

## THE GLORY OF GOD

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Week 5 – “I Saw the Lord”

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There are no contradictions in Scripture. Man cannot see God as He truly is (unapproachable light [I Tim. 6:16]), but God may and did reveal Himself to some in such a way that they knew that God did appear to them. Any theophany, again, which is God’s manifestation of Himself to man, is for the purpose of man being able to experience God’s awesome presence...without perishing.

Man needs something tangible. God has provided – God displays Himself...God appears...God came to earth as Emmanuel! “In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son born of a woman under the law” (Gal. 4:4). But, He, the Son would come prior to Bethlehem to give the people HOPE!

And, when Jesus was seen in His glorified body by Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration and after His resurrection, because no one died at beholding the glorified Christ, some have suggested that the disciples and others (the over 500 in I Cor. 15:6) beheld a part of His heavenly glory - ?? They saw Him in His glorified body which the Godhead has allowed for man to see. Do I totally understand? No! But I read it and I accept! And so, we continue to study and to marvel!

John the Apostle saw Jesus! When John had been banished to the Isle of Patmos because of his testimony, the glorified Jesus revealed Himself to John.

### Revelation 1:17-18

*And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. <sup>18</sup> I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.*

The Apostle John knew Jesus intimately. John was the beloved disciple...the one whom Jesus loved! Suddenly Jesus appears (60+ years after His resurrection and ascension) in His glory. And the only thing John can do is to fall at Jesus’ feet as though dead. How did John behold the glorified Jesus? How did the disciples look upon the resurrected Jesus in His glory...and the over 500 who saw Him following His resurrection (I Cor. 15:6)? How did Peter, James, and John see Jesus in His glorified body on the Mount of Transfiguration? They saw Jesus and they did not die. I read this and I accept.

We are going to focus on John’s response to the revelation of Jesus. When John saw Jesus on Patmos, he was face-to-face with God’s power and might and...with his own unworthiness. John was **UNDONE**.

After God Almighty confronts Job, Job in genuine humility speaks these words to God, *I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. <sup>6</sup> Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes* (Job 42:5-6). When we **BEHOLD** Who God is, that He alone is worthy, we realize who we are – not worthy. And, we abhor our sin and turn to God!

*He laid His right hand on me* – What a tender touch from Jesus! What a picture of faith we see – the simple, helpless trusting dependent of those who have no resources of their own. When Ezekiel was overcome by the glory of the Lord (Eze. 1:28), the Holy Spirit restored him to his feet (Eze. 2:1-2). (See Oswald Chambers’ devotional in “My Utmost for His Highest” – May 24<sup>th</sup>). Belief – *pistis* Gk. – means to trust in and rely upon. A picture which represents *pistis* – a nursing baby, totally helpless, at its mother’s breast.

*Do not be afraid* – What had John seen to affect such a response from Jesus, “Do not be afraid”?!! OR, what had John thought regarding Jesus worthiness and his own unworthiness? God is transcendent. He is beyond/above the range of normal; He is beyond/above physical human experience. God is revealed in creation...He is revealed in Scripture...He is revealed in individual lives. HOW ARE WE RESPONDING? ARE we responding? “Reveal” and “respond” - let’s focus on those two words.

God is a God of infinite glory and that glory cannot be contained! God’s glory must be revealed. And, we must respond either in obedience, worship, and praise OR in suppressing the truth, rejection. In our response we are either glorifying God or not glorifying God.

God’s plan unfolds through Scripture. And, during the Millennial Kingdom, *The earth will be filled* (speaks of fullness/abundance) *with the knowledge* (to know by experience, to perceive, to discern, to see) *of the glory of God* (Hab. 2:14).

#### Isaiah 6:1-7

*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!’ <sup>4</sup> And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> So I said: ‘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 my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.’ <sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> And he touched my mouth with it, and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.’ <sup>8</sup> Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’*

Isaiah began his prophetic ministry in 739 BC. He received the prophecy of the first five chapters after his calling. Now Isaiah in chapter six describes how God called him.

*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne.* The king is dead. Uzziah was a great and wise king. But Uzziah’s life ended tragically. After 52 years of reigning, leprosy caused the death of Uzziah in 739 BC (II Chron. 26:16-23).

II Chron. 26:16 - *But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.*

II Chron. 26:17-21 - <sup>17</sup> So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD—valiant men. <sup>18</sup> And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honor from the LORD God.” <sup>19</sup> Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. <sup>20</sup> And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he was leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him. <sup>21</sup> King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD.

Those from the tribe of Levi were priests. Kings came from the tribe of Judah. Uzziah overstepped his role. He, as king, was not to take the priestly role of offering incense in the temple (Num. 16:40). Is God serious? Was He just serious in the OT?

Rom. 1:18 – the wrath of God is consistently revealed from heaven!!!!

Rom. 8:1 - *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus....*

Heb. 12:5-6 - *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; <sup>6</sup> For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.”*

Uzziah died. The land was without leadership. Surrounding Israel, enemies threatened them. They were in desperate circumstances. Some might say, “Where was the Lord in all this?”

