

## Isaiah's Burning Coal

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. You shall place the ark of the testimony there, and you shall screen the ark with the veil. You shall bring in the table and arrange what belongs on it; and you shall bring in the lampstand and mount its lamps. Moreover, you shall set the gold altar of incense before the ark of the testimony, and set up the veil for the doorway to the tabernacle. "

Exodus 40:1-5 (NAU<sup>1</sup>)

Then he placed the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the veil; and he burned fragrant incense on it, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Exodus 40:26-27 (NAU)

Now the main point in what has been said *is this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and **in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man**. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this *high priest* also have something to offer. Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve **a copy and shadow of the heavenly things**, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "That you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain."

Hebrews 8:1-5 (NAU)

When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much **incense** was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. Then the angel **took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar**, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

Revelation 8:1-5 (NAU)

The Golden Altar (or Altar of Incense), which stands before the throne of God in heaven<sup>2</sup>, is an integral piece of furniture used in, and typifying worship in the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The incense which is burned on the Golden Altar, before God, are the prayers and praises of the saints. But, for those who reject God's Sacrifice of Grace, the Lord Jesus Christ, it becomes a source for the outpouring of the wrath of God in the coming Day of the Lord.

### **The Copy and Shadow**<sup>3</sup>

The *Tabernacle in the Wilderness* was laid out in a specific manner – a pattern given to Moses by God. The *Tabernacle* was, rudimentarily speaking, a box, in a box, in a box. It was comprised of the

<sup>1</sup> NAU – New American Standard, Updated 1995.

<sup>2</sup> And the related "copy" instituted by God, in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, in the *Tabernacle in the Wilderness*, under Moses; and later that in the temple in Jerusalem. In the tabernacle and temple, the *Golden Altar* stood before the *Ark of the Covenant*, but separated by a curtain.

<sup>3</sup> The typology of the tabernacle and temple addressed in this article is **not** discussed exhaustively, but rather, only elementarily. It is to give the reader a basic understanding of layout and furnishing to put the main topic of discussion into perspective.

*Holy of Holies* (or the *Most Holy Place*<sup>4</sup> or the *Holiest of All*), where the *Ark of the Covenant* resided, the *Holy Place*, containing the *Golden Altar*, *Table of Showbread* (also known as the *Table of the Bread of Presence*) and the *Golden Lampstand*, and the *Outer Courtyard* where the *Bronze Laver* (Basin) and *Bronze Altar* were located.

In the Jerusalem Temple (specifically the temple built by Herod the Great, which was still being completed in the days of Jesus' earthly ministry) other courts also existed. Like the *Tabernacle in the Wilderness*, the Jerusalem Temple was a box, in a box, in a box. It too included a *Holy of Holies*, (though no Ark resided there at this time, see the section below on the *Ark of the Covenant*), the *Holy Place* containing the *Golden Altar*, *Table of Showbread* and *Golden Lampstand*. The area outside the *Holy Place* was known as the *Court of Priests* (which corresponds with the *Outer Courtyard* in *Tabernacle in the Wilderness*). Beyond the aforementioned temple proper, was the *Court of Israel* (where men could enter and which was delineated from the *Court of Priests* merely by a 1½ foot / 45cm high balustrade<sup>5</sup>) followed by the *Court of Women* (for Jewish women). Beyond this, there was a cordoned off area called the *Sacred Enclosure*, with designated points of entry. Within this area, and the temple proper, no foreigner was allowed to enter.<sup>6</sup> Gentile presence was only allowed from the outer temple mount area to the *Sacred Enclosure* – as such it was called the *Court of the Gentiles*<sup>7</sup>.

