



Greetings!

Please read [Isaiah 6: 1-8](#)

Over the last few weeks there have been massive cheers in our region for our NFL team, the Cincinnati Bengals. Founded by the legendary coach Paul Brown as an expansion team in the late 1960's, the team has struggled with the successes of other storied franchises, however, that does not mean that the team has been unsupported by this region. [USA Today](#) published the meaning of our Who Dey cheer: "Who dey, who dey, who dey think gonna beat dem Bengals?" If you have followed the Bengals throughout their history, the answer is pretty much every team in the NFL has beaten the Bengals numerous times!

Perhaps you have enjoyed watching them play over the last 5 weeks and relished the performance of the fabulous group of new players led by QB Joe Burrow? It has taken on a rarified air space. It feels other worldly – like a place we have never been before.

The prophet Isaiah found himself in such a place. The first five chapters of Isaiah lays out the spiritual problem of the Judeans. They have forgotten and forsaken the Lord ([1:4](#)); their worship is futile ([1:11-17](#)); corruption marks their leadership ([1:23](#)) and greed has led to injustice ([5:8](#)). Isaiah 6:1 then describes the political crisis: the long-serving king who brought stability has died.



Purification of Isaiah, Cathedral d' Amiens, France  
1220-1240 AD.

In this context comes the text before us, a powerful scene of the Holy in the midst of humanity. In the Temple an experience unfolds with holy beings and fire. The purification of the lips of Isaiah results in a call to ministry. Isaiah's hearing and response to God's direction forever changes the narrative of the people and his life, providing multiple texts that have transformed the faithful for millennia.

Three of my favorite hymns set this text to music. Perhaps they have impacted your life too?

[Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty](#)  
[The Voice of God is Calling](#)

Each of these musical settings of the text add their own grandeur to the story that you have read. Why? Because each hymn talks about real spiritual experience that can be identified with at many points along the way. Maybe you didn't have a seraph touch a hot coal to your lips, but have you known the sense of your life being transformed because you knew your sin was forgiven? Or perhaps you were in touch with worship in a particular place or a particular time that truly was Holy?

The experience of Isaiah in the passage is known as a [theophany](#). Finding God in the midst of our life unexpectedly is overwhelming. And it was so for Isaiah, who responded by offering his life to explain to the people Who Dei.

[Prayer](#)

Loving God,  
you have called forth disciples and prophets  
to live and speak your word.  
Give us ears to hear,..  
lives to respond,  
and voices to proclaim the good news of salvation,  
which we know in our Savior Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever. Amen.

Peace,



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