

HERE AM I: SEND ME!

Joe Slater

You've heard about the four Christian brothers, Sam Somebody, Even Everybody, Andy Anybody, and Norman Nobody. Whenever there was a job to be done at church, Everybody figured Anybody could do that; but Anybody thought Somebody should do it. Of course, Nobody ended up doing it. Poor nobody was worked to death! So, Nobody went to Heaven; as for Everybody, Anybody, and Somebody, you can finish the story!

Where are those who, like Isaiah the prophet, will say, "*Here am I! Send me!*" (Isaiah 6:9). We sing those words, but do we mean them? When Isaiah understood **who God was** (6:1-4) and **what the Lord had done for him** (6:5-7), he was ready to go to work. the task was difficult, but we hear no excuses from Isaiah.

Moses wasn't quite so willing – at least not at first. Why me? (I'm a nobody!) I don't know what to say? Even if I knew what to say, they won't listen to me. Besides, I'm not a good speaker. (See Exodus 4:1-10). We might contrast Moses with Isaiah: "Here am I! Send someone else!" God did, indeed, send someone else (Aaron); but He sent him **along with** Moses, **not in place of** him. Moses finally accepted his assignment and fulfilled it magnificently. Lesson: You don't have to do everything by yourself; it's OK for other people to help you. But you must do your part!

Isaiah and Moses completed their work; they did not quit part-way through the process. Perseverance and determination characterized these and other heroes of faith. In the New Testament, John Mark turned back after going part-way with Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:13). Why? Scripture doesn't say, but we know it offended Paul, who refused to take him on the second journey (Acts 15:36-39). Happily,

Mark later proved himself a dedicated worker, and his relationship with Paul flourished (2 Timothy 4:11).

Jesus rebuked the church at Sardis because they failed to finish what they had begun. "*I have not found your works perfect [complete] before God*" (Revelation 3:2). Despite their reputation for being a lively congregation, the Great Physician pronounced them dead (3:1).

May each of us zealously answer the call of God: "Here am I! Send me!" And may we persevere with determination so that God's will may be done, His name glorified, and we may enter Heaven by His grace!



Singing

We song "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" to teach and admonish one another (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Many efforts have been made to distinguish a psalm from a hymn from a spiritual song, but none have found wide acceptance.

We recognize, however, that "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," as a group, are distinguished from drinking songs, love ballads, war songs, comic ditties, etc.

The sentiment, the words of the song, accomplish the purposes for which we are directed to sing them: praising God and teaching and admonish one another. Tempo and harmony are important, but the words are more so.

Singing can accomplish both purposes. Organs, pianos, keyboards, guitars, and drum sets accomplish neither.

--Cecil May, Jr. (via *Preacher Talk*)

Ways I Deepen My Faith (when I read Revelation)

I see evil more clearly (chapters 12-18).

Looming over these chapters, John shows us evil personified as a violent dragon, two grotesque beasts, and a prostitute. We need these shocking images because we don't always see evil as plainly as that. The world teaches us to call un-nice things by nicer names. Instead of cheating, it's creative accounting. Instead of lying, it's massaging the truth. Instead of homosexuality, it's an alternative lifestyle. Instead of profanity, it's freedom of expression. It's not gossip; it's concern. Satan is a deceiver, and his most effective strategy is dressing up ugly realities in beautiful words.

So in these chapters, John exposes the evil that seeks to deceive his readers. False religion and godless government are not simply well-meaning but misguided institutions. They are evil beasts that belong to the dragon. Follow the strings, and you will find they are marionettes of Satan, puppets of the prince of this world. The fallen culture around you may at first appear attractive, and it will seem she is offering you the beginning of a beautiful friendship. But in Revelation 17, John unmasks her as a cheap, diseased streetwalker. She will be destroyed and all those with her, so don't be seduced.

John is teaching us to call sin by its true name. What looks harmless is hellish. This world is not a playground but a battleground, and the battle rages in the things I buy, movies I see, activities I pursue, conversations I have, priorities I set, and beliefs I live by. In all of these, Satan will tempt me to make subtle compromises, and I must keep my eyes wide open.

When I read Revelation, I see evil more clearly.

--Matt Proctor (via *Christian Standard*)