Worship and Respond  
Isa 6:1-8  
SS Lesson for 06/02/2013

Devotional Scripture: John 4:20-24

OUTLINE

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson reviews the elements of Worship and Responses to it. The study's aim is to adjust our mental awareness and the attitude of our hearts to make this biblical type of worship our standard. The study's application is to implement this understanding to inform all our worship, whether in private or in our corporate gatherings.

Key Verse: Isa 6:3

3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"

Commentary from Barnes Notes

[And one cried to another] Hebrew 'This cried to this.' That is, they cried to each other in alternate responses. One cried 'holy;' the second repeated it; then the third; and then they probably united in the grand chorus, 'Full is all the earth of his glory.' This was an ancient mode of singing or recitative among the Hebrews; see Ex 15:20-21, where Miriam is represented as going before in the dance with a timbrel, and the other females as following her, and "answering," or responding to her, Ps 136:1.

Holy, holy, holy] The "repetition" of a name, or of an expression, three times, was quite common among the Jews. Thus, in Jer 7:4, the Jews are represented by the prophet as saying, 'the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these. Thus, Jer 22:29: 'O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord;' Ezek 21:27: 'I will overturn, overturn, overturn;' see also 2 Sam 18:33: 'O my son Absalom! my son, my son;' see also the repetition of the form of benediction among the Jews, Num 6:24-26. In like manner, the number "seven" is used by the Hebrews to denote a great, indefinite number; then a full or complete number; and then perfection, completion. Thus, in Rev 1:4; 3:1; 4:5, the phrase, 'the seven spirits of God,' occurs as applicable to the Holy Spirit, denoting his fullness, completeness, perfection. The Hebrews usually expressed the superlative degree by the repetition of a word. Thus, Gen 14:10: 'The vale of Siddim, pits, pits of clay,' that is, was full of pits; see Nordheimer's "Heb. Gram." Section 822-824. The form was used, therefore, among the Jews, to denote "emphasis;" and the expression means in itself no more than 'thrice holy;' that is, supremely holy. Most commentators, however, have supposed that there is here a reference to the doctrine of the Trinity. It is not probable that the Jews so understood it; but applying to the expressions the fuller revelations of the New Testament, it cannot be doubted that the words will express that. Assuming that that doctrine is true, it cannot be doubted, think, that the seraphs laid the foundation of their praise in that doctrine. That there was a distinct reference to the second person of the Trinity, is clear from what John says, John 12:41. No "argument" can be drawn directly from this in favor of the doctrine of the Trinity, for the repetition of such phrases thrice in other places, is merely "emphatic," denoting the superlative degree. But when the doctrine is "proved" from other places, it may be presumed that the heavenly beings were apprized of it, and that the foundation of their ascriptions of praise was laid in that. The Chaldee has rendered this, 'Holy in the highest heavens, the house of his majesty; holy upon the earth, the work of his power; holy forever, and ever, and ever, is the Lord of hosts.' The whole expression is a most sublime ascription of praise to the living God, and should teach us in what manner to approach him.

[The LORD of hosts]; The Lord - Hebrew Yahweh. Host - the word sometimes translated "Sabaoth"; Rom 9:29; James 5:4. The word means literally armies or military hosts. It is applied, however, to the angels which surround the throne of God; 1 Kings 22:19; 2 Chron 18:18; Ps 103:21; and to the stars or constellations that appear to be marshalled in the sky; Jer 33:22; Isa 40:26. This host, or the "host of heaven," was frequently an object of idolatrous worship; Deut 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kings 17:16. God is called Yahweh of hosts because he is at the head of all these armies, as their leader and commander; he marshals and directs them—as a general does the army under his command. This,' says Gesenius, 'is the most common name of God in Isaiah, and in Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Malachi. It represents him as the ruler of the hosts of heaven, that is, the angels and the stars.
Sometimes, but less frequently, we meet with the appellation Yahweh, God of hosts. Hence, some suppose the expression Yahweh of hosts to be elliptical. But it is not a correct assertion that Yahweh, as a proper name, admits of no genitive. But such relations and adjuncts as depend upon the genitive, often depend upon proper names. So in Arabic, one is called Rebiah of the poor in reference to his liability. The name is given here, because to save any portion of a nation so wicked implied the exercise of the same power as that by which he controlled the hosts of heaven.

