

# The Glory of the Lord

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth M Ferguson

[ 0 : 00 ] I'd like with the Lord's help to turn again to the prophecy of Isaiah on chapter 6 and to consider some aspects of this glorious vision that the prophet Isaiah had.

We may read again at the beginning of this chapter. Isaiah chapter 6, I'm reading verse 1. 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, and so on.

King Uzziah reigned in Judah for 52 years.

And we have in 2 Chronicles 26 an account of his reign. The first part of his reign seemed very positive and successful.

And the scripture reminds us that as long as he sought the Lord, he prospered. But his time of calamity began when he took his eyes off the Lord, and he sought, among other things, to assert his influence within the holy place, which was the jurisdiction of the priests alone.

[ 1 : 55 ] In fact, there was one day he took a censer, and he burned incense, which was the domain of the priests.

And when the priests opposed him in doing this, he became angry at them. And when he became angry at them, the Lord struck him with leprosy.

And leprosy spread in his forehead, and he was ushered quickly out of the holy place, and he spent the rest of his life in a separate house, not even able to enjoy the family comforts that the other royal members of the family enjoyed.

Under all these years that he was suffering from leprosy, the nation around him suffered also from spiritual leprosy.

It's as if King Uzziah and his leprosy condition was a microcosm of the whole nation of Judah.

[ 3 : 15 ] They had turned their back upon the Lord. They didn't want to hear the word of God. And that was nothing new. Not only was Isaiah confronted with that kind of situation, but others also whom the Lord had sent to declare the word of God to them.

They just turned away, not willing to receive what God was saying, or comply with what God was asking of them. And the year King Uzziah died, we read here in Isaiah chapter 6, the Lord revealed himself in a most glorious fashion to his prophet Isaiah.

I saw the Lord, Isaiah says, sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple. I'd like to say a few words, first of all, on this glorious vision that Isaiah was granted of the Lord in his glory.

Secondly, a few words on the effect that this revelation of God's glory had upon the prophet. And thirdly, the Lord asks a question, whom shall I send?

And who will go for us? And immediately the prophet says, here am I, send me. He knew the kind of people to whom the Lord was sending him, a hard-hearted people, a people who resisted the word of God.

[ 4 : 57 ] He nevertheless said, yes, send me. And the Lord told him clearly the kind of reception his preaching was going to receive.

And we can read that as we continue with looking at these verses. First of all then, the glory of the Lord that Isaiah saw.

I saw the Lord high and lifted up. Now we have a reference to this revelation of God's glory in the Gospel of John, chapter 12. And he talks there about what the prophet was able to see.

And obviously the revelation was of God in his glory speaking as one whose throne is permanent and with the passing of the years he himself does not change.

We have a number of references bearing that out throughout the Scripture. For example, this psalm we have just been singing, Psalm 95. The Lord is the great God, king over all gods, the earth's

deepest places he holds in his hands.

[ 6 : 08 ] The height of the mountains belong to the Lord. The oceans are his. He has formed a dry land. He is the one who is greater than all the gods whom people seek in this world.

Gods with a small g. Jehovah, Yahweh, he is the only, one only, true and living God. And it was he who Isaiah saw on this particular day.

The permanence of his throne is mentioned throughout the Scriptures. For example, Psalm 29, verse 10. The Lord sits enthroned over the flood. The Lord sits enthroned as king forever.

And then also in Psalm 93, your throne is established from of old. You are from everlasting. And in Psalm 145, we have just been singing, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

So we have there, as it were, in opposition and contrast to Isaiah's throne that has just been left vacant, we have the throne of the living God that is never vacant and the living God is not affected with the passing of the years or the circumstances that affect the sons of men in the world.

[ 7 : 38 ] He reigns and there is no end to his reign. I saw the Lord high and lifted up. The train of his robe filled the temple and then in verse 2 it says, Above him stood the seraphim, each had six wings.

With two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet and with two he flew. The word seraphim meaning the burning ones. These are angels, as it were, attendant upon the throne of God in heaven.

and it says here that each of these seraphim had six wings and I think what they did with their wings speaks volumes to ourselves as to how we ought to behave in the presence of the holy God also.

With two of the wings he covered his face as if the glory of God was so dazzling that they realized themselves as mere creatures bowing before him, him who gave them life and who sustained them in life and it's as if they acknowledge his authorship of their life and of their being and they cover their faces before him.

We also ought to do the same. Always acknowledge that God is the author of our being and to him we are accountable at the end of life's journey.

