the Old Testament into three parts: the Law, the Prophets, and the Sacred Writings. The Law is the first five books, the books of Moses. The Prophets are grouped in two parts, the former and the latter prophets. Under the former prophets are the books which we usually think of as the historical books: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. They were, of course, all written through prophets just as much as the later ones. The latter prophets are the ones we usually think of as the prophets, the last books of the Old Testament from Isaiah through Malachi, except that the Jews do not group the books of Lamentations and Daniel with the prophets but put them with eleven other books in a section called the Kethubim or Sacred Writings, which they do not consider as of equal inspiration with the Law and the Prophets. You may like to remember that the New Church accepts the Hebrew “canon” or measure of the Word in the Old Testament with the addition of

the books of Psalms, Lamentations, and Daniel. Someday you will learn the reasons behind this acceptance.

We think of the first four of the books which are called by the name of individual prophets as the *Major Prophets* and the others as the *Minor Prophets*. Major means greater and minor lesser, but this has reference only to the length of these books. All the prophets are of equal importance. The four Major Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Jeremiah was a prophet in Judah under its last five kings before the captivity and continued to prophesy in Egypt after the people of Judah were carried away to Babylon; he wrote the book of Lamentations in Egypt. Ezekiel and Daniel were among those carried away from Judah. Ezekiel prophesied in Mesopotamia, where he lived near the river Chebar, and Daniel prophesied in Babylon. Our lesson today is about Isaiah.

In the time of what kings did Isaiah live?  
Whom did Isaiah see in vision?  
What did he see above the Lord's throne?  
Why was he afraid?

Read Exodus 30:20, 33:20. He recognized that he and all the people had sinned, and he thought that the vision must cause his death.

How were his lips cleansed?

Fire from the altar is a picture of pure unselfish love from the Lord. It was the touch of this divine love which would make Isaiah worthy to speak the Lord's words.

Once Isaiah felt that he was purified, he was ready to serve the Lord. Sometimes we know there are things we ought to do, but we think of how hard they are and we hang back. Isaiah, knowing the sins of the people, knew that he would be called upon to say many hard things to them. The prophets never had an easy time. So it took real courage to say, "Here am I; send me." This is the kind of courage we must develop if we are to be found worthy to bring to others the message the Lord has given the world in His Second Coming.

### Intermediate

The Intermediates will be interested in the correspondence of the details of the vision. The principles suggested by these details will make good discussion material. The lesson of humility and willingness to serve is especially needed.

The books of the Prophets are not arranged in the Bible exactly in their historical order. Of the four Major Prophets the first two prophesied in the Holy Land—Jeremiah also wrote the book of Lamentations in Egypt after the captivity of Judah—and the last two prophesied from captivity outside the land. The ancient Hebrews did not recognize either the book of Lamentations or the book of Daniel as part of the inspired Word because they were not written in the Holy Land. They did include Ezekiel, probably because he says frequently that he was “carried in the spirit to Jerusalem” and much of his prophecy concerns the visions that he had at these times. Isaiah and Jeremiah, writing during the last years of the kingdom of Judah, were both subject to persecution because they were called to rebuke the people and to prophesy doom, and this is never popular. Daniel and Ezekiel both prospered in captivity. Ezekiel was looked up to by the other exiles, who listened gladly to his visions and looked to him for counsel. Daniel was one of the young men specially trained as advisers to the king of Babylon and was advanced to high position, holding favor with successive kings because of his ability to interpret dreams and to advise wisely and because of the miraculous protection which he received from the Lord.

The book of the prophet Isaiah, from which our present lesson is taken, is one of the longer books of the Bible and contains many verses familiar to us, and because we read of Isaiah in connection with King Hezekiah in the second book of Kings, he stands out in our minds as an individual. The varieties of study in the book and the fact that in the last twenty-seven chapters events are described which took place after Isaiah’s time have led critics to assume that the book must have been written by several authors rather than by one, but tradition and the testimony of the New Testament support Isaiah’s authorship. Believing as we do that the Lord is the author

of the inspired Scriptures throughout, the identity of the human penmen is of comparatively minor importance; yet we should be careful not to accept without thought the theories of scholars who begin their study of the Bible with the premise that it is, like other books, merely the work of men. If one starts out on the wrong road, the farther he travels the farther he may get from his true destination.

Our chapter, which describes Isaiah's call, gives us both in the letter and in its internal meaning a clear picture of what is required of one who would speak for the Lord. There must first be a "seeing" of the Lord; Isaiah's vision of the Lord sitting upon the throne is, like John's [Revelation 1], the recognition that the Lord is the truth and that His truth must reign. The seraphim with six wings picture the power of divine truth to protect the inner character (the face) and the conduct (the feet) and to lift one's thoughts above the material level.

