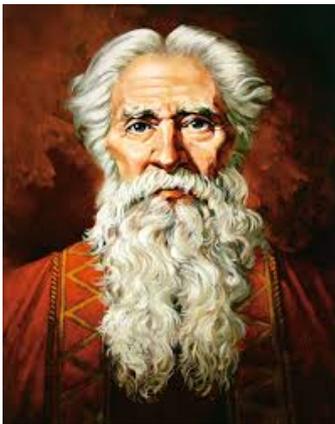


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The Cleansing of Isaiah

6: 5-7



At this point, **the prophet** becomes aware of **his own spiritual shortcomings, as well as those of the people with whom he lives.** Isaiah has been aware of the awesome holiness of **ADONAI** with all of **His** transcendence, and now **he** is suddenly and brutally aware of **himself.** **He** who had been pronouncing woe upon others now must pronounce **woe** upon **himself.** If this experience did come at the onset of **his** ministry, then its force here is that **members of the nation** must come to recognize **their** condition before **the LORD.** Prophecy is not enough. Personal confrontation is necessary.

We are fooling ourselves if we think that we can serve **the LORD** in our own strength. First, we must come to the end of our rope. The process of becoming a child of **God** begins in our recognition of the hopelessness of our situation. It begins when we are finally willing to turn over the steering wheel of our lives to **ADONAI.** It continues when we recognize the true nature of **God.** Then, and only then, can we appreciate the gulf between **the LORD** and ourselves. This gulf is our sinfulness. Only when we acknowledge that gulf can we receive the incredible and undeserved grace of **God** that cleanses us.

An old American Indian tale recounts the story of a chief who was telling a gathering of young braves about the struggle within. "It is like two dogs fighting inside of us,"



the chief told them. "There is one good dog who wants to do the right, and the other dog always wants to do the wrong. Sometimes the good dog seems stronger and is winning the fight. But sometimes the bad dog is stronger and wrong is winning the fight. "Who is going to win in the end?" a young brave asked. The chief answered, "The one you feed."