

The Holiness of God

A. W. Tozer in his classic book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, makes the following statement:

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. A right concept of God is basic not only to systematic theology but to practical Christian living as well. I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God.

Tozer is 100% correct –no one will ever rise above their concept of God, because your view of God directly affects how you live your life, it affects how you view your circumstances, it affects how you respond to those circumstances.

Beloved, the manner in which you behold God, or your view of God, will affect every area of your life, but the most significant, and the most important area that is affected by your view of God is your relationship with God.

At its very core an improper view of God is synonymous with an idolatrous view of God. The idolatrous heart assumes that God is something other than what he truly is, other than what he has revealed to us about himself in the Scriptures. The idolatrous heart assumes that God is something other than what he truly is. Idolatry is to think incorrectly about God's person, about God's character, about God's attributes. It is to think something about God that is not true of him. Simply put, idolatry makes the God who is, into something that he is not.

In the church today, there are many who claim to accept the biblical view of God, but in reality they have twisted God into something else entirely. The LORD God Almighty, as revealed in the Scriptures, has been shrunken down and reduced into a more manageable and compliant god.

In other words, God is refashioned to fit our own sinful expectations. God is refashioned to fit our own sinful desires. The one true God, as revealed in the Scriptures, has been substituted for a lesser god, a god that makes us feel more comfortable, a god that makes us feel better about ourselves.

Romans 1:24-25, Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

The truth of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, is exchanged for a lie. God Almighty is exchanged for a lesser god –a god of convenience, a god who is viewed only in terms of what he can do for us, and not for who he truly is.

This exchange and perspective is referred to as having a low view of God. A low view of God views God as less than what he truly is, it views God as less than who he truly is.

Those who hold to a low view of God say things like, “God is not so much concerned about your sin, rather God is concerned about your happiness. As long as you love God it does not really

matter how you live. God is far too loving and too gracious to send anyone to hell.” Those who hold to a low view of God are often heard saying, “that’s not the god I serve.” And quite right they are, the god whom they serve is not the God of the Scriptures, but rather a lesser god, a god that has been twisted and conformed to their own image and their own desires.

Do you know what this kind of thinking fails to take into consideration? It doesn’t consider the true nature of God, as revealed in the Scriptures. God is a Spirit, who is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Beloved, do you realize that your view of God will affect how God is viewed by other people? A workman is known by his work, and God is also known by his work. And whether we like it or not, when people look at us they get an idea of who God is, they associate God, with what they see in our lives (in our words, in our deeds).

Do you remember when David sinned against the Lord, with Bathsheba, and was confronted by the prophet Nathan?

2 Samuel 12:13-14, And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die." However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die.

The LORD God Almighty was blasphemed because of David’s deeds. And likewise, the LORD God Almighty is also blasphemed by our deeds. And it is our failure to know God, it is our failure to know his character, it is our failure to know his attributes that results in our sinful deeds, which ultimately results in his dishonor.

So what are we to do? How are we to restore a high view of God in our lives? How are we to ensure that our concept of God is correct? How are we to ensure that we are, in fact, worshiping the true God and not a god of our own making, one that has been fashioned after our own desires?

A high view of God comes from the study of his word, it comes from the study of his revelation to us. It comes from the study of his person, his character, his attributes, and his works. It comes from knowing the one true God as he has revealed himself in the Scriptures.

Please turn with me to the book of Isaiah; Isaiah 6:1-8, Isaiah's vision of the glory and majesty of God. Let us read the text together.

Isaiah 6:1-7, 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. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for 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!” Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

Isaiah was one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament. he prophesied during the reign of four of the kings of Judah (Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah). For over a period of sixty

years Isaiah faithfully proclaimed the word of the Lord –during times of prosperity, times of national crisis, times of national chaos, and in times of moral and spiritual decline.

