

2 Nephi 16 — Isaiah 6 — The Throne Theophany, the Coal from the Altar, and Send Me

Isaiah's commissioning vision in the year King Uzziah died: the seraphim, the trisagion, the coal from the altar, the until-when, c. 740 BC.

Isaiah's call-narrative. The throne-vision in the year Uzziah died, the six-winged seraphim, the triple-holy, the coal from the altar applied to the prophet's unclean lips, the *here am I; send me*. Nephi places the chapter here in the Isaiah block — not chronologically (it would come before chs. 1–5) but theologically. The chapter is the prophet's authorization narrative; it explains why Isaiah's words have authority. John makes the Christological reading explicit at Jn. 12:41 — *Isaiah saw his glory*.

Ten Insights

- 1. The year King Uzziah died (v. 1).** When the earthly king fails, the heavenly King is seen. The throne-vision is anchored in calendar-time, not in a-historical mysticism.
- 2. Ram v'nissa — high and lifted up (v. 1).** *Ram v'nissa* — the same lexical bundle Isa. 52:13 uses of the Suffering Servant. The Lord on the throne is the Servant of Isa. 52. Jn. 12:41 makes the identification explicit.
- 3. Seraphim — the burning ones (v. 2).** *Saraph* — to burn. Unique to Isaiah's vision; six wings; two cover the face, two cover the feet, two for flight. Reverent service in the divine presence.
- 4. Holy, holy, holy (v. 3).** *Qadosh qadosh qadosh* — Hebrew superlative-by-tripling; the OT's highest possible degree. Christian liturgy preserves the formula in the Sanctus of every Mass.
- 5. Wo is unto me, I am undone (v. 5).** Encountering the holy reveals the un-holy. The disciple's first reaction to the Lord's holiness should be self-recognition, not self-congratulation.
- 6. Unclean lips (v. 5).** For a prophet, the lips are the load-bearing instrument. The verse is the OT's clearest image of speech as the prophet's primary sacrament.
- 7. Coal from the altar (vv. 6–7).** The same fire that consumed the sacrifice now purges the prophet's lips. Atonement-altar applied directly to the place of need — the OT's foundational sacramental image.
- 8. Whom shall I send (v. 8).** *Us* — divine council plurality. The Lord and the Son (and possibly the Spirit) confer in commissioning.
- 9. Hinneni; send me (v. 8).** *Hinneni* — the patriarchs' covenant-response. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Lehi, every disciple — the chain of covenant-readiness.
- 10. The holy seed (v. 13).** *Zera qodesh* — the surviving covenant-remnant. The tenth that remains. Christologically: Christ Himself is the holy seed carrying the covenant through the judgment.

Cross-References

Gen. 22:1, 7, 11 (Abraham's *hinneni*); Gen. 28:13 (Jacob's vision); Ex. 3:4 (Moses' *hinneni*); Ex. 19 (Sinai); Ex. 25:8; Ex. 40:34–38; Lev. 16:12 (coals from the altar); 1 Kgs. 8:10–11; 1 Kgs. 19:11–13 (still small voice); 1 Kgs. 22:19 (heavenly council); 1 Sam. 3:4–10 (Samuel's *hinneni*); Job 1–2 (sons of God); Ps. 24:7–10 (King of glory); Ps. 99:9; Isa. 1:4 (the Holy One of Israel); Isa. 40:25; Isa. 52:13 (*yarum v'nissa*); Isa. 57:15; Jer. 1:4–10 (Jeremiah's call); Ezek. 1–3 (Ezekiel's call); Dan. 7:9–10 (Ancient of Days); Matt. 13:14–15 (Christ cites vv. 9–10); Mk. 4:12; Lk. 8:10; Jn. 1:14; Jn. 12:39–41 (Isaiah saw his glory — explicit identification); Acts 7:55–56 (Stephen sees the Lord); Acts 28:25–27 (Paul cites vv. 9–10); 2 Cor. 12:1–4 (third heaven); Heb. 1:3 (right hand of the Majesty); 1 Pet. 1:16 (be ye holy); Rev. 4–5 (throne-vision); Rev. 15:3–4; 1 Ne. 1 (Lehi's commission — parallel); 2 Ne. 11:2; Jacob 7:11; Mosiah 3:5; Mosiah 15; Alma 5:14; 3 Ne. 11–18 (Christ's throne); Eth. 3 (brother of Jared sees Christ); D&C 76:20–24 (vision of the Son); D&C 110:1–10 (Kirtland visitation); D&C 137 (celestial kingdom); JS—H 1 (Joseph's commission).

Apocryphal Correlations

Ezekiel 1:4–28. Wheel-vision throne-theophany — closest canonical parallel; fire, cloud, four living creatures.

1 Enoch 14:8–25. Enoch's throne-vision — flaming fire, cherubim, the Lord of Spirits on the throne — closest extra-canonical parallel.

Ascension of Isaiah 6–11. Christian-era expansion — Isaiah ascends through seven heavens and sees the Beloved descending; ancient Christian commentary on this chapter.

4 Ezra 8:20–21. *O Lord, who art enthroned, who dwellest in eternity* — closest 1st-century-AD parallel.

2 Baruch 21:6–10. Throne-theophany supplication with similar vocabulary.

Revelation 4:1–11. John's throne-vision directly cites this chapter — *holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty*.

1QM (Qumran War Scroll) 12:1–5. Angelic-armies surround the throne in priestly battle-array — Qumran's reading.

Sirach 49:6–10. Praise of Isaiah — *he saw by an excellent spirit what should come to pass at the last*.

Targum Jonathan on Isaiah 6. Aramaic targum carefully rephrases *I saw the Lord* as *I saw the glory of the Lord*; the BoM preserves the *I saw* directly.

Hebrew Word Studies

ram v'nissa (רָם וְנִסָּא, **high and lifted up**) — v. 1. Same lexical bundle as Isa. 52:13's Suffering Servant — *yarum v'nissa*. The Lord on the throne is the Servant of Isa. 52. Jn. 12:41 — *Isaiah saw his glory*.

qadosh qadosh qadosh (קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ, **holy holy holy**) — v. 3. OT's highest superlative-by-tripling. Shaped Christian liturgy for two millennia. The Restoration's *most holy place* preserves the *qadosh*-grammar.

ritzpah (רִצְפָּה, **hot stone / burning coal**) — vv. 6–7. The altar's atoning coal applied to the place of need. Foundational sacramental theology — the Restoration's sacrament operates by the same logic.

hinneni (הִנְנֵנִי, **here am I**) — v. 8. The patriarchs' covenant-response. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, Isaiah — the chain. Every disciple's signature-word.

zera qodesh (זֶרַע קֹדֶשׁ, **holy seed**) — v. 13. Covenant-remnant that survives the judgment. Christologically — Christ is the holy seed. Heb. 2:16; Gal. 3:16.

Personal Application

Three practices. First, let the trisagion shape your worship. When you enter a sacred moment — the temple, the sacrament hall, the prayer closet — let the qadosh-qadosh-qadosh be on your lips. The seraphim's song is the disciple's song. Worship without awe of the Lord's holiness has lost half its substance. Second, answer the commissioning question. The Lord's whom shall I send is still being asked. When the call comes — to a calling, to a service, to a hard conversation, to a difficult relationship — answer with hinneni. Send me. Third, receive the coal. Your unclean lips are not solved by self-improvement; they are solved by the altar's coal applied to the place of need. When self-condemnation comes, kneel at the sacrament and let the coal touch the lips. Sacramental participation is sacramentally efficacious.