Isaiah's first reaction to this vision was fear because of his own unworthiness, another essential for a true prophet. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." [Psalm 111:10] The coal from the altar with which the seraph touched his lips pictures a spark of divine love—pure, unselfish love—which alone can cleanse the heart of unworthy feelings and enable the lips to speak the truth. Then Isaiah heard the voice saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" This pictures the understanding that the Lord needs individual men and women to do His work in the world. The Lord's call comes to each one of us. If we think of ourselves, we shall immediately imagine all the sacrifice and difficulty which devotion to the Lord's service will involve. But if we really wish to be good people, we shall be willing, like Isaiah, to accept the call personally, and to answer, "Here am I; send me."

The rest of the chapter tells Isaiah plainly how the people would receive his message. Some would close their ears, being too satisfied with themselves to wish to change or to think of possible consequences. But a few would listen and take the message to heart and would serve as the remnant through whom the Lord's church could

be rebuilt. This is a lesson which we find several times in the Word. Each of us should try not to be of the self-satisfied ones who close their ears to the Lord's teaching. But also the thought should encourage us when sometimes we try to give others the truths of the New Church and they are not received. If we keep trying faithfully, we shall certainly find a few who will welcome what the Lord has entrusted to us to give them, and we shall be preserving and increasing the Lord's kingdom on earth and in the heavens.

*Basic Correspondences*

- a throne = judgment
  - seraphim (or cherubim) = divine providence protecting
  - the face = the inner character
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**Senior**

The principal lesson for the Seniors is in the application to our own lives of the successive steps of Isaiah's vision. They are at a point where the difficulties of living the Christian life in the modern world are becoming apparent to them. The lives of the prophets can serve as an inspiration to fortify them against the temptation to give up the effort.

The seventeen books of the Prophets, as they are arranged in our Bible, are not in exact historical order. Although some of them do belong to the time after the taking captive of Israel and Judah, many of them parallel the history in the books of Kings. The earliest is thought to have been the minor prophet Jonah. A number were contemporaries. Each, like the many prophets who left no written record of their words, had his own place and time, and his words had a meaning for the people of that time. Bible scholars make use of the peculiarities of the text and the historical allusions in the letter to place the men historically. This study is interesting and helpful so long as we are careful to sift out the theories which are based on purely humanistic premises, for these leave the Lord's providence and the possibility of prophecy out of the picture.

For us, however, the value of the Prophets is not in the personality of the individual or in his effect on his own people and time,

interesting as such considerations are, but in what the Lord is saying through these chosen men to us today. For through them He speaks to us just as really as He spoke to the ancient Hebrews through their lips in the first place. What we learn from the Prophets will depend partly on our own states and needs and partly on the effort we make to find the inner meaning of their words with the help of the key to interpretation given to the new age by the Lord through Swedenborg. Although there are some simple lessons and even some stories in the letter of these seventeen books (Jeremiah wrote two), they are for the most part composed of “dark sayings,” food for a lifetime of study and thought for each person in all time.

The Lord through all His spokesmen is trying to point out to us the way of life, so that we may choose the way that leads to happiness and avoid the pitfalls which lie beside the road. The purpose of the Lord is to neglect nothing which could help us to choose the right path. But if we close our ears to His prophets, as their contemporaries did, He cannot help us. The choice is always ours.

The four Major Prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel—belong to the last days of the Israelitish nation. The first two prophesied before the captivity, Jeremiah also writing the book of Lamentations in Egypt after the captivity, and the last two to the period of the captivity itself. It is easy to see why Isaiah and Jeremiah were persecuted as prophets of doom, while Ezekiel and Daniel were honored. When we are in trouble, we turn to the Lord.

Our chapter for today is from the book of Isaiah, the first of the Major Prophets. It concerns Isaiah’s call, and it teaches us lessons which are true not only of every prophet but of every individual who wishes to advance the Lord’s kingdom. Isaiah’s experience is given to show us what is necessary if one is to speak for the Lord to others: first, a vision of the Lord as king and judge; second, the humble sense of one’s own unworthiness; third, the consecration conferred by the touch of the Lord’s unselfish love, the coal from the altar; and finally, the readiness to do the Lord’s will.

We see also that the Lord told Isaiah quite plainly that most of the people would not listen to him. The hardest part of the true

prophet's task is to continue to speak the truth though it falls on deaf ears. The last and most severe temptation of the Lord Himself in his earthly life was the temptation to try to save men against their wills, and we remember, too, that on the cross, the Lord was allowed for a moment to feel Himself forsaken by the Divine within.