[ 9 : 17 ] We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ there to receive according to what we have done in the body whether it be good or bad. With two of his wings he covered his face and with two he covered his feet.

With two he covered his feet. Isn't it amazing that in the presence of the holy God the holy angels who have never sinned nevertheless acknowledge that they need to cover their feet before him.

Remember when Moses at the burning bush sought to approach and investigate us to this marvelous sight that he saw and the Lord spoke to him and he said cast your shoes from off your feet for the place upon which you're standing his holy ground.

And the angels here the seraphim are acknowledging the holiness of the very spot upon which they're standing and it's so appropriate for them to cover their feet in the presence of a holy God. And then also it says that with two of his wings he flew ready to respond in delighted and delightful obedience to the commands of God to go and do this or do that other thing ready to respond.

[ 10 : 48 ] I believe that there's a connection here between what the Lord Jesus teaches us in the Lord's Prayer when he says thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

I believe this is an example of the way the will of God is done in heaven the readiness of the angels in the presence of God to fulfill his purpose and to obey his commandment readily and without reservation.

And we also ought to seek to do the same whatever commandment the Lord reveals to us that we ought to fulfill that we would seek grace to fulfill all that he asks of us to do.

And the vision wasn't finished with him seeing the angels in these particular ways.

Also it says here and one called to another and said holy holy holy is the Lord of hosts the whole earth is full of his glory.

[ 11 : 53 ] holy some people suggest that there was a number of seraphim on each side and as they called holy the group on one side responded by saying holy the whole of the temple resounded with the voice of the angels the seraphim acknowledging and praising the holiness and the purity and the holy otherness of God.

I don't know how you feel but I sometimes feel that in our own present day we don't really have the same awareness of the holiness and the otherness and the transcendence of God.

God with whom we have to do God who is in all his fullness everywhere doesn't matter where you look where you go what you think what you do he knows all things concerning us and they are calling holy holy holy you know there are no superlatives in the Hebrew language and rather than the seraphim say he is the holiest of all which is the superlative of holy they rather say holy repeatedly it tells us so much about this God that the angels themselves repeat again and again the fact that he is holy holy holy and then they say that the whole earth is full of his glory the whole earth not just this little corner of the temple where the vision was granted to the prophet but the whole earth the whole universe is full of expressions of the glory of God look around you today the glory of his kind providence to us in giving us marvelous weather look at yourself the glory of his kindness to yourself in giving you health and strength the glory of his grace in the life of the church in bringing people from darkness unto light from being in the far country like the prodigal son was to thinking about themselves and coming to themselves and going to the father's house it is the glory of the

Lord by his grace and in his grace that is so manifested in such situations as these Christ says I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it the glory of his commitment to the church of his dedication to building up his individual people and presenting them at last faultless in the presence of his glory with exceeding joy the whole earth is full of his glory and then in verse 4 it's as if the foundations of the threshold respond to all that has been happening the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called some are of the view that this is the voice of God himself speaking whichever voice it was it was so heavenly and so powerful that the foundations of the threshold of the temple yielded and shook you know when the

Lord by his word deals with us in our soul for eternal life the thresholds of our souls and lives also must shake at the voice of him who speaks to us in his word we must not and cannot remain unmoved by what the word is talking to us about by what the Lord is saying to us in his scriptures we must yield to him and grant him entrance into our life as the threshold of the door of your heart and life shaken any time within this building under the preaching of the gospel have you been able to welcome the Lord Jesus Christ into your heart and life as one whom you ask to take control of your life and be

[17:08] Lord of your life and Savior of your soul well this is what he says the foundations of the threshold of the temple shook at the voice of him who called and the house was filled with smoke we have a reference to that also at the time when King Solomon prayed the prayer of dedication at the opening of the temple and after he finished his prayer the house was filled with smoke as an indication of the Lord's presence having come and having been granted to this people in the midst of them so we see here a marvelous revelation of the throne of God of the God of the throne of the glory of this God who is the Holy One of Israel the power of this God before whose word the foundations of the thresholds shook coming secondly to the effect that this had upon the prophet now what was the effect well one would maybe expect that he would bask and enjoy comfortably this revelation of the glory of God but that's not the way the

Lord works that's not the way he worked here he worked here in such a way as to impress upon the prophet the sinfulness of his own heart and life and particularly his lips I said in verse five woe is me for I am lost I am a man of unclean lips I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips for my eyes have seen the king the lord of hosts what an amazing response to such a glorious revelation of God's glory and power and holiness of course this is the same kind of response as the people of God had down through the centuries remember the experience that Jacob had after he had left his house and was going to Paddan Aram and night fell and he decided to camp in the wilderness and he took a stone and made it a pillow for himself that he might sleep and there he was granted a vision of a ladder set up upon the earth and his top reaching to heaven and you remember that he says that the lord was at the top of it and the lord spoke to him and the lord gave him marvelous promises regarding the ground on which he was lying