The *Court of Priests*, the *Holy Place* and the *Holy of Holies* were the places in which the sacrificial and priestly system functioned. The *Outer Courtyard/Court of Priests* contained a *Bronze Altar*<sup>8</sup> where the daily and personal sacrifices were performed. In from the *Bronze Altar*, toward the *Holy Place*, but still in the *Court of Priests* was a *Bronze Laver* in which the priest would wash (sanctify) their hands and feet for work.<sup>9</sup> In the *Holy Place* there was three pieces of furniture: the *Golden Lampstand* on the left (south) and opposite the *Table of Showbread* (also known as the *Table of the Bread of Presence*), on the right (north). Standing before the curtain<sup>10</sup> and entrance to the *Holy of Holies* was the *Golden Altar* (also known as the *Altar of Incense*<sup>11</sup>). Following Israel's return from exile in Babylon the *Holy of Holies* did not contain any furniture or implements, that is to say, there was no *Ark of the Covenant*.

The entire layout of the Tabernacle and its furnishings is not without significance. The first piece of furniture in the *Court of Priests* which would be approached was the *Bronze Altar* upon which one's sacrifice was made: for the [would-be] Christian we can liken it to accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Next is the *Bronze Laver* in which the priest is washed and we are/were baptized. Note that the New Testament calls Christians "a holy" and "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5,9), a "kingdom and priests to our God"<sup>12</sup> (Rev 5:10). But it is only AFTER accepting Jesus' sacrifice that we become priests and can be baptized (if we have truly repented and belong to Christ).

Priests, having sanctified themselves for service by washing their hands and feet, were able to enter the *Holy Place*. There they ministered at the *Golden Lampstand* to keep its light burning – cleaning the oil lamps and refilling them with the specially prepared oil. The Christian can see significance in this piece of furniture and the oil (Biblically symbolic of the Holy Spirit) with Psalm 119:105, "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" and of 2 Cor 4:6, "For God, who said, 'Light shall

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Updated Edition, 1994), 23.

<sup>5</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Updated Edition, 1994), 27.

<sup>6</sup> In the Jerusalem temple around the time of Christ, the Roman authorities had signs placed around the temple, written in Latin and Greek, warning that gentiles could not enter the courts of the temple – on pain of death. Essentially, the Roman signage said, "Proceed at your own risk" and/or "All care taken, no responsibility held" – as we might say. It is relation to this that we can see the issue the Jews from Asia made of seeing Paul in the temple and accusing him of taking gentiles into the temple in Acts 21:27.

<sup>7</sup> A footnote in Edersheim's book states that term for this area in Jewish writings is the 'mountain of the house' and that the *Court of Gentiles* is just common use. Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services* (Peabody Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Updated Edition, 1994), 22.

<sup>8</sup> Stone's Tanach translates the Hebrew into *Copper Altar*.

<sup>9</sup> Exodus 30:17-21

<sup>10</sup> Also referred to as a veil, cf 27:50,51; Mark 15:37,38; Luke 23:44-46.

<sup>11</sup> Luke 1:5-11

<sup>12</sup> The King James Version (translation) of the Bible says, "kings and priests".

shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

Numbers 4:7 says, of the *Table of Showbread (Table of the Bread of Presence)*, that "the continual bread be on it". This bread was to be eaten on the Sabbath, before the Lord, by the priests. Only the priests were to eat of this bread. We are told, in 1 Samuel 21:6, that it was the *Bread of Presence* that was given to David, by the priest of the city of Nob, when he was fleeing King Saul. Jesus makes reference to this incident in Matthew 12:3-4, Mark 2:25-26 and Luke 6:3-4. We see here, for the Christian, that Christ is the true bread, a continual sacrifice, offering and food for us. And the elements (symbols) of the Christian Communion, i.e. the bread and the wine (which have come from the Jewish Passover Seder<sup>13</sup>), are for the Christian only; and not to be taken in a reckless and unworthy manner (1 Corinthians 10:15-16; 11:20-34). When the priests of Israel partook of the *Bread of Presence* they were also to burn incense at the *Golden Altar* – giving praise to God. How great is God's pattern for us.

The *Golden Altar (or Altar of Incense)* was where specially blended incense was burned, upon hot coals, before the Lord. It is here that the daily incense was burned, the priests burned incense on the Sabbath, and it was here – on the Day of Atonement – that the High Priest would take some of the coals from this altar, into a special vessel and carry the burning incense before him as he went into the *Holy of Holies* with the blood to be sprinkled on the *Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant* (Leviticus 16).

With Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, the curtain, or veil, of the temple was torn in two. The way is now open for the Christian to come before God – in the name, and by the blood, of Jesus.

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Hebrews 10:19-22 (NAU)

### **The Ark of the Covenant**

Despite the example of God's divine judgment against the northern kingdom of Israel and how she fell to the Assyrians with her people taken into exile, the southern kingdom of Judah, likewise, failed to repent, failed to show loyalty and faithfulness to Yahweh. And just like many in today's churches, Judah used physical blessing and prosperity as the barometer of being in God's will. They disregarded their sins, the nation's sin and rejected God's laws. They failed to understand that faithfulness to God and His Word was to be maintained in good times and bad. They failed to understand that material blessing was not a licence to continue on with the status quo or their own pursuits. They went through the motions of worshipping God – whilst living their lives the way they wanted. They thought that Judah and Jerusalem were safe!

But possession of the Ark of the Covenant, material blessings, prosperity and Jerusalem itself were not enough to save Judah. To the northern kingdom of Israel God sent prophets: warning of the imminent danger of their rebellion and God's demand for repentance and return to His ways. But Israel failed to listen. To the southern kingdom of Judah God likewise sent prophets, and like her sister Israel, she did not listen. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, warned,

And the LORD said to me, "Faithless Israel has proved herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. Go and proclaim these words toward the north and say, 'Return, faithless Israel,' declares the LORD; 'I will not look upon you in anger. For I am gracious,' declares the LORD; 'I will not be angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the LORD your God And have scattered your favors to the strangers under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice,' declares the

<sup>13</sup> Seder meaning service.

LORD. 'Return, O faithless sons,' declares the LORD; 'For I am a master to you, and I will take you one from a city and two from a family, And I will bring you to Zion.' Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding. **It shall be in those days when you are multiplied and increased in the land," declares the LORD, "they will no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' And it will not come to mind, nor will they remember it, nor will they miss it, nor will it be made again."**

Jeremiah 3:11-16

After seventy years in Babylon, Judah did return to the land, and her people adopted the name of the kingdom and tribe they were predominantly from: Judah, land of the Judeans, that is, the Jews. Nevertheless, Judah's exile brought with it the loss of the Ark of the Covenant and as Jeremiah said, "Nor will it be made again!"<sup>14</sup>

In 63BC the Roman general Pompey went to Jerusalem to gain advantage for Rome, since Judea, at the time, was in the middle of civil war. Though gaining entry into Jerusalem by the efforts of those who saw Rome as an ally, Pompey was restrained for three months from gaining entry to the temple. Finally, however, Pompey was not to be denied and the temple fell into Roman hands. F.F. Bruce, in *Israel and the Nations*, notes,

At last the Romans succeeded in forcing an entrance from the north side of the temple area, and many Jews were killed as the whole area fell into Roman hands. It is recorded as a remarkable fact that the priests in the temple court went on with their sacrificial duties, ignoring what was happening, and were killed in great numbers ... Pompey visited the captured area and inspected it all thoroughly. He even insisted on entering the holy of holies, despite the horrified protests of the priests, for only the high priest was permitted to enter this innermost shrine, and that only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, bearing the blood of the special sacrifice offered on that day. But their attempts to prevent Pompey from going in made him all the more determined to see what it was they were trying to hide from him; for there were curious rumours among the Gentiles about what was kept in the Jewish holy of holies – among them grotesque and sinister rumours. When Pompey went in, however, he found exactly nothing – it was empty.<sup>15</sup>

It is also reported that Pompey came out stating that he could not understand all the interest in a sanctuary which was nothing but an empty room. But the significance of the emptiness of The Most Holy Place – the Holy of Holies – is seen in Jesus Christ.

