

The Trinity - Isaiah's Vision

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[0 : 0 0] I'm turning back to Isaiah but before we do that I'll read just one verse in the gospel of John one verse in John John 12 verse 41 John 12 verse 41 says Isaiah said these things talking about Isaiah's prophecies about Jesus Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him carrying on again our long-running series looking at the Trinity and we said last week that this week we'd see the Isaiah example and we did say there's not enough for one sermon so we'll see how far we get tonight I've got a few a few notes here to help us understand it it's not too much content but it's a very good basis for us to argue our belief in the Trinity we've said that from the start we're not just here for dry theology we're not just here to grow an understanding of what we pray and we hope that's happening we are here of course to learn how to apply what we hear in the real world and we've said for ourselves locally and I hope you're finding as time goes on we're hoping to apply what we're learning about the Trinity especially to our friends and perhaps even quite literally our neighbours who are part of the Mormons are part of our JWs especially the JWs quite often of course with the Mormons of the LDS they have their own different book and they use the Bible and it's a whole different thing with the JWs though they'll use usually the King James version of the Bible and along with their own version but they have most of the texts we've been looking at in fact every text we've seen so far to defend and learn about the Trinity it exists in the JW version of the Bible you can take them to that and show it to them in their own Bible but it says the exact same thing as our Bible says and the same for this evening they have in their Bibles the exact same pretty much verse as we have here in John 12 verse 41 the JW Bible will say along the lines of Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory he saw Jesus' glory and spoke of him our evidence this evening as we come back to Isaiah chapter 6 and we see a passage that most of us know so well that we see God being described in the temple all the glory and we'll get to that in a second but the summary is the end of our sermon is that John says who Isaiah is seeing is God when Isaiah sees God in the temple John says quite simply in one single verse he says obviously that was

Jesus that Isaiah was seeing and if that's the case then how is the son described how is the son described in Isaiah chapter 6 that's going to spend some time on this evening and it makes sense it makes sense that Isaiah was seeing the second person of the Godhead we know that God the Father he has never been seen no one has ever seen God Jesus himself that tells us that who is seen last week who was seen the week before that who was seen it is Jesus or the son we should say really in his pre-incarnate state so the son before he took on human flesh for all time before he was born of a woman he appears as we said last week as the angel of the Lord and this week we see he appears here in a vision as Isaiah sees a real person on a throne it's a vision yes but he sees someone and although we won't do it in our series

Ezekiel sees someone too and the parallels here between Ezekiel's vision and Isaiah's vision are similar but that's a future worry for us not this evening so let's turn to Isaiah 6 and just see a few of the elements of how Isaiah describes the Lord as he sees him in the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up and the train of his robe filled the temple or the hem of his robe filled the temple two things starting off here Isaiah of course sees in his vision he sees God enthroned as we said no one's seen God no one's ever seen as it were God the Father God the Spirit he is not seen with our eyes so for Isaiah to say he is seeing God yes it's a vision but God does not have form in a vision either as much he does in real life so who is Isaiah seeing?

well Isaiah says quite simply I saw the Lord capital or small L-O-R-D there and we'll see more later on he saw Adonai I saw the Lord I saw the King sitting on a throne and note how the throne is described as God's enough throne this throne is high and lifted up that's not describing the structure of the throne that quite literally is describing the magnitude the glory of it the same word there for lifted up is used elsewhere to describe God's glory the throne the throne itself is glorious it quite literally the translation is the throne is heavy it's lifted up high and heavy heavy of God's glory of God's presence brothers and sisters I've asked this before but I know for some of us and not all of us but for some of us perhaps many of us who know and who love the Lord there's these fleeting moments isn't there in your walk these fleeting moments and you feel as it were

God's presence is close and for some of us there are plenty of times we feel that others of us it's once or twice in our walk but you feel the heaviness of God in the air you feel times of worship perhaps or times of prayer times of meditation times in God's word whatever it is for you you feel a passing sense of the heaviness and the beauty and the glory of God what Isaiah is seeing is that in its fullness before him is the heaviness of the beauty and power of God but that God he is seeing he is seeing God in physical form well how do we know that because he's sitting on a throne he's sitting on a throne he is there quite physically before Isaiah Isaiah is seeing a person he's not seeing a spirit he's not seeing just some kind of mist he is seeing

[7 : 33] God on the throne Isaiah spends plenty of chapters using the Lord's words to speak against false prophets and those who who who misspeak as to what God is like and what God is so if Isaiah is seeing he is saying he's seeing God in human form in a person it's true it's true what else do we see then here we see God enthroned and the glory is there his robe his presence really is filling the temple and above God on his throne we see these angelic beings above him verse 2 stood the seraphim each having six wings and we see these creatures and our study this evening is not into these angels but we see here the seraphim the seraphim we see again in Ezekiel and other places they're always beside God always around