[The whole earth] Margin, 'The earth is the fulness of his glory.' All things which he has made on the earth express his glory. His wisdom and goodness, his power and holiness, are seen everywhere. The whole earth, with all its mountains, seas, streams, trees, animals, and people, lay the foundation of his praise. In accordance with this, the Psalmist, in a most beautiful composition, calls upon all things to praise him; see Ps 148.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

In this text we are introduced to a scene in heaven, the place where God dwells, where He sits in authority over all things. Around Him are all His angels of various ministries. It is not often that the Bible shows us a glimpse of a scene as holy as this, and we can imagine the awe that Isaiah must have felt when he was in the presence of the absolute holiness of such a place as the throne of God. Here we are introduced to the seraphim—unique angelic beings that were speaking regarding the person and presence of the most holy God. The symbol of fire for holiness can be seen here. The seraphim's message was simple but powerful: God is infinitely holy! Why is "holy" repeated three times? One observation is that this might be a reference to the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Godhead, coequal in holiness, power, and purpose. The gods of the world are many and may even show themselves as more human than divine. But the Lord is one, not many. God Himself confirmed this oneness when He gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4). God is not divided but one in power and purpose. He is in total harmony with Himself and His creation and in the redemption of man. His purpose and methods will never change. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). Holy is holy; there are no degrees of holiness with God. But man has a problem with personal holiness because he bears the seeds of Adam's transgression and needs a new relationship with God's holiness. Sin and holiness can never occupy the heart of man at the same time. Even in our prayer life, sin can build a wall of hindrance to God's blessing. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66:18).

In considering the statement made by the seraphim, "The whole earth is full of his glory," we see that all that God created shows His signature and glorifies Him. Regarding man's unacceptable behavior, the Apostle Paul reminded us that there is no excuse for our sin because all of God's creation bears witness to the Creator. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). Life itself, in all its various forms, shows the evidence of a power far beyond the intellect of man. Man is the only life form that recognizes his nakedness and his need for clothes. This is seen after sin entered into the heart of Adam. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3:7). It is only the love of God that was able to bridge the gap between sin and holiness. Now we can enter once more into His presence. Because of the finished work of Christ, this bridge between God and man is now open for all.
Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The outline of the lesson came from a previous lesson and from the points revealed by the study of the Scriptural text.

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Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The prophet Isaiah lived in turbulent times. In fact, prophets usually served in such times; that is why they were called to their ministry. God raised them up to provide a divine perspective on the events unfolding before his people—events that sometimes appeared to be spiraling out of control. Isaiah’s ministry occurred during the period of Old Testament history known as the divided monarchy. His prophetic call came, as today’s text states, “In the year that King Uzziah died” (Isaiah 6:1); that was 740 BC, about 191 years after the nation of Israel had divided into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. The northern kingdom was in decline in 740 BC, both politically and spiritually. Concurrently, the Assyrians to the northeast had gained in strength and vigor, thanks to the efforts of Tiglath-Pileser III, who ruled 745–727 BC. A few years after his reign ended, the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians, in 722 BC (2 Kings 17:5, 6). Isaiah’s ministry was concentrated in the southern kingdom of Judah. All the kings mentioned in the opening verse of his book are kings of Judah (Isaiah 1:1). Approximately 20 years after Israel fell, the Assyrians targeted Judah just as they had targeted Israel. But Judah was spared from destruction during the reign of godly King Hezekiah, who received counsel from Isaiah (37:21-38). Thus the prophet Isaiah served during a time of both divine judgment (upon the northern kingdom of Israel) and divine deliverance (granted to the southern kingdom of Judah). It was during times that seemed as uncertain and foreboding as those that occurred on 9/11 that Isaiah was called to remind the people that God was in control. Isaiah himself was allowed to experience that truth in a unique, unforgettable way. His experience is the subject of today’s printed text. We may wonder why Isaiah’s call is not recorded until chapter 6 of his book. In the cases of the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the calls appear toward the beginning of the records, where one would expect them to be (Jeremiah 1:4-19; Ezekiel 1:1–3:27). Perhaps Isaiah’s call actually did precede his messages of Isaiah 1–5, but the account of the call is placed in Isaiah 6 to make a crucial point: the first five chapters explain why a prophet like Isaiah was so desperately needed by God’s people. Isaiah 5 in particular is a compelling description of the extent of corruption within a people originally called by God to be “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). Isaiah uses the imagery of a vineyard and a garden to describe both the Lord’s care for Israel and Judah and his disappointment that they had not produced the desired crop (Isaiah 5:1-7).