Jesus' name in Hebrew is Yeshua – which means *Yahweh is Salvation*. Jesus' name alone answers the question of who is the salvation of the Lord (Yahweh)? Yahweh Himself is! Matthew 1:23, quoting Isa 7:14, says of Jesus that he would be called "Immanuel" which means "God With Us" or "With Us is God". How appropriate was it that the *Ark of the Covenant* (where God's presence in the temple dwelt) was not present in the *Holy of Holies* in the days of Jesus' earthly ministry. For when Jesus was in the temple – God was in the temple. And not just in the temple with priest as mediators for the people, but God was present with Israel. In Christ, God was walking with them, talking to them, living with them, tabernacling with them. God was present with His people.

## **Isaiah**

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the

<sup>14</sup> There are explanations and stories in the apocryphal writings stating that Jeremiah hid the Ark in a cave in Mount Nebo, prior to the invasion by Nebuchadnezzar, and that its location will not be revealed until God is ready for it to be found. But such stories, in texts which are not regarded as being inspired, are irrelevant to this discussion. *Sola Scriptura*.

<sup>15</sup> F.F. Bruce (1963) (Revised David F. Payne), *Israel and the Nations* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 1997), 181.

voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth *with it* and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven."

Isaiah 6:1-7 (NAU)

What is the significance of the burning coal touching Isaiah's lips? Why could Isaiah's iniquity be taken away and his sins be forgiven in this manner? Why could not everyone go through the same process to be made clean? If man could be cleansed in this manner, then what need was there for the sacrifice of Jesus?

We must remember that the *Tabernacle in the Wilderness*, and later the Jerusalem Temples, were just types and shadows of the true in heaven. It is the tabernacle of God in heaven where the ultimate sacrificial offering, blood and cleansing would be required. In this we speak of Jesus,

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were *committed* under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. For a covenant is valid *only* when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. Therefore even the first *covenant* was not inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you." And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood. And according to the Law, *one may* almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference* to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

Hebrews 9:11-28 (NAU)

So how could the coals that touched Isaiah's lips cleanse him, prior to Christ's sacrifice? From the beginning God set in motion His plan for salvation. The eternal, sovereign God who created this universe and time by which we are governed by, is not Himself governed by His creation, nor is He governed by the constraints of time. God is eternal. For those in the Old Testament they essentially look forward to the coming Messiah; but for those living after His coming, we look back at Christ.

In this way, before the throne of an eternal God, could Isaiah's sins be forgiven? But what is the significance of the coal?

### **The Coals of the Altar**

The *Bronze Altar* in the *Outer Courtyard* was where sacrifices were offered. The fire of this altar was not to go out (Lev 6:13), the fire was to be fed continually. Once pieces of wood on the *Bronze Altar* had reduced to coals, some of the coals were transferred to the *Golden Altar* for the burning of incense. It is here that we see the significance of the coals.

The coals upon which the Incense was to be burned were the coals upon which sacrifices had been made. The incense could only be burned post sacrifice!

As Christians we pray in the name of Jesus. It is because of His faithfulness, His sacrifice, His blood and His life that we can come before God. Our prayers – the smoke of our incense rising up before God – are made upon the coals of His sacrifice. We can not come before God apart from The Saviour who is our Sacrifice, High Priest and Intercessor.

Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Romans 8:33-34 (NAU)

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world*.

1 John 2:1-2 (NAU)

I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. Then I *began* to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Revelation 5:1-8 (NAU)

Isaiah's experience before the throne of God has marked similarities with John's in Revelation. But, none more so than the coals from the *Altar*<sup>16</sup>. Where the prayers of the saints are to be offered upon the *Altar* before God in Revelation, it is the coal from this same *Altar*<sup>17</sup>, the coal which is post sacrifice (that is, after the sacrifice of Messiah/Christ) that touched Isaiah's lips and cleansed him.

