

DEEP PREP GUIDE

VISION | NOVEMBER 16 | BIG GOD STORY

BOTTOM LINE:

Our God vision shapes our call + response.

STORY TEXT:

Isaiah 6:1-8

MEMORY VERSE:

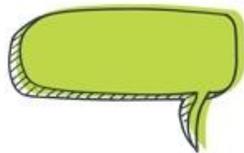
And God asked, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Isaiah 6:8 (NLT)

What was a picture or representation you had of God when you were a teenager? A Santa Claus like grandfather, an aloof relative who is around for the good times, but disappeared when things get tough, or even a strict mother-like character who never let you have any fun? The way our minds work, it's no wonder how we respond differently to God when we are confronted with different pictures of who God is, and even a description of an encounter with God.

Young people have fascinating imaginations. In many ways, we can let them teach us what it's like to imagine. In other ways, we need to come together to re-orient and re-imagine what God is like and allow that to shape our response to Him. In the book of Isaiah, we encounter a story of Isaiah encountering a God he thought he imagined, but was struck with fear, awe, and wonder.

In similar ways, people have been encountering God for centuries and are caught in dynamic, life-changing experiences where their lives will never be the same. Maybe it's not as full of a God vision as Isaiah had, but people today can encounter God and be changed as a result. In looking at the Isaiah call and response, we too are confronted with the reality that we need a God vision to shape our call from Him and response to Him.

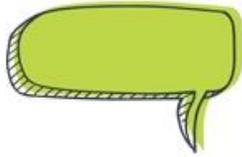


TENSION

In the same way, students can have a picture of God that is not helpful to shaping a dynamic call and response to their God vision. What happens if that picture of God is of an “aloof relative”? We respond accordingly. What happens when God is a Santa Claus-like character who gives good things but then disappears? We respond accordingly.

Tension lies at the heart of the Isaiah passage. Isaiah was about to have a serious call to be a prophet for the people of Israel. He had tough, good news he needed to deliver to them. The God vision he received brought him to initially a difficult place, but it was out of the difficult place that God shaped His path for him moving forward.

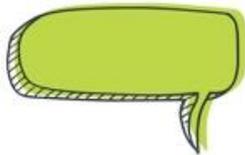
For our students, this is tension. God doesn't always come to us in neat and tidy ways. As much as we want to package God stories into creative and understandable ways, there are pictures and visions of God we just don't understand right away. This is tension for students. As much as we want to give students a clearer vision of God so they can respond to the God we know will carry them now and throughout their life, we always hold this in tension with the fact that God is shown in uncomfortable, un-planned, and sometimes disturbing ways. Just as Isaiah was confronted with God and the immediate response was "woe is me" – a sign of sorrow and distress, we can be distressed and full of "awe-sorrow" with where we are at with our vision of God. The point is God doesn't let us stay there. He wants to call us and give us the opportunity to respond in faith.



TEXT [CONTEXT]

The book of Isaiah has been immensely influential in the formation of Christianity. The call of Isaiah in chapter 6 serves as a pivotal point in the 66 chapters, and perhaps is one of the more famous sections of the Old Testament. It is significant because of its specificity of the 'God-vision', but also because of the place of the prophet Isaiah in the Christian and Jewish faith tradition.

Much discussion and debate can be had regarding the experience Isaiah had in chapter 6. Whether we should take it literally or as a vision in a dream, our bottom line can still be true for students today.



TRUTH

God