

A Vision of God

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Text: *Isaiah 6*

On November 22nd, 1963, a tragic and sad news was sent out across the United States and the world: **“The President is dead!”** John F. Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States, was fatally shot by a sniper - a nation was plunged into sorrow. It was a sad day for America. Great number of people flocked into churches. Ministers changed their sermons and preached messages of healing, comfort and hope to the people of America.

About 700 years before Christ was born in Bethlehem, the sad announcement was made, **“The King is Dead!”** King Uzziah, the eleventh King of Judah, had died.

1: In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train (skirt of his robe) filled the temple.

King Uzziah began his reign when he was only 16 years old, and he reigned for 52 years.

Overall, he was a good king.

2 Kings 15:3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done;

But tragedy happened. In the later years of his life ...

2 Chronicles 26:16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

God was not pleased and He struck Uzziah with leprosy, and he was an isolated leper until his death.

Isaiah, who was the prophet at that time, was broken. Isaiah had great reason to be broken and discouraged at the death of the king, because Uzziah was not only his king, he was also his friend.

Sometimes tragedy can break or make a man, but in Isaiah's case as we will see in the story both broke him and made him.

In his heartbreak, Isaiah somehow found his way to the Temple, perhaps to worship and to seek comfort.

Brothers and sisters, when tragedy strikes and sorrow fills our heart, the best place to be found is in the House of the Lord. We ought to always be found in the House of the Lord! But especially when we are facing the difficult circumstances in life. God is our Sanctuary. God is our refuge. Hope in God! Seek Him in the midst of tragedy.

Proverbs 8:17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Jeremiah 29:13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

Whether Isaiah went to the temple to worship or to seek comfort or not, we will never know, but this we know Isaiah was found in the right place when tragedy struck. And being found in the House of the Lord Isaiah saw something that forever changed his life.

What did Isaiah see when he went to the House of God?

I - Isaiah Saw The Lord

1: In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train (skirt of his robe) filled the temple.

Sometimes it takes a crisis or a tragedy before we are able to see the Lord, before we realize the reality of God. I believe Isaiah already knew the Lord before this experience but here we read he saw the Lord.

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

1 John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

But God has, on some few occasions, granted special and particular manifestations of Himself. One good example is when He manifested Himself to Moses at the burning bush and on the mount. In these cases there was a manifestation of Deity in some form, temporarily assumed, cognizable by the senses, and bringing the soul into close communion with the Eternal One himself.

Isaiah had a vision of God. God graciously manifested Himself.

Which Lord did Isaiah see?

1. A Sovereign Lord

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.

King Uzziah may be dead but God is still alive!

When Isaiah went up to the House of the Lord, he learned that the king was dead. But he had a revelation, God is alive! King Uzziah may be dead but the King of kings is still alive and sitting on a throne. God is still in charge. No one sits on the throne except God. Not any fallen sinful, weak man, not the devil but God sits on the throne.

Even in the midst of tragedy, crisis, trying times, chaos in the world and at home, we can be assured that the Lord is still on the throne. He is still in charge of all things and all creation.

2. An Exalted Lord

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.

Great and Exalted

3. A Glorious Lord

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.

The train signifies the skirt of a garment, or a robe. Kings of that time would wear robes with long trains - which is an emblem or symbol of dignity and majesty. Essentially, the same is said when a bride wears a dress with a long train today.

What Isaiah saw in his vision was the One sitting on the throne was wearing a robe with a large flowing train, so large it filled the temple.

A robe with long flowing train, implies the glory and the majesty of the One wearing it and His glory filled the temple.

4. A Holy Lord

Observe the Seraphims before the presence of God

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.

It is a great mark of respect in the East to cover the feet, and to bow down the head in the presence of the king.

3: And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

These angelic beings were proclaiming His glorious nature and character to one another, in the presence of the LORD.

Their preoccupation was to cry, *Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts:*

They sing Holy, Holy, Holy not because its in their church program, were not forced to, they were not manipulated to saying it, but because they knew and they see the holiness of God. And they sing it with passion and delight.

Why do they have to repeat three times?

Today if we want to give emphasis on something we highlight, we underline, we put arrows, etc. In Hebrew language, they repeat to give emphasis.

To say, *Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts* is to declare His holiness in the highest possible degree.

1 Samuel 2:2 There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.

Holiness is essentially His glory...

1 John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

3: And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Not just the temple but the whole earth is full of His glory: The seraphim surrounding the throne of God could see this probably more clearly than Isaiah could. We are often blind to the obvious glory of God all around us.

Look all around you and you would see that the whole earth is full of His glory. Oh, may God open our eyes to see His glory. Oh Lord, show us they glory!

4: And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

The doorpost holding the door which are not easy to shake, moved.

The angelic beings before the throne sang so powerfully, the door posts were shaken to its foundation! Shouldn't we sing with the same passion, the same heart, the same intensity? If the angels who have never experienced redemption could sing this way, how much more we who have been recipient of God's redemption. Do those angels have more to thank and praise God for than we do?

4: And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

A smoke or cloud of glory often marks the presence of the LORD.

While all these were going on in the temple. Isaiah saw something else.