I will give it to you and to your seed and they shall stretch forth to the north and the south and the east and the west and I will be with you and I will not leave you until I fulfill everything that I have promised to you what marvelous promises because that was something that left its mark upon him also and the mark it left on him was this he was afraid it says in Genesis 28 and he said how awesome is this place this is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven a place that filled him with awe a revelation of God that made him tremble that brought goosebumps up on his skin because he knew he was in the presence of the almighty God with whom he was the

deal and who saw his life and all its twists and turns and his life had been full of twists and turns up until then have you ever felt anything of that nature when the scripture is read or when the scripture is explained it's as if it puts the search light into your own heart and life and you realize oh things aren't right the way they are and you feel uncomfortable in the presence of the all seeing eye of God well that's the way Isaiah felt something like Moses also felt when he was asked by the Lord to put his shoes off his feet at the burning bush and then it says I am the Lord the God of Abraham God of Isaac and the God of Jacob and then it says Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look at God there is the fear of God and this is what the prophet here experienced one more example from the New Testament from the life of the apostle Peter remember that Peter and the disciples had been fishing all night and had caught nothing and the Lord commanded Peter let down your net for a draft and he said well we have been laboring all night and we have caught nothing but at thy word I will let down the net and they soon enclosed a large shoal of fish you know what the response of Peter was when Simon

Peter saw it he fell down at Jesus knees it says in Luke 5 verse 8 saying depart from me for I am a sinful man oh Lord he knew he was in the presence of the almighty only the almighty could have brought about the circumstances that were brought about before his two eyes he had searched the whole of the lake of Galilee maybe all of the night and nothing and then one word from the Lord Jesus and the fish were gathered he knew he was in the presence of the all seeing almighty God and he says I don't feel comfortable in your presence I say I hear woe is me I am lost a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips mine eyes have seen the king the lord of hosts

[ 24 : 00 ] I don't believe for a moment that Isaiah was a foul mouthed man he was a man of God before this experience but he realized how imperfect he was and how imperfect his words were and how imperfect his preaching was and how imperfect his life was in the presence of the perfection and the glory of God's holiness and he acknowledged the people he lived among were unclean also he would have heard maybe people cursing God people saying that they had no time for God why go up to the temple why offer sacrifices what's the point in it all and maybe there are people you know yourselves who say something just like that what's the point of reading your Bible what's the point of going to church what's the point isn't it all fantasy anyway science has disproved it all or proved it all wrong ah but you see the people with whom

God is dealing they realize that they themselves are all wrong and they need God to make them right and this is what Isaiah experiences a man of unclean lips and then in verse six one of the seraphim flew to me having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from off the altar I believe the seraphim was commanded by the Lord to do what he was doing he wouldn't have this done this on his own initiative the Lord commanded that this be so and he took a burning coal with the tongs from off the altar and touched the mouth of the prophet with it now this is I think wonderful symbolism of the way the Lord forgives people all of their sins he had complained about the sinfulness of his lips of his language the imperfection of his language and the

Lord is going to show him how he can be cleansed a live coal from off the altar you remember in the furniture of the temple and the tabernacle there were two altars first of all the altar of burnt offering upon which the animals were sacrificed and then in the holy place there was the altar of incense upon which live coals were placed having been taken off the altar of burnt offering and placed on the altar of incense and then incense offered up the incense was an illustration of the ongoing intercession prayer of intercession of the priest on behalf of the people of Israel the congregation so what we have here is a symbolic act the animal having been sacrificed on the altar of burnt offering the sacrifice having been received by God and the merit or the efficacy or the effects or fruits of that sacrifice are now being applied to the prophet who is complaining of his sin and that's the way it has to be with ourselves there is nothing that is to take our gift away nothing that is to atone for our sin but the sacrifice of the

Lord Jesus Christ and that sacrifice be applied or its efficacy or merit be applied to us in our hearts in our souls so that our sins be taken away and atoned for we all know that Jesus Christ went up to the cross bearing the sins of his people but on the cross he bore the punishment for their sins and now there is therefore those to those who believe in Jesus there is therefore no point at which God can justly condemn them because all of their sins have been atoned for and their guilt has been taken away through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Lord Jesus Christ makes continual intercession for them what an amazing picture we have here of the gospel in its effectual

application to the hearts and souls of the sons of men and what an amazing assurance the prophet received when he was told this has touched your mouth and your guilt is taken away and your sin is atoned for we have something similar in the life of king