From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

This quarter our lessons examine aspects of worship, by which God's people humbly acknowledge His worthiness and recommit themselves to glorifying Him. Our first unit, consisting of four lessons, is taken from Isaiah's prophecy. It is fitting that the first of these prophecies emphasizes the Lord's holiness, for without
recognizing this primary attribute, we cannot worship Him in an acceptable manner. We live in surroundings in which sin is commonplace. So it is natural for us to become inured to the seriousness of sin in God's sight. We compare our standards to the norms of others and form a high opinion of ourselves, thinking we are "not as other men." Then we carry this attitude into our acts of worship and as a result fail to give God the glory due His holy name. Isaiah too lived in wicked days in the history of Judah, when the majority fell woefully short of God's laws. Though they went through the motions of worship, the Lord rejected their observances because their hearts were unclean (cf. Isa. 1:2-15). Isaiah could minister to his generation only after he saw God's glory and was cleansed from his sin. His transforming vision is the subject of this week's lesson. People sometimes speak of going to church as "going to worship." Some also apply the word "worship" to many activities, such as worship in song, worship in giving, or worship in serving. Much of what goes on in a church service may actually militate against worship, since it can be man-centered, works-centered, or people-centered rather than God-centered. A church service may have other distractions, such as certain types of music, chitchat, and other activities that can disrupt our prayer and our focus on the worship of God. This week we look at one of the most significant passages about true worship. Remember that the Word of God is the only reliable source of instruction we have on spiritual matters such as worship.

**Major Theme Analysis**

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

**Elements of Worship (Isa 6:1-4)**

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.
2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.
3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!"
4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

**Worship the Majesty of God (1)**

*God is majestic because nothing can contain Him* *(I King 8:27)*

"But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!"

*God is majestic because there is nowhere we can go from His presence* *(Ps 139:7-10)*

7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depth, you are there. 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

*God is majestic because there is no one or thing like Him* *(Exod 15:11)*

"Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you-- majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?"

*God is majestic because of His great power and strength* *(Eph 1:18-21)*

18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.
God is majestic because He is worthy and deserves it  (Rev 4:8-11)

8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." 9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Worship through the Praise of God (2-4)

God must be praised because of His acts of power and greatness  (Ps 150:1-6)

1 Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. 2 Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. 3 Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, 4 praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, 5 praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. 6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

God must be praised because of His righteousness  (Ps 7:17)

I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

God must be praised because He counsels and instructs us (Ps 16:7)

I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.

God must be praised because He is our rock, fortress and deliverer  (Ps 18:2-3)

2 The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 3 I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.

God must be praised because He lives (Ps 18:46)

The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior!

God must be praised because of His mercy (Ps 28:6-7)

6 Praise be to the LORD, for he has heard my cry for mercy. 7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.

God must be praised because it is fitting (Ps 33:1-4)

1 Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. 2 Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. 3 Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy. 4 For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

God must be praised because He is our hope (Ps 42:5)

5 Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Commentary on Seraphs

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

This is the only place in the Bible where seraphs are mentioned. (While there are similarities between the seraphs and the “beasts” described in Revelation 4:6-8, the latter are never called seraphs.) Apparently they
had human form except that each one had six wings. Two of these wings were used to cover their faces (perhaps to protect the seraphs from beholding the glory of God) and two to cover their feet. The third pair of wings was used so that the seraphs could fly. The primary function of the seraphs appears to have been to praise God and to serve as his messengers. The term seraphs comes from a Hebrew word meaning “to burn”; thus the seraphs were the “burning ones.” Some see that as suggestive of their role as purifying agents, as in verses 6 and 7.

From the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia

A plural word occurring only in <Isa 6:2> -- Isaiah's vision of Yahweh. The origin of the term in Hebrew is uncertain. Saraph in <Num 21:6; Isa 14:29>, etc., signifies a fiery serpent. Seraphim are in Jewish theology connected with cherubim and ophanim as the three highest orders of attendants on Yahweh, and are superior to the angels who are messengers sent on various errands.

