

The Expert

Mark 4:10-12 (KJV)

10 And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. **11** And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: **12** That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

One time I read an article on the internet with a title something like, "All The Times Jesus Was A Jerk." In that article, they used this passage as a supposed example of Jesus intentionally trying to be hard to understand. However, this passage occurs more than once in the bible and is fulfillment of prophecy.

Luke 8:10 (KJV) And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

Matthew 13:13-14 (KJV)

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. **14** And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

All these verses reference a passage in Isaiah, but Matthew is the only one that says it. Jesus was quoting Isaiah 6:9 and expects that we're familiar with the entire chapter. At a glance, it appears that Jesus is using parables to hide the meaning of his words, which seems odd, because parables are generally used to make words more understandable. To understand what Jesus is saying here, we must understand the verses he's quoting. But before we explore Isaiah 6, I want to show you a parable called, "The Expert."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKorP55Aqvg&feature=youtu.be>

Don't Feed the Trolls

My company loves this video, because it shows how many of us feel when we are speaking with people who don't understand what we do. Many of you are probably like the expert in the video; you're an expert in your field, but you work with many people who don't understand what you do. Like the expert in the video, we talk to people who ask for things for us, but they don't understand what they're asking for. They want you to be an expert, but they also want you to give them simple "Yes or No" answers to difficult questions. The questions themselves make no sense, yet they don't even realize it. As the expert, you begin to wonder if the questions being asked are serious.

In modern terminology, this is called "trolling."

Trolling – to post inflammatory or inappropriate messages or comments on (the Internet, especially a message board) for the purpose of upsetting other users and provoking a response.

So, some people post trolls, not because they believe what they're posting, but because they know the posts will upset the people who read them.

The article I mentioned earlier that had a title like, "All The Times Jesus Was A Jerk" was probably just trolling.

Believe it or not, Isaiah 6 is one of the first scriptures to talk about trolling.

A Man of Unclean Lips

Isaiah 6 starts by giving us timeframe for the vision that he's about to relate.

Isaiah 6:1-4 (KJV)

1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. **2** Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. **3** And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. **4** And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

Now remember that Isaiah chapter 1 states that it takes place “in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” So, by time we get to chapter 6, Isaiah has been a prophet for many years. God’s spoken through Isaiah on more than one occasion. Isaiah isn’t a newcomer to the presence of God. In this passage, he lets us know that he’s not only speaking on God’s behalf, but he’s physically in the presence of God. Look at what happens to the veteran prophet Isaiah when he comes into the presence of God this time:

Isaiah 6:5 (KJV) Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Isaiah is overwhelmed by God’s presence. Even though Isaiah has been a prophet for many years and God has chosen Isaiah to speak for Him before, when he gets in the presence of God, he says, “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips.”

Isaiah is an expert. He’s been in the presence of God in prayer before. He’s spoken the word of the Lord with authority. By all accounts we would expect Isaiah to be on a ‘first-name’ basis with God. Yet when Isaiah comes face to face with the full power of Heaven, Isaiah realizes that he’s nothing. He’s a prophet, yet he calls himself “a man of unclean lips.”

We’d be doing well just to act like Isaiah did in this passage. We may feel like we’re doing well in our walk with God, but then the presence of God moves upon us and it all changes. When the Holy Ghost comes into the service, you find strong people suddenly weak. Grown men who never show any emotion are suddenly weeping at the altar. Why? Because when we’re faced with the presence of God, we realize we’re nothing. Just like Isaiah, we’re left shouting “I am a man of unclean lips.”

“Fire People”

Isaiah 6:6 (KJV) Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

The Hebrew word for fire is “serap.” The suffix “-im” makes the word plural, just like the letter “s” does in English, except it usually has the context of plural people. So, “seraphim” would be translated into something like “fire people.”

Fire is used to separate gold ore into pure gold and dross, or junk. Symbolically, fire is used to purify people. So, the seraphim are purifiers. Their job is to make people pure and worthy of being in the presence of the Most High God.

Isaiah 6:7 (KJV) And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

The seraphim makes Isaiah pure. It touches his lips with a coal from the altar and by doing so, Isaiah’s sin is purged. Isaiah didn’t have to go through a complicated ritual to become holy. He didn’t have to pay penance or slay a thousand Philistines like Saul made David do. No, Isaiah must endure a simple, almost symbolic, act of having his lips touched with a coal.

Fortunately, we don’t have to touch our lips with coals; we go straight to the baptism tank. Our sins are purged through the waters of baptism in Jesus name.

In both cases, it’s a simple act that purges the sin and makes us worthy to be in God’s presence. God wants us to be in His presence so He made the act of becoming holy quick and painless. But after He brings us into His presence, God immediately sends us away from His presence, so that He can bring others in.

Isaiah 6:8 (KJV) Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Isaiah volunteers to go out from the Presence of God into the world. Isaiah has seen the throne of God. He’s seen the train of His robe fill the temple. He has seen the wings of the seraphim. One of the seraphim touched his lips with a coal. He’s heard the voice of God with his own ears.

Expert Gibberish

In other words, Isaiah is now an expert.

Most of you are experts. You've been in the presence of God. You're going to take what you've experienced into the world and you're going to tell people what you've experienced, but they aren't going to understand. It's going to sound like gibberish to them. You can tell somebody about how the presence of God feels when God moves through a service all you want, but to them, you may as well be trying to describe what the middle C note smells like.

Isaiah 6:9-10 (KJV)

9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. **10** Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

What God's telling Isaiah is that when he tries to witness to people, they aren't going to understand. Likewise, when we try to tell people about the message of salvation, they aren't going to understand. Like our hapless expert in the video, they may try to take our words and repeat them back to us, but they won't make sense.

For us, they want us to make a plan of salvation based on good works. We reply, "No, salvation comes through faith; good works will follow from that faith." They reply, "So you're saying it's possible for you to create a salvation plan that includes good works?" If you've experience the presence of God, then you're an expert. But to people who haven't experience it, you will probably not make much sense. So, when Jesus says,

Mark 4:11-12 (KJV)

11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: **12** That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

In other words, "You guys are the experts. You've been in the presence of God, but when you speak to others, it's going to seem like they're just trolling you. In the back of your mind, you're going to ask yourself, 'are they really this stupid?'"

But remember, you're an expert; they're not. You must keep trying to explain it to them. The easiest way to explain it is to make them experts too. That is, to have them experience the presence of God as well. Some things are too hard to explain; they must be experienced for yourself.

As Long As It Takes

Isaiah asked God how long he should try to explain what he has seen, given that they are probably not going to understand it anyway.

Isaiah 6:11 (KJV) Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

In other words, "as long as it takes." We cannot be like our hero in the video and just give up trying to explain truth to people. We can't just give in to their attempts at minimizing the message or watering down the truth.

Matthew 7:14 (KJV) Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

We can't make our straight lines in the shape of a cat just to make it easier on ourselves. We are the experts. We know what a straight line looks like. We must keep pushing the message of straight lines and narrow roads until the end of time.