God they are the closest the early church fathers would call the seraphim the throne guardians wherever God is enthroned in scripture described as being enthroned the seraphim are always right there now the beauty and the wonder and the questions we have about these creatures we'll have them till we see them ourselves but we're described for us quite simply Isaiah describes them they're there with six wings two of these wings are always covering their faces two are always covering their feet why why why faces why waist wings why have them covering faces and covering feet they're covering our face of course because they're beholding they're around they're in front of who of God of a holy God and yes they were made by him yes they're made to exist in glory with him but even the angels here are shielding their faces from the beauty and the glory of God who is enthroned and they're hiding their feet why because feet culturally this day and this age it's a sign of uncleanness isn't it think when Moses goes to the burning bush what's the first thing

God says to Moses take off what take off your sandals before you're standing it's holy ground why because he's in the presence of God and these angels as glorious as they are as beautiful as they are even they have to hide their faces and they hide their feet as a symbol of whoever before and look what they're saying and they call to one another and the sense there of called it's not just a one time thing this is repetition quite literally the Hebrew saying to us here and calling to one another and calling to one another so we're doing this again and again and again they're saying again and again and again as they're around God's throne they're calling out they're shouting out in joy holy holy holy is the Lord of hosts the whole earth is full of his glory and here they give the man on the throne the one on the throne they give him here a title if you note in your

Bibles it's capital L O R D the first time we saw Lord in verse 1 that's Adonai that Lord in verse 1 can be used to describe earthly lords and earthly kings that describes anyone that's over you so if we were Hebrew speakers we would use the term Lord to describe perhaps our king to describe perhaps even even your boss in a workplace situation would be a Lord to you this Lord here in verse 3 as the angels cry out the name of God capital L O R D we'll know by now that is the name Yahweh they are saying holy holy holy is Yahweh the Lord of hosts is Yahweh of hosts is Yahweh of the armies brothers and sisters and friends Isaiah here is saying that the angels are ascribing to this person on the throne the name that only God can have if we're saying the person on the throne is anyone other than God then the angels are committing heresy

Isaiah is committing blasphemy and our book is completely rubbish we've wasted our lives what we have here is one on the throne in physical form and that one in physical form on the throne is being given the highest holiest name that only the Lord takes for himself holy holy holy is Yahweh of hosts of hosts being the Lord of the armies the Lord of the angels in other words the Lord who has all the power as the angels praise him by praising him for his holiness that he alone is God that he alone is perfect that he alone is set aside that he alone is holy also that he alone is the Lord of hosts if you have ESV you'll see there's a wee one there beside glory it takes you down to the bottom where it says the whole earth is full of his glory the other translation is and it's equally valid is may his glory fill the whole earth it's either a statement or it's a kind of a question a forward looking statement in Hebrew they both work the exact same way it depends how you translate it either way we are seeing here God before us as the closest angels to God's throne use God's name to sing and shout with joy praise to the one on the throne we're coming face to face beside Isaiah we are seeing the son on the throne it's not the father it's not the spirit he is in bodily form it's the son on the throne again scripture interprets scripture this is not my thinking it's not the church father's thinking it's not the reformer's thinking scripture interprets scripture and John tells us

[14 : 25] John says to us Isaiah saw Jesus Isaiah saw Jesus so God is enthroned God is here in physical form God is being called here the son of God here is being called of his person on the throne it's being called Yahweh he's being called the Lord of hosts we're seeing and being told his glory is filling or will fill the whole of the earth I think back to our psalms psalm 72 for example that's a desire that's a prayer that's ascribed to God isn't it when we sing psalm 72 we sing it every communion most communions and we sing it and we love singing it it's a prayer isn't it looking forward to the day when the whole earth will be filled with his glory but who's the his in that psalm it's the father it's God but here we say it's also son it's God that's what happens the angels cry out as the one on the throne is covered in glory and Isaiah poor Isaiah as any of us would be he is terrified the foundations of this place are shaking the thresholds are shaking the whole house is filled with smoke we assume that's smoke from the incense it's smoke from God's glory it's just hidden and put Isaiah in verse 5 well what else do you say you come face to face of God and his angels

Isaiah says woe is me for I am lost I have unclean lips I have unclean lips I have unclean lips Isaiah says what do I say what do I do I am before God I have nothing I can say I am feeling my smallness I am feeling the dirt I am before God who is holy holy holy look the last thing Isaiah says for my eyes have seen the king the lord of hosts if we weren't convinced up to now this is the final punch of a verse for us Isaiah himself is seeing I am gone I am undone why because I have seen the king Yahweh of hosts capital L-O-R-D Isaiah himself is now saying I have seen him with my eyes Isaiah is seeing something someone physically before him and he knows who he is seeing is God and he is so terrified he is seeing God he knows that he can't see

God and live he is saying well I have seen God I have seen Yahweh of hosts how do I live this won't go well for me if we are thinking here it all connects together to last week angel of the lord remember we saw that do we not where the cry of that young couple waiting for a child to be born and what is said we have seen the lord we've seen the lord they saw the angel of the lord who we said was Jesus the son pre-incarnate they saw the lord this evening Isaiah says I have seen the king the lord of hosts this is not a metaphor these words are literal he's saying as he's seen it himself and he feels himself of course unclean before the king he feels himself unworthy he's realising he realised before a holy king a holy god before the holy son