David who sinned grossly in his own personal life when Nathan the prophet came to explain the situation to him many months later Nathan said you are the man I'm describing and immediately we find David saying I have sinned I have sinned he confesses his sin and Nathan the prophet immediately says your sin is forgiven the Lord had made known to Nathan what had happened in the experience of this man the Lord forgave his sin it matters not what sin you may have burdened you this evening if you truly confess it you will find that just like the prophet Isaiah your sin also can be taken away and atoned for what an amazing experience he had that day having seen the Lord and the light of the glory of God having seen himself for what he was and then having seen what [ 31 : 09 ] God can do with a wretch like him he forgave him thirdly and finally we see the prophet's answer to God's very searching question in verse 8 I heard the voice of the Lord saying whom shall I send and who will go for us here am I send me here am I send me having been given assurance of his pardon he readily gives himself now to God's service and he is sent to reprove a people for their blindness and the hardness of their heart an interesting verse in Jeremiah chapter 7 the Lord brings before us the state of this people from the day that your fathers came out of the land of

Egypt to this day the Lord says I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them day after day yet they didn't listen to me or incline their ear but stiffened their neck they did worse than their fathers that's the people Isaiah is being sent to and the Lord says go and say to this people keep on hearing but do not understand keep on seeing but do not perceive make the heart of this people dull and their ears heavy and blind their eyes lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and turn and be healed it's as if he was being sent on a suicide mission what's the point of going to people who are hardened against the gospel what's the point of going to people concerning whom

Isaiah himself eventually says Lord who hath believed our report as if there were so few who believed what he was saying he opens chapter 53 with these words Lord who has believed our report nobody seemed to be listening ah but you see the Lord says you are to preach to them until cities lie waste without inhabitant and houses without people and the land is a desolate waste and the Lord removes people far away and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land if you were to have to draw up a chart of successful ministries on the basis of conversions and numbers attending services

I say I wouldn't be anywhere near the top of the chart at all but what is the hope the Lord lays before Isaiah despite how hard hearted the people are and generally the malaise concerning true religion in verse 13 you find this written though a tenth remain in it it will be burned again like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains when it is felled the holy seed is its stump he's talking about a tenth and you find this throughout the scriptures and in Romans it is mentioned Romans 11 as a remnant according to the election of grace and the remnant according to the election of grace will receive the word and they will lay the word up in their hearts and appreciate the gospel and live for Christ and glorify God in their lives and they will come isn't it amazing that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God Isaiah went forth he declared the unsearchable riches of Christ to the people a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and call his name Emmanuel Isaiah chapter seven Isaiah chapter nine his name shall be called wonderful counselor the mighty God the everlasting father and the prince of peace and onwards through to Isaiah 53 he was wounded for our transgressions bruised for our iniquities the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him and by his stripes we are healed and you know the people who are the elect of God will embrace these words they will embrace the

[ 36 : 43 ] Christ of the gospel they are enabled by God's spirit to receive and rest upon Jesus Christ alone as their own savior election belongs to God but our response to the gospel is our domain we have a responsibility to receive the word and to receive the free offer of the gospel to receive the Christ who is freely offered to us as a mighty and a glorious savior this evening maybe he is standing at your own door and knocking as he was to that church in the revelation the church of Laodicea when he says behold I stand at the door and knock you have heard him knocking yet once more through this sermon you have heard him often through this preaching of the gospel from this pulpit maybe other places also well now he is standing knocking and he makes this statement whosoever opens the door

I will come in and sup with him and he with me will you hearken to his voice this evening and open the door ask that the lord give you grace to turn to him and to receive and rest upon him alone as he is so freely offered to you in the gospel we live in a day maybe something like the day in which Isaiah was living where not many people throughout our land go to church on Sunday maybe 10% maybe less what about the 90% well what about them but your business is a personal business you have to do with your God and you call upon him this evening while he is near call upon him that you might be saved may

God bless these thoughts to us let us pray Lord our God help us to be thankful for your great kindness in allowing us to gather in this way around the word of life and we pray that it may be a word of life to us all that each of us may benefit and profit from having spent time together this evening and that your great name would be glorified in all that we have said and done we pray for your blessing to be upon us as we sing your praise in conclusion and forgive every sin for Jesus sake Amen