



IT'S GOD
CALLING



WEEK FIVE: ISAIAH AND DAVID

Isaiah is considered to be one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament, and the theme of his book essentially, is the message of salvation. In fact, Isaiah's name means "**YAWHEW IS SALVATION**". Most of us know the scriptures concerning the coming of the Messiah in chapter 9 and 53. Other chapters such as those we studied earlier, 40 and 55, contain wonderful words and promises. Isaiah's ministry ran from around 740 B.C., the last year of the reign of Judah's King Uzziah, through to the end of King Hezekiah's rule in 686 B.C. Although this is the only book that bears his name, according to scholars, he also wrote 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings and the first half of 2 Kings. His writing is referred to more than 35 times in the New Testament, and he is the most quoted of all the Old Testament writers in the Gospels. He married a prophetess, (we don't know her name), and had at least two sons. In 723 B.C. during his ministry, the northern tribes of Israel were conquered and taken into captivity by the Assyrian Empire. I understand that it was the time of the founding of Rome and the first Olympic games of the Greeks.

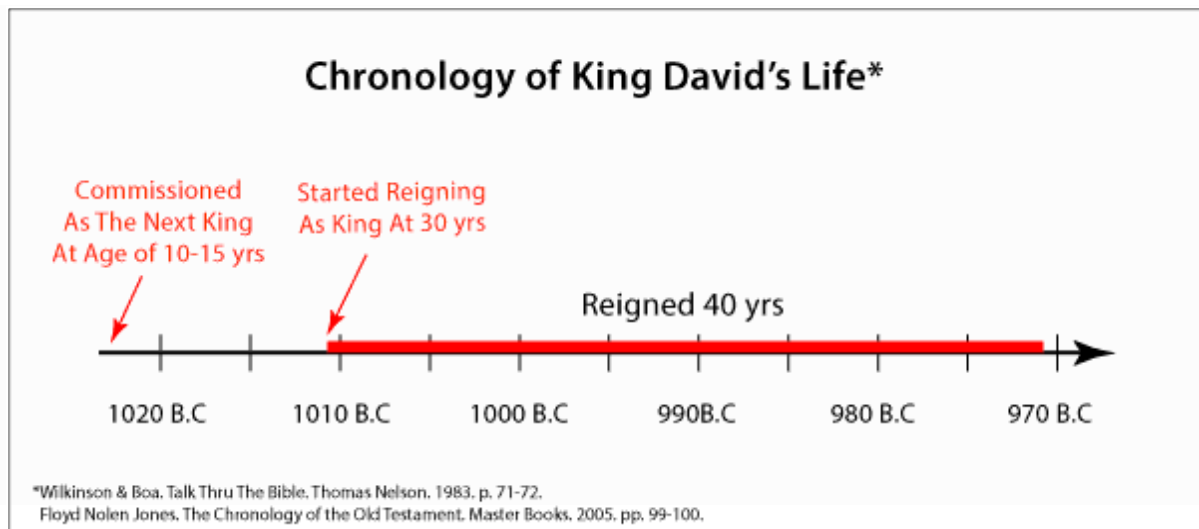
Read Isaiah 6

The first four verses describe the opening of the vision that Isaiah saw. It must have been an immensely powerful experience for him.

- What is the first thing that Isaiah saw?
- His response was that of a man filled with fear. Why do you think he felt that?
- Have you ever experienced that kind of awe?
- How were his sins dealt with?
- What was the response of Isaiah to God's questions?
- Are we willing to respond in the same way:
"Here am I. Send me."
- Did you notice the use of the word 'us' in God's question? It is the same as in Genesis 1:26. What does it tell us?
- Verses 8 and 9 seem, perhaps, a little strange. What do we think God meant?
- What is the good news Isaiah heard in verse



Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13



No-one can ever say God is predictable in the way he calls and deals with people. Think about the individuals we have already studied: Joshua was probably around 70 years old when God told Moses to appoint him leader of the Israelites. Samuel was a young boy. Abraham was thought to be around 75 when God told him to take his family and belongings and set out for a country which God would show him. Jeremiah is thought to have been in his early 20s when God called him. There is no set age, gender, economic status, or family, that God uses as his yardstick for calling someone to his service.

- What does this tell us about God?
- Does this encourage you, and why?

King Saul had not lived up to the standard God required of him as king to the extent that God rejected him from reigning over Israel (see chapter 15). This is the starting point for our study on the call of David.

Samuel was very sorrowful over the situation with Saul, but God spoke clearly to him. *“You have mourned long enough for Saul. I have rejected him as king of Israel. Now fill our horn with olive oil and go to Bethlehem. Find a man named Jesse who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my new king.”*

- Have we ever experienced God speaking to us in a comparable way? Perhaps issues in the family, or the church, or with friends have deeply upset us, but God says it's time to move on. You cannot hold yourself responsible if you have done everything possible to bring about reconciliation.
- Why was Samuel fearful about this instruction? What solution did God give him?
- Do we think about asking God for solutions to our problems? Do we try and solve the problem ourselves but fail miserably?
- We should burn the words of verse 4 on our minds: *“So Samuel did what the Lord said...”* We could save ourselves a lot of heartache if only we did that instead of doing things our way.
- Samuel had a powerful reputation as a judge and a prophet which led the people of Bethlehem to ask if he had come in peace. Do we seek to be Godly in the way we live and respond to situations?

It is interesting to read how even the greatest of men can be swayed by looks and demeanour. God spoke clearly to Samuel (verse 7):

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Don’t judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn’t make decisions the way you do! People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at a person’s thoughts and intentions.’”

Remember, when we studied the book of James (chapter 2), he spoke powerfully about showing partiality by judging a man’s appearance.

- Is this something of which we are guilty? How do we overcome it?

You can almost sense Samuel’s frustration when he asks, verse 11, *“Are these all the sons you have?”* God told Job in chapter 8, not to despise the day of small things. Jesse doesn’t seem to have thought David worthy of being brought to Samuel because he was so young. However, this was the one whom God had chosen to become king.

Verse 13 says: *“So David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the olive oil he had brought and poured it on David’s head. **And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.**”* He had fulfilled all that God had asked him to do.

If we continue to read through the books of Samuel, we will see that although David had been anointed by Samuel it took about fifteen years before his calling was settled.

- Are we prepared to wait for God’s timing?
- David had a challenging time during those fifteen years, partly because of Saul, but also because of his own sins. We all know how he spied Bathsheba and he took her, despite the fact she was married, and she bore him a son, who died in a few months. He compounded his sin by having her husband put in the front line of battle, so that he would be killed.

We might wonder why God had chosen him, but despite his failings, God said of David, that he was a man after his own heart.

- Does it encourage us to know that God will forgive our sins, if we come in repentance? In Psalm 51 David says: *“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence, and don’t take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me again the joy of your salvation and make me willing to obey you.”*
- What does verse 17 say?

We don’t have to be anything but repentant, accepting of God’s grace and willing to be called and used by God.

Prayer:

Father, May we prepare ourselves for your work by following the instruction in Micah 6:8 “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” Amen