I've got no chance I've got no chance I shouldn't be here I shouldn't be here and as he cries this out we see what takes place one of the seraphim leave their position across around the throne and they come and the seraphim he has in his hand a burning coal that's a burning coal from the altar it's an altar of incense this is a vision of a temple and from the incense altar there's burning coals burning coals of incense the incense is there to show the purity of God and the goodness of God and to show the presence of God so from the altar he has his coal and symbolically he touches Isaiah's mouth it's a vision of course it's a vision he touches Isaiah's mouth with a burning coal and the angel speaking on behalf of the Lord says behold this has touched your lips your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for brethren sisters no one takes away guilt no one atones for sin but who but God we said this last week didn't we with the angel of the Lord last week forgives sin the angel of the Lord says your sins are forgiven that doesn't happen no angel says that no other spirit says that no other person says that only God can say your sins are forgiven well here

Isaiah as he comes before the son he is told because he's beheld the son because he looked on the son because the son has looked on him because before the son he has confessed that he is lost without help and without hope he's then told your guilt is taken away your sin is atoned for son forgives Isaiah the son then prepares Isaiah I heard the voice of the Lord saying whom shall I send verse 8 and who will go for us even that verse is often used as an example takes us back to

[20 : 56] Genesis chapter 1 where God speaks in plural God speaks in the same time in singular and he speaks in plural who will go whom shall I send singular and who will go for us plural now again the rabbis of old at times would say well this is God speaking on behalf of the angels too the angels don't serve don't serve alongside God they aren't privy to his discussions and privy to his plans they aren't part of his decision making process God is God the angels serve him yes but they're not alongside him as he decides what he's going to do so in this segment where we see the son on the throne we also see the son say who will I send and who will go for us just like a glimpse a passing quick glimpse to what's going on it's reconfirmed for us here we have father son and spirit as we said everything God does we see one of the persons doing it whether father or son or spirit they as it were we'll see in future weeks that one of the persons always seems to take the lead as far as we see and we understand but the reality is behind what we can see and understand father son and spirit are fully involved in every single action of

God of course they are creation father son and spirit the world made through Jesus this world was made for Jesus this world belongs to Jesus the father as we said was the architect of sorts enacted his plans through the son and the spirit brings all things together the same is seen here Isaiah speaks to the son but the son of course speaking as triune God Isaiah is then sent here we see the final evidence that's God only God instructs his people what to do whom shall I send who will go for us I said here I am send me Isaiah and God said back to Isaiah verse 9 go and say to this people the son sends Isaiah with a message we know that the many things

Isaiah speaks about Jesus are often talking about the suffering of our saviour Isaiah speaks we know plenty about him becoming man taking on human flesh being torn and ripped to shreds in his body and his mind for us as the lamb the suffering lamb we all know what Isaiah says about Jesus in the most vivid of terms Isaiah paints the suffering servant who was to come for his people and as Isaiah goes out from this moment and starts talking more and more about the coming saviour he does so being commissioned by that very same Jesus to go and to share Isaiah has seen the glory of the Lord before he comes down to fulfil the prophecies he's about to make about him the son in his glory gives Isaiah the very words of prophecy that are all about him leaving the place Isaiah has seen him in this place of glory and coming down and living and suffering as a suffering servant stepping down and living and dying for us as people again showing someone that it's

Jesus or he's the son in Isaiah we're not saying it will convince anyone but it's another section it's another turn on the wheel of showing someone all the way through the Old Testament from creation as we've seen all the way through to Isaiah there is evidence after evidence after evidence of our triune God Father Son and Spirit moving and working all the way through history and this was easier in a sense because all you have to do is take them to John 12 verse 41 and take them to Isaiah 6 take them to the rest of chapters of Isaiah speaking about the suffering servant and say what does it mean then that Isaiah saw Jesus what does it mean if it doesn't mean this what else does it mean and you'll get answers again our job is not to come up with every single possible answer to every single question brothers and sisters there are some people we've said this before there are some people who are able to memorise every single argument and every single defence and every single theological point

I am not that person and I'm sure many of us we're not these people what we are called to do is not to be experts in theology or experts in apologetics we're called to point people to Jesus we can do that bit by bit area by area section by section we're serving the Lord as best as we can as we show people that all the way through the Old Testament the Lord is building together his plan for his people time and time again we see our triune God working in history we're bringing people and pointing them towards Jesus and at the end of the day that's all we're called to do that's all we can do so a few points for us then of how we see Isaiah Isaiah pointing towards Jesus next time we gather looking at the section we'll be leaving the Old Testament we spent four or five weeks in the Old Testament and looking more now towards the Trinity itself as to what we understand about the

[27 : 07] Trinity and what that means for us as believers and then after that we'll see some of the most common objections to Trinity and we'll see how scripture answers these objections but that's months ahead and it's all of course very much Lord willing Amen good praise to God for his word thank you thank you thank you to good thank you thank you