But there is also in the last verse of our chapter the prophecy of the remnant. There will always be some few who will listen and remember. And in each one of us, so long as we are permitted by the Lord to remain in this world, there is this remnant, this possibility of return. So beware of trying even for a short time to stifle your conscience, for your conscience is the Lord's voice trying to reach you through whatever remains of goodness and truth you have in your heart and mind. This is not to say that your conscience always tells you what is right, for there may be very little truth there for the Lord to use; but the promptings are always a warning that you need to stop and think and try to find out whether you are really choosing a right and wise course or not.

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### Adult

The mission of the prophets to us is the outstanding lesson for the Adults, and the class should be inspired to wish to study them seriously with the help of the writings.

The prophets were those who spoke for the Lord. Their words, although taken from the content of their own minds, were not their own, but were chosen and arranged by the Lord to express what He wanted to say not only to the ancient Hebrews but to all men for all time. To the people of the Old Testament the words of the prophets had an immediate meaning which related to their national life, rather than to the life of their individual souls. To us also the words written by the prophets have an immediate meaning, but it is a meaning which relates not to our national life but to our spiritual life. The Lord is speaking to us today through the recorded words of the prophets, and He

has given us the key to unlock the meaning which these words are meant to have for us. The prophets all had a common mission, to point out and denounce evil and show what it led to, and to promise the rewards of righteousness. Yet we know that the Lord does not repeat Himself—even apparent repetitions in the letter take on varied meaning from their contexts—and so each of the prophets has a special message to meet special conditions and needs. The general historical background of each, so far as it may be drawn from the letter of the Word, will help us to read this special message.

The four Major Prophets were all from the kingdom of Judah. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel lived near the end of that kingdom, all three witnessing the captivity. Ezekiel and Daniel were both carried away among the early captives and prophesied from exile. Jeremiah wrote just before the captivity, and because he prophesied it and urged the people to submit, he was allowed by the king of Babylon to remain in his home; but later some of those who were left in the land forced him against his will to flee with them to Egypt, and it was there that he wrote the book of Lamentations. The book of Daniel was written in Babylon. The Jews did not include either Lamentations or Daniel in their Scripture canon because they were written outside of the Holy Land. Ezekiel wrote in Mesopotamia, but the Jews accepted him as inspired, possibly because he so often speaks of being carried in the spirit to Jerusalem for his visions.

Isaiah, as our chapter tells us, received his call “in the year that king Uzziah died,” and prophesied in Judah during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Recalling the meaning of Judah we see that Isaiah gives us the Lord’s message to our affectional life at a time when we have departed very far from following the Lord in our minds and in our conduct, and when our ruling love is wavering between self and the Lord. King Uzziah, though a good king, was a leper, and leprosy in a good man pictures the inability to live rightly because of lack of the knowledge of what is genuinely good. When we have experienced the fullness of such a state, pictured by Uzziah’s death, the voice of the Lord comes to

us in some powerful way; it was a fitting time for Isaiah's call. Jotham, the next king, was good, but he was followed by the wicked Ahaz. So our wavering will responds to the voice of the Lord and then falls back. But when we once more resolve to reform and to make a thorough job of it, we seek the Lord's counsel voluntarily, as Hezekiah sought the advice of Isaiah whenever he was in need of it. We recall that Hezekiah carried out the most thoroughgoing reforms of any of the kings of Judah.\*

We are perhaps more or less familiar with the major characteristics of the four long prophetic books. Jeremiah is the prophet of doom. Ezekiel stands out in our minds for his visions of Jerusalem and the temple, in some respects very much like the visions of John in Revelation. Daniel is the voice of the faithful few among the captives in Babylon, whose steadfastness eventually made sufficient impression on their captors to bring about the return. In the book of Isaiah we are perhaps most familiar with the beautiful prophecies of the Advent, and we know Isaiah as a person from his dealings with Hezekiah. But Isaiah's call, with which our chapter for today deals, presents some of the basic principles which apply to all prophecy and indeed to all genuine service of the Lord.

Isaiah had a vision of the Lord as to His omnipotence, king and judge, sitting upon His throne, addressed as Jehovah Zebaoth, the Lord of hosts (AC 2921). The seraphim above the throne picture the protecting power of the Lord. Wings picture spiritual truth (AC 8765), and the three pair of wings show the power of spiritual truth to protect the interiors (the face) and the exteriors (the feet) and to lift one up above the level of merely natural things. Isaiah was afraid because he recognized his unworthiness. The mouth pictures thought from affection (AE 580) and the lips the interior things of man (AC 1286). In AE 580 (see below) Swedenborg explains quite simply the purification in Isaiah's vision. Following this, Isaiah was ready to be the Lord's messenger.