II - Isaiah Saw Himself

5: 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.

undone - ruined, what a wretched state I am

When Isaiah saw the LORD, he knew what kind of man he was. This vision (or actual experience) of the throne of God did not immediately make Isaiah feel good. The more clearly he saw the LORD, the more clearly he saw how bad his state was. Isaiah felt like he was coming apart. He is in trouble. He is a dead man.

Isaiah's deep sense of depravity is consistent with the experience of other godly men in the presence of the LORD.

Job

Job 42:5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. 6: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Ezekiel

Ezekiel 44:4 Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD: and I fell upon my face.

Daniel

Daniel 10:15 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. 16: And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. 17: For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

Peter

Luke 5:8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

John

Revelation 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

Remember these men were not heathen nor wicked men.

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

After Isaiah had a vision of God he had an honest sense of his own sinfulness and unworthiness.

5: 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.

The first sin he saw is his sin of the tongue.

5: 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.

Words tell a lot about a person.

*Luke 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: **for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.***

I remember when I first got saved, one of the things God dealt with me is my language, my vocabulary.

Isaiah saw his sinfulness, and the sinfulness of his people, mainly in terms of sinful speech.

*5: 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 was a righteous, godly man by all outward appearance. Yet when he saw the enthroned King, the Lord of hosts, he saw how sinful he was in comparison.

When Isaiah's righteous life lay against the background of God's perfection, it looked different. **The importance of seeing the Lord and seeing ourselves** - then we are ready for cleansing...

The cleansing of the prophet

6: 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:

7: 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.

After seeing the Lord, seeing ourselves, cleansing then we are ready to see the need ...

III - Isaiah Saw the Need

8: 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.

Once Isaiah had met with the LORD, been convicted of his sin, and cleansed from its guilt, then he heard God.

You cannot be near the Lord and not hear Him. You cannot see the Lord without hearing His voice.

A divine invitation

How strange it is that this God of majesty, sovereignty, and power asks for volunteers! He could easily create robots to do His work, or command angels to carry out His will. But God wants willing, surrendered servants. Have you been waiting for God to force you to serve Him? He looks for volunteers!

A difficult task

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.

Go and tell these people, "Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing but do not perceive." God told Isaiah to go and preach to a people who wouldn't respond, so that their guilt would be certain.

The Question

11: Then said I, Lord, how long ...

This is a logical question from anyone who is given such a difficult commission. *"I have to preach to those who won't hear, and their rejection of my message will ultimately seal their doom? How long will I have to serve in that kind of ministry?"*

The Answer

11: 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, 12: And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. 13: But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

Preach until destruction comes (Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant). Preach in hope of the restoration of a remnant (yet a tenth will be in it, and will return). **Even though Isaiah's ministry was difficult, it was not without hope.**

Closing thoughts

1. Sometime loss is gain

*It was when 'King Uzziah died' that the prophet 'saw the Lord sitting upon the throne.' **If the Throne of Israel had not been empty, he would not have seen the throned God in the heavens.** And so it is with all our losses, with all our sorrows, with all our **disappointments**, with all our **pains**; they have a mission **to reveal to us the throned God.** The possession of the things that are taken away from us, the joys which our sorrows smite into dust, have the same mission, and the highest purpose of every good, of every blessing, of every possession, of every gladness, of all love - **the highest mission is to lead us to Him.***

*Is that what our sorrows, our pains, losses, disappointments do for us? Well for those to whom **loss is gain**, because it puts them in possession of the enduring riches! Well for those to whom the passing of all that can pass is a means of revealing Him who 'is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever'! The message to us of all these our pains and griefs is 'Come up hither.' In them all our Father is saying to us, 'Seek ye My face.' Well for those who answer, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Hide not Thy face far from me.'*

*Let us take care that we do not waste our griefs and sorrows. They absorb us sometimes with vain regrets. They jaundice and embitter us sometimes with rebellious thoughts. They often break the springs of activity and of interest in others, and of sympathy with others. **But their true intention is to draw back the thin curtain, and to show us 'the things that are,' the realities of the throned God, the skirts that fill the Temple, the hovering seraphim, and the coal from the altar that purges.** - Alexander MacLaren*

2. A Vision of God and the Divine Commission

The design of this revelation of God was not only to impress the prophet with a sense of the glory and majesty of God, but also to give additional weight to his commission, as having been derived immediately from the divine majesty.

We need a vision of God today. I believe this is the root of many problems in Christianity today. Many battle with trying to work up a desire to win lost men and women to Christ. We need to realize and understand that that desire is given to us in direct proportion to the communion we have with God.

A vision of God that will not keep you silent. You have to, you must ...

*2 Corinthians 4:13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, **I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;***

The seraphim cried, not because they were force, they have been guilt to doing it, to have been manipulated but because they could not help it but cry ...

*Acts 4:20 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19: But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20: **For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.***

*Jeremiah 4:19 My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; **I cannot hold my peace**, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.*

*Jeremiah 20:9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But **his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.***

How can I be silent if I know the God who is worthy to be made known?

How can I be silent if I know the God who alone can rescue sinners and not proclaim the name of this glorious God?