We're given a glimpse of the spiritual temperature in the Southern kingdom of Judah during this time in

Isaiah 22:12-13, In that day the Lord GOD of hosts called for weeping and mourning, for baldness and wearing sackcloth; and behold, joy and gladness, killing oxen and slaughtering sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine. "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

Quite a contrast isn't it? Instead of weeping and mourning over their sins; instead of confession and repentance; instead of their surrender and their submission to the LORD God, the people of Judah were living life for their own advantage– "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

Isaiah was commissioned to confront these people of their corruption and to warn them of the consequences that would soon follow.

Isaiah 1:4, 15, Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

It was also during this time that Northern kingdom, Israel, had been taken captive by Assyria, and the Southern kingdom, Judah, was in danger of the same fate. So, it was a time of war; it was a time of panic; it was a time of great instability and immorality. And it was during this time, that King Uzziah died. Now this would have been extremely difficult to accept because King Uzziah had been great king. He was the 10th king of Judah and his reign lasted for 52 years.

2 Chronicles 26:4-5, And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God, and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper.

However, in his later days, King Uzziah was unfaithful to God. He attempted to burn incense on the altar of incense, which was a task that only the priests were to perform. He was rebuked and confronted by 81 priests, but in his pride and arrogance he disregarded their rebuke and become enraged at them. God rewarded his rage and arrogance with leprosy.

2 Chronicles 26:21, And King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death, and being a leper lived in a separate house, for he was excluded from the house of the LORD. And Jotham his son was over the king's household, governing the people of the land.

This was a very sad ending to the reign of an otherwise great king. During his life, King Uzziah had provided peace, prosperity, and security, to the Southern kingdom of Judah, but now the king was dead. And this is the backdrop to our passage this morning.

Isaiah 6:1-2, 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. Above him stood the seraphim.

Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

Who was it that Isaiah saw sitting upon a throne? Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne. Notice the spelling of the term Lord in v1, an upper case l with lower case ord. Anytime you see the word Lord spelled in this way, it is a reference to the Hebrew word Adonai.

In Isaiah 6:3, we again read the word LORD, but here it is in all caps, which is a reference to the Hebrew word Yahweh or Jehovah. Yahweh refers to God's essential nature, while Adonai refers to the LORD God's sovereignty and dominion. Sitting on the throne, Isaiah saw Adonai –the sovereign and supreme ruler of all the heavens and all the earth.

It is interesting –the Lord, who Isaiah saw sitting on the throne, was the Lord Jesus Christ. This was a Christophany, or an appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ.

John 12:37-41, Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.” Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him.

According to the gospel of John, the “his glory” and the speaking “of him” was a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. So, in the year that the earthly king died, Isaiah saw the true king, the real king, the heavenly king, Jesus Christ, Adonai, sitting on the throne.

And his throne was lofty and exalted, literally meaning, it was raised to a superior position above all other thrones. And the train of his robe filled the temple, which speaks of God's incomparable splendor. God is glorious; God is magnificent; God is the most high. In no vision of heaven, do you ever catch the LORD God in a plain or ordinary setting; you never catch God asleep or unprepared. The LORD God reigns; he is sitting on the throne, all is at peace, and all is under control.

So, in the year that the earthly king died; when everything in the kingdom of Judah seemed to be falling apart; when tragedy was on the horizon; when captivity was inevitable –Isaiah saw the Lord sitting on the throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of his robe filling the temple.

Beloved, this is a vision that many of us need today; we are surrounded by an exceedingly wicked world; we are surrounded by gross immorality, lawlessness, godlessness, pain, suffering, and instability. It is inescapable. It is everywhere we go. It is all around us. And the state of the so-called church isn't much better; we see false doctrine, false teachers, selfishness, marital unfaithfulness, financial impropriety, disobedient children, depression, fear, anxiety, addiction, and abuse. What is going on in the world? What is going on in the church? How much worse is it going to get?

Isn't it encouraging to know that when everything seems to be turned upside down; when the future looks dark and bleak; when we don't understand what's going on in the world, the church, or even our own lives; when we do not understand why certain things are happening to us or to our loved ones –isn't it an encouraging thought that the LORD God is on his throne and that God is in control of all things?