From the Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament

According to the orthodox view, which originated with Dionysius the Areopagite, they stand at the head of the nine choirs of angels, the first rank consisting of seraphim, cherubim, and throni. And this is not without support, if we compare the cherubim mentioned in Ezekiel, which carried the chariot of the divine throne; whereas here the seraphim are said to surround the seat on which the Lord was enthroned. In any case, the seraphim and cherubim were heavenly beings of different kinds; and there is no weight in the attempts made by Hendewerk and Stickel to prove that they are one and the same. And certainly the name seraphim does not signify merely spirits as such, but even, if not the highest of all, yet a distinct order from the rest; for the Scriptures really teach that there are gradations in rank in the hierarchy of heaven. Nor were they mere symbols or fanciful images, as Hävernick imagines, but real spiritual beings, who visibly appeared to the prophet, and that in a form corresponding to their own supersensuous being, and to the design of the whole transaction. While these seraphim hovered above on both sides of Him that sat upon the throne, and therefore formed two opposite choirs, each ranged in a semicircle, they presented antiphonal worship to Him that sat upon the throne.

Response to Worship (Isa 6:5-8)

5 So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."
6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar.
7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged."
8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

Recognition of unworthiness (5)

Recognizing the sin in our life makes us unworthy (Luke 5:8)

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

Recognizing that we have put others before God makes us unworthy (Matt 10:37-38)

37 "Any one who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Recognizing that we have preferred earthly things instead of God makes us unworthy (Matt 22:8)

"Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come.
Commentary from Adam Clarke's Commentary
Because they made light of it, and would not come; preferring earthly things to heavenly blessings. Among the Mohammedans, refusal to come to a marriage feast, when invited is considered a breach of the law of God, HEDAYAH, vol. 4 p. 91. Anyone that shall be invited to a dinner, and does not accept the invitation, disobeys, God, and his messenger: and anyone who comes uninvited, you may say is a thief.

Recognizing that we may have rejected God makes us unworthy (Acts 13:46)
Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.

Commentary from Barnes' Notes Commentary
Unfit to be saved. They had deliberately and solemnly rejected the gospel, and thus shown that they were not suited to enter into everlasting life. We may remark here: When people, even but once, deliberately and solemnly reject the offers of God's mercy, it greatly endangers their salvation. The probability is, that they then put the cup of salvation forever away from themselves.

Realization—Or Lack Thereof (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)
Many today are obsessive about cleanliness. Just think about how much hand sanitizer we use. How different from the days of my childhood! Back then, I often wondered why it was necessary to take a bath once a week. Even when I had been playing outdoors all week in the summer, with its heat, humidity, and dirt, I didn’t think I needed a bath. I’ve reformed since then, but I still think that there are people who sometimes go too far. I read recently that Germany has a “cleaning week,” where tenants are required to sweep the pavement in front of their apartment buildings. In the United Kingdom, 58 percent of those who hire domestic cleaning help admit that they tidy up before the cleaners arrive. One society matron in America instructed her staff to change the bed sheets daily, even if the beds had not been used by guests. A women on a talk show recently confessed that she can’t hold her daughter’s hand because she is afraid she will get germs. Marketers push products that claim to be much better than soap. One product is a “cleansing bar” made with olive leaf extract, which supposedly “deep cleans” to remove oil, dirt, and dead skin. Another product is made with marine oils that are “bio-compatible,” allegedly cleansing the pores without disrupting the skin’s natural balance. Still another has mink oil and Vitamin E. All this in an effort to get clean or, somehow, “more than” clean? Physical cleanliness is important, but spiritual cleanliness is infinitely more vital! Yet spiritual cleanliness won’t happen until we first acknowledge the need. Isaiah realized his need. Do we realize ours?

Cleansing by God (6-7)

Cleansed by shedding of Jesus blood (Heb 9:22)
In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Cleansing of acts that lead to death (Heb 9:13-14)
13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Cleansed by coming near to God (James 4:8)
Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
**Cleansed by focusing on and doing righteousness (Isa 1:16-17)**  
6 wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong. 17 learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

**Cleansed by the word of God (1 Tim 4:5)**  
for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

**Cleansed by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:11)**  
And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

**Cleansed by our hearts being sprinkled by God through faith (Heb 10:22)**  
let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

**Cleansed by the blood of the Lamb (Rev 7:14)**  
I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

**Availability and commitment (8)**

**Making myself available (Here I am)**

**Available by first giving myself to God (2 Cor 8:5)**  
And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

**Available by submitting to God (2 Chron 30:8)**  
Do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were; submit to the LORD. Come to the sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever. Serve the LORD your God, so that his fierce anger will turn away from you.