*I saw the Lord* - “Saw” Hebrew word *ra-ah* to see, observe, give attention to, discern. God revealed Himself to Isaiah in what appears to be a vision. Isaiah may have been in the earthly temple to grieve Uzziah’s death and perhaps to receive answers. And, Isaiah is given a vision which transcends the earth. Isaiah sees the throne of God in the heavenly temple!

“Lord” (v. 1) – upper case “L” w/ the rest of the letters in the lower case. This is the Hebrew word *Adonai* which speaks to God’s sovereignty, His omnipotence (He is all powerful) and His authority.

“LORD” (v. 3) - this is the Hebrew word *Yahweh/YHWH*. *Yahweh* has reference to God's covenant relationship with Israel. We see the nature of His character, His essential nature (Who He is). *YHWH* – “I AM that I AM.” God is eternal; He is sufficient unto Himself.

How does Isaiah see the Lord?

*sitting on a throne* - Isaiah is essentially telling the people in the scroll of Isaiah, “We lost our human king, but I saw the true KING. God remains on His throne. He is enthroned in heaven. He continues as sovereign! He is in complete control of all creation.

Isaiah was not alone in seeing God’s throne. Almost everyone in the Bible who had a vision of heaven, who was taken to heaven, or who wrote about heaven spoke of God’s throne. Job saw God’s throne (Job 26:9), David saw God’s throne (Psalm 9:4, 7, 11:4), the Sons of Korah saw God’s throne (Psalm 45:6, 47:8). Korah’s sons were spared from the death Korah and others experienced – being swallowed up by the earth as God caused the ground to split open (Num. 26:9-11). God had a purpose and plan for even the line of Korah. The most remarkable thing to note about the sons of Korah is that during the time of King David, they became the great leaders in choral and orchestral music in the tabernacle. Of the Psalms in the Bible, eleven are attributed to the sons of Korah. These beautiful psalms express a spirit of great gratitude and humility to an awesome, mighty God. They express a longing for God and deep devotion. These poetic songs include Psalms 42—50, 62, and 72—85. Psalm 42:1 contains the beautiful line, “As the deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.” Psalm 84:1 states, “How lovely is your dwelling place, O God.” Psalm 46:1–3 conveys the powerful message, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.”

Jeremiah saw God’s throne (Lamentations 5:19), Ezekiel saw God’s throne (Ezekiel 1:26, 10:1), Daniel saw God’s throne (Daniel 7:9), and the Apostle John saw God’s throne (Revelation 4:1-11). In fact, the book of Revelation has been referred to by some as “the book of God’s throne,” because God’s throne is specifically mentioned more than 35 times in that book! AND, it is from the throne room of God that His plan for the universe unfolds.

Isaiah sees the Lord...Isaiah sees the Lord *high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple*. Isaiah’s vision of the Lord doesn’t seem to be a vision of the Lord seated on a throne in the Holy of Holies of the earthly temple in Jerusalem, but rather a vision perhaps of the heavenly temple of which the temple on earth was a type or a symbol. Heb. 8:5 – speaking of priests...*who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle... we then read, For He said, “See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.*

The mighty kings of the earth would sit on thrones that were lifted up high, and in fact Solomon’s throne was said to be higher than that of any of the other kings in the world. I Kings 10:19-20 - *There were six steps to the throne and a round top to the throne at its rear, and arms on each side of the seat, and two lions standing beside the arms. 20Twelve lions were standing there on the six steps on the one side and on the other; nothing like it was made for any other kingdom.*

*and the train of His robe filled the temple...*

Why is there mention of the *train of His robe*? In the ancient world only the rich and powerful could afford to add extra *length* to their robes. The longer the *train*, the more glorious and splendid the *king*. What a picture of God's majesty and His exaltation, His glory and His power! Consider: in Isaiah's vision, there was no room anywhere in the temple to stand! No ground to stand upon in the temple! Nowhere to stand – because all is HOLY ground!

And what of these seraphim with the six wings? The seraphim are an order of angelic creatures. Seraphim are only mentioned in Isaiah 6 in Scripture. The name seraphim means, "burning ones." Each seraphim had two wings covering their face perhaps because they did not dare look upon the face of God in reverence for Who He is. Two wings covered their feet, perhaps acknowledging their lowliness while engaged in divine service. With two wings they flew in serving God. What we need to emphasize is their response to the Lord – they worshipped Him, calling special attention to God's glory and majesty.

*And one cried to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!'* Why '*holy, holy, holy*'? Some explain this antiphonal praise (sung alternately among groups – groups of seraphim in this account) as highlighting the Trinity – one for each member of the Trinity. Certainly each member of the Trinity is holy as each member of the Trinity is GOD! The praise uttered by the seraphim in this passage emphasizes the HOLINESS of God! This is the only attribute of God in all of Scripture that is repeated three times! Our transcendent God, God Who is above time and space, is separate and apart from His creation.