Philip Hacking in his commentary on Isaiah makes the statement,

<sup>16</sup> Technically, the altar from which the coal is taken is not explicitly named in Isa 6:6. Based on other Scripture, particularly Revelation and the typology of the pattern of the tabernacle, the *Golden Altar* seems most likely. Nevertheless, even if it was not the *Golden Altar*, but the *Bronze Altar*, the significance of the action is not changed. The *Bronze Altar* is where the sacrifice is made and burned; if the coals came from this altar, they still relate to the purging of sin through the true sacrifice (i.e. the Messiah) and not the copy in the earthly sacrificial system.

<sup>17</sup> Opinions are mixed, in commentaries, as to whether the altar is the *Bronze Altar* (Barnes' Notes; Adam Clarke's Commentary; Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary) or the *Golden Altar* (Keil and Delitsch Commentary on the Old Testament). Isaiah describes God's throne from the standpoint of being in the temple, he talks of the angels (seraphims) who flew around the throne (which is described as being on the tapestry of the curtain in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness); also, he describes the smoke (incense) filling the temple. The action of the angel bringing the coal to Isaiah seems, most likely, to be indicative of coming from the throne area of God, and via the *Altar of Incense*.

Any encounter with God should lead to an awareness of our uncleanness. In the New Testament, when Jesus performed the remarkable miracle of bringing in the great catch of fish, Peter asks the Lord to leave him because he was so conscious of his own unworthiness (Luke 5:1-11). Isaiah was made aware not only of the sins of the nation he represented but of his own sin ... There will be no power to preach until the preacher is penitent, and leaders in the church today need to remember Isaiah's need for repentance and cleansing before he could minister God's word to Israel ... There is a real anticipation here of the gospel message of complete forgiveness through Christ, where there is penitence. Isaiah's lips were touched as a sign of cleansing and atonement, as were Jeremiah's (Jeremiah 1:9), because by them the message would be preached. Ultimately all of us need cleansed lips; the effective Christian must first be the cleansed Christian.<sup>18</sup>

The salvation God offered freely to Isaiah, is the salvation God offers to us today. It is the free gift of God, but yet it will cost us something. It requires truth and honesty on our part, it requires a revelation of a lost state to realise the need for a saviour. It requires a revelation that we are poor if we are to seek to become rich; it requires a revelation that we are sinners if we are to seek the robe of righteousness; it requires a revelation that we are sick, if we are to seek The Physician; it requires a revelation that we are blind before we endeavour to see; it requires the revelation that we are diseased before we seek our healing; it requires a revelation of our uncleanness and filth if we are to seek being cleansed; and it requires a revelation of our wretched state before we can seek forgiveness. We need a revelation of the need for humility. We need a revelation that we need to humble ourselves before Almighty God. We need to be humble to come before Yahweh, the God of the Bible, and bow our heart and knee before Him and ask Him to forgive and save us. We need to say, as Isaiah did, "Woe is me, for I am ruined!"

Of Isaiah, Barry Webb, notes,

The vision of God produces not rapture but sheer terror in the prophet. He knows himself to be utterly ruined, for two reasons: he is unclean, and he has seen God ... Isaiah cannot praise and serve God as the seraphs do because, in the depths of his being, he is unclean, just as his compatriots are. It is remarkable to see the prophet identify himself so completely with those whose sins he has been denouncing in the previous chapters. But in the presence of God degrees of sin become irrelevant. It is the holiness of God which reveals to us our true condition, not comparison with others. Paradoxically, Isaiah's confession of being unclean like his fellows has set him apart from them, for he, unlike them, has been willing to acknowledge his condition. The altar from which the burning coal is taken by the seraphs ... symbolizes the entire provision which God had made in the temple and its services for sins of his people. Isaiah is cleansed, not by his own efforts, but purely by the grace of God.<sup>19</sup>

*Oh, the glorious mercies of our Lord and Saviour  
Jesus Christ, Immanuel, Yahweh who Is Salvation.*

<sup>18</sup> Philip Hacking, *Crossway Bible Guides: Discovering Isaiah* (Leicester: Crossway Books, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), 35.

<sup>19</sup> Barry Webb, *The Bible Speaks Today Commentary Series: The Message of Isaiah* (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1996), 59,60.