**Available by offering myself to God as an instrument of righteousness (Rom 6:13)**  
Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

**Available by living to the Lord because I belong to Him (Rom 14:8)**  
If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

**Available by honoring God with my body (1 Cor 6:19-20)**  
19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

**Becoming a living sacrifice and servant of God (Send me)**

**By offering my whole self to God (Rom 12:1)**  
Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.
By being renewed daily inwardly (2 Cor 4:16)
Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

By continually offering to God a fruit of the lips which should be a sacrifice of praise (Heb 13:15)
Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name.

By being a living stone in the spiritually house of God (1 Peter 2:5)
you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

By being a slave of righteousness (Rom 6:16)
Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

**Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

**Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**
Those familiar with the Star Trek television series of the 1960s can probably recall parts of the introductory words to the program, which described the mission of the starship Enterprise. The concluding line of that introduction remains an oft-quoted piece of television history, if for no other reason than its infamous split infinitive: “To boldly go where no man has gone before!” That line is very appropriate for describing the impact that worship is meant to have on the worshipper. Isaiah’s experience of God’s presence did not leave him content to remain there, satisfied to let the sinners around him perish. When he heard the Lord’s questions asking for someone to go on his behalf, Isaiah replied without hesitation: “Here am I. Send me!” His was not the attitude of “Let others do it” (compare Exodus 4:13) or “I’m not ready yet” (compare Jeremiah 1:6). Worship challenged Isaiah to confront his world, not ignore it because he had found a refuge from it.

An old story tells of a man who entered a church building as the worshippers were leaving. He asked the minister, “Say, is the service over?” “No,” replied the minister, “it’s just beginning.” Real worship will move us to real service.

**Concluding Thoughts from Ray Pritchard**
Before we can understand what it means to be holy, we must understand what it means to say that God is holy. In many ways holiness is God’s central attribute. One writer actually defines it this way. “Holiness is that which makes God God.” Dr. Renald Showers calls it “the foundational truth of revelation.” How important is it? Holiness is the only attribute of God mentioned in triplicate. Two times the Bible tells us that God is holy, holy, holy (Isaiah 6:3, Revelation 4:8). Think about that for a moment. If God says something about his character once, that’s enough to settle it. When he says it twice, that’s emphasis. But when he says it three times, that means it’s of supreme importance. The Bible never says that God is love, love, love or mercy, mercy, mercy, or justice, justice, justice, justice. But it does say that he is holy, holy, holy.

Let’s begin by working toward a definition. I agree with those writers who say that holiness is the most difficult attribute to define because it deals with the essence of God’s character. Defining holiness is like defining God! It can’t be done completely. We can describe holiness and find ample illustrations of it, but we can’t define it entirely. This is what makes God God! The word itself means “to be set apart.” A thing is holy if it is set apart for a special use. Other words you might use are words like distinctive or different. Applied to God, holiness is
that characteristic that sets him apart from his creation. There are many verses that speak of God being “on high,” “reigning,” “in his holy temple,” “sitting on the throne.” These verses all picture God as separate from creation and reigning over it. We can go a step farther and say that anything is “holy” that is “set apart” for God. That’s why we call the Bible the Holy Bible—it contains the Word of God. We call Israel the Holy Land because it is the land he chose for his own people. The angels are holy angels because they belong to God. The sabbath is holy because he set it apart for himself. And when Moses stood before the burning bush, he was told to take off his shoes because he was standing on “holy ground”—ground that God had set apart for himself. There is a second important meaning of the word holy: “Utterly pure, separated from sin.” The Bible tells us that God hates sin, that he cannot sin nor will he tempt others to sin. God is so pure that he cannot tolerate sin in any form in his presence. One day he will destroy sin forever. That leads to an important implication: holiness and sin cannot coexist. If you want to be holy as God is holy, you must adopt his attitude toward sin. You must abhor it as he does. If you coddle sin or excuse it or dabble in it, you cannot be holy as he is holy.


**Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

1. In uncertain times, focus on God's sovereignty to find peace of mind (Isa. 6:1)
2. Fear not—God's holiness, His supreme attribute, controls all that He does (vs. 2-3)
3. The awesomeness of God is greater than words or even a picture can describe (vs. 4)
4. The more man understands God's holiness, the more he understands his own sinfulness (vs. 5)
5. God is always ready to forgive those who are ready to repent (Isa. 6:6-7; John 1:9)
6. Hearing God's call is one thing; heeding God's call is quite another (Isa. 6:8)! Do both.