Do we understand the holiness of God? Perhaps the absence of a clear understanding of God's holiness is the reason for our disobedience. Might it be that when we don't really understand how holy God is, that's when we move toward compromise, and focus on fulfilling our desires?

Jesus told His disciples to pray in this manner, *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name*. HOLY is Your name. A well-known Bible teacher said, "Any attempt to understand God apart from His holiness is idolatry." Holiness, at its root, has the idea of *apartness* – *being set apart*. God is set apart from His creation in that the Lord God is not a creature, and He exists outside of all creation. If all creation were to dissolve, the Lord God would remain (II Pet. 3:10). God is set apart from *humanity*, in that His "nature" or "essence" is *Divine*, not *human*. God is not a *super-man* or the *ultimate man*. God is NOT the man upstairs! He is *Divine*, and we are *human*.

*The LORD of hosts*

Hosts – Hebrew *sabaoth* – armies – the armies of heaven.  
Hosts also refers to Israel's armies

*The whole earth is full of His glory*

Creation – Psa. 19:1 – the heavens declare the glory of God!

We are often blinded to the obvious glory of God all around us. But Isaiah saw the LORD in the midst of his circumstances and it rocked him!

*And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.* The foundations are shaken. The temple is filled with smoke. The shaking and smoke speak to God’s holiness as it relates to His wrath and judgment. Think of God’s presence at Mount Sinai.

Ex. 19:16-18 - *Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. <sup>17</sup> And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. <sup>18</sup> Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.* At Mount Sinai we see a holy God of judgment.

Deut. 4:24 - *For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.* The context of Deut. 4 addresses God’s command not to worship other gods. Only the LORD is to be worshipped. We see a God Who is serious about Who He is! What does that truth communicate to us – about how we should live moment-by-moment?

God has revealed Himself to Isaiah and Isaiah responds.

*So I said: ‘Woe is me, for I am undone!’*

In the book of Isaiah, Isaiah uses the word “woe” at least ten times to refer to God’s judgment on others. “Woe” is a word of cursing/judgment. And, here, Isaiah is using this word of himself. Isaiah is a servant of God – a prophet. God is using Isaiah to speak to the masses – to warn them. But, when he sees the holiness of God, Isaiah can only pronounce a curse upon himself. Isaiah sees his own defilement. Isaiah sees no goodness in himself. Isaiah’s confession of his own unworthiness and his willingness to be used of God as God’s ambassador were Isaiah’s responses to the revelation God gave to him of His glory.

*I am undone*

The New American Standard Version states, *Woe is me, for I am ruined! Damam* – Hebrew word for “ruin, undone” which means to destroy, to perish, to be cut off. I am destroyed...because Isaiah saw God and when he saw God...for the first time in his life he saw Isaiah – he saw himself. And he knew how wretched he was.

What was the most important instrument of a prophet? His mouth. As a prophet, Isaiah spoke the word of God.

*Because I am a man of unclean lips*

Isaiah was essentially stating “I have a dirty mouth.” WHY?

*For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts*

And, as Isaiah saw the King, the LORD of hosts, for the first time Isaiah was seeing himself.

Standing in the presence of God, we are either profoundly and devastatingly aware of our own wretchedness...our own sinfulness...or we are not! If we don't understand the holiness of God, we don't understand our sinfulness. And we don't understand our sinfulness, we don't grasp the consequences! (Rom. 6:23 – the wages of sin is death!!!!) And, not understanding the consequences causes us to balk at God, saying, “How dare He!”

*<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> And he touched my mouth with it, and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.’ <sup>8</sup> Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’*

John the Apostle in the Gospel of John spoke of Isaiah’s vision and described it as a vision of the glory of God. In the Gospel of John, John was speaking of Jesus and His miracles and many not believing in Him.

*John 12:37-40 - But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, <sup>38</sup> that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: ‘Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?’ <sup>39</sup> Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: <sup>40</sup> “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.”*

John then states in John 12:41 - *These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus.*

Regarding Isaiah’s vision of the glory of God on the throne – of Jesus – consider this.... How might we comprehend a theophany in human form as a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus?

Phil. 2:7 – *Jesus ...made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.*

God humbled Himself...

Phil. 2:5-8 – *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, <sup>7</sup> but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

Isa. 53:10 – *But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering,*

Heb. 13:8 – *Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

Jesus emptied Himself of His glory (NEVER of His deity) in order to manifest Himself in such a form as man can comprehend...even prior to His incarnation at Bethlehem.

How do we respond to such great love?

QUESTIONS:

What was God's revelation to Isaiah?

What was Isaiah's response?

How does this lesson matter to God?

How does this lesson impact you?

What impacted you most?

About what are you excited?

What is your response?

What are you going to do with this lesson?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread this lesson and look up the Bible references.

Jot down observations and questions and begin to seek answers from Scripture.

Begin a journal of how God is revealing Himself to you and how you're responding.

Read Week 4's handout when you receive it prior to the next class.