We remember the Lord's teaching in Matthew 15:11, 17-19 that

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\*Josiah is often ranked with Hezekiah in this respect. –Ed.

it is what proceeds out of the mouth which defiles a man, for “those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart.” The first part of the message given to Isaiah, which is quoted in all the Gospels (Matthew 13:14, Mark 4:12, Luke 8:10, John 12:40), like the statements about the Lord’s hardening Pharaoh’s heart, have been puzzling to many. We are often told by Swedenborg that the people of that day were of such a nature that they cared only for material things and that if they had perceived spiritual things, they would have profaned them. It is part of the Lord’s mercy that we are permitted to see and acknowledge only so much of the truth as we are capable of living up to. The more selfish we become the more our minds are closed against the truth. Isaiah was to tell people that this state would continue until the land was utterly desolate, and that only then could a new beginning be made. The “tenth” which should return pictures the remains of good which are always preserved by the Lord as a possible new beginning. Each new church is founded on such a “tenth,” and likewise each new beginning in us. These remains are likened to the terebinth or oak on account of their strength and persistence.

The call to be a messenger of the Lord comes to each one of us, and it begins with a vision of the Lord as king and judge. We are told, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48) If we are to imitate the Lord, it is not enough to believe vaguely that there is a God: we must have a clear and definite idea of His character and power. The next step is to realize and acknowledge our own unworthiness, to see how far we are by nature from the pure love and wisdom which are the Lord. Then the cleansing fire of the Lord’s unselfish love can come in and purify our motives, and inspire us to say, “Here am I; send me.” Finally our message becomes clear: all worldliness and selfishness must be put away and the heavenly character must be built on the remains which the Lord has preserved in us for this purpose.



### From the Writings of Swedenborg

*Apocalypse Explained*, n. 580: “One of the seraphim touching the mouth and lips of the prophet signifies his interior purification, which is that of the understanding and will, and thus inauguration into the gift of teaching; the burning coal from the altar signifies the Divine love, from which is all purification, and the mouth and lips signify thought and affection, or what is the same, the understanding and the will; when these are purified man is withdrawn from iniquity and sin; consequently it is said, ‘therefore thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin is expiated.’ Anyone can see that iniquity is not taken away by a burning coal applied to the mouth and lips.”

*Arcana Coelestia*, n. 303: “A man acquires a life by all the things he is persuaded of, that is, which he acknowledges and believes. That of which he is not persuaded, or does not acknowledge and believe, does not affect his mind. And therefore no one can profane holy things unless he has been so persuaded of them that he acknowledges them, and yet denies them. Those who do not acknowledge may know, but are as if they did not know, and are like those who know things that have no existence. Such were the Jews about the time of the Lord’s advent, and therefore they are said in the Word to be ‘vastated,’ or ‘laid waste,’ that is, to have no longer any faith. Under these circumstances it does men no injury to have the interior contents of the Word opened to them, for they are as persons seeing, and yet not seeing; hearing, and yet not hearing; and whose hearts are stopped up (Isaiah 6:9, 10). That the mysteries of faith are not revealed until men are in such a state, that is, are so vastated that they no longer believe (in order, as before said, that they may not be able to profane them), the Lord also plainly declares in the subsequent verses of the same Prophet (6:12). He is called a ‘man’ who is wise, or who acknowledges and believes.”

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### Suggested Questions on the Lesson

- P. What is a prophet? *one who speaks for the Lord*
- P. About what great prophet to Israel have we had a story? *Elijah*
- J. What Judge was also a prophet? *Samuel*
- J. Into what three parts did the Hebrews divide their Bible? *Law, Prophets, Writings*
- J. What books did they include in their Prophets which we think of as historical books? *Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings*
- J. Into what two groups do we divide the Prophets? *Major, Minor*
- J. Why are they called *Major* and *Minor*? *longer, shorter*
- P. How many Major Prophets are there? *four*

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- P. Can you name them? *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel*
- P. About which one is our lesson today? *Isaiah*
- J. When and where did Isaiah prophesy? *Judah, reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah*
- P. Whom did Isaiah see in his vision? *the Lord*
- P. What can you tell about the seraphim? *six wings*
- P. Why was Isaiah frightened? *“unclean” lips*
- J. How did the Lord purify Isaiah’s lips? *live coal*
- P. What did the Lord ask? *“Whom shall I send?”*
- P. What did Isaiah say? *“Here am I; send me.”*
- I. What was the mission of the prophets? *point out evils, call to repentance*
- S. What do we learn in this lesson are the qualities which we must have if we are to serve the Lord effectively? *vision of Lord, humility, consecration, willingness to serve*