Isaiah 46:9-10, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from

ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'

What a marvelous comfort it is to know that our God is sovereign. What a marvelous comfort it is to know that our God exercises his supremacy as he sees fit, and that nothing that happens is outside of his immediate and direct control. There is no sickness, no death, no accident, no uncomfortable situation, absolutely nothing happens apart from the will of God.

C.H. Spurgeon, "There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God's Sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that Sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that Sovereignty overrules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children ought more earnestly to contend than the doctrine of their Master over all creation—the Kingship of God over all the works of His own hands—the Throne of God and His right to sit upon that Throne."

Like Isaiah, some of us desperately need to be reminded of this truth from time to time.

Beloved, as God was then, so is God now. God is immutable. God does not change. God is always on the throne with all power and all authority, lofty and exalted. And God always accomplishes his purpose; his plans are never thwarted.

So don't get frustrated, don't doubt in God. Rather, trust in God; take comfort in him, view your circumstances through the lens of God's character; God is sovereign; God is good; God is faithful; God is just; God will always do what is right; and God is working in your life for your good and for his glory. The LORD God uses our present circumstances, no matter how difficult, to conform us to the image of his son—the Lord Jesus Christ. And while you may not understand, all the ins and outs of your present circumstances—the LORD God most assuredly does, and it is the LORD God who is sitting on the throne.

In Isaiah 6, God on the throne isn't the only thing that Isaiah saw. What else did he see?

Isaiah 6:2, Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

Surrounding the throne of God, Isaiah sees angels identified as seraphim—this is the only place in the Scriptures that these angels show up. The word seraphim is plural for seraph, which literally means to burn. Isaiah describes the seraphim as having six wings. Two of the wings were used for flying and the other four wings were used for covering themselves—two of the wings covered their faces and two of the wings covered their feet.

Why did the angels need to cover themselves? It is important to remember that these angels are flying around the throne of God, these angels are exposed to the full brilliance of the glory of God.

Do you remember back in Exodus 33, when the presence of the Lord passed by Moses and God hid him in the cleft of the rock? Do you remember why God hid him?

Exodus 33:18-20, Moses said, "Please show me your glory." And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.'"

And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”

This principle applies, not only to men, but to all created beings –angels included. I don’t think that any creature can withstand the sight of the full brilliance of the glory of God, which is why the seraphim covered their faces with their wings. Well, what about the feet? Why did they cover their feet?

Some commentators suggest that covering their feet was a sign of humility and modesty, or that it demonstrated an attitude of lowliness. I think it’s similar to when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush. The ground that Moses stood upon became sanctified and he was required to remove his sandals. In a similar manner, the seraphim, who surround the throne of God, need to cover themselves from the splendor and the glorious brilliance of God.

C.H. Spurgeon describes the seraphim:

“Thus they have four wings for adoration and two for active energy; four to conceal themselves, and two with which to occupy themselves in service; and we may learn from them that we shall serve God best when we are most deeply reverend and humbled in his presence. Veneration must be in larger proportion than vigor, adoration must exceed activity. As Mary at Jesus' feet was preferred to Martha and her much serving, so must sacred reverence take the first place, and energetic service follow in due course.”

Now the most important description of the seraphim is not in their physical appearance but the words that they called out to one another.

Isaiah 6:3-4, And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

This is a dramatic scene isn’t it? This reminds me a lot of the living beings of Revelation 4. Although they’re not called seraphim, there are certainly some similarities in these two passages.

Revelation 4:8, And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”

The four living creatures of Revelation 4 call out “Holy, holy, holy,” and the seraphim, of Isaiah 6, call out “Holy, holy, holy.” So what is it that is going on in these two passages? Unceasing praise; never-ending adoration; the perpetual worship of the LORD God Almighty; “holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts,” for night and day, without stopping, without ceasing, and without end.

I don’t think that you or I, or anyone else, will ever fully understand this kind of adoration; we’ll never fully understand this kind of praise, this kind of worship because we don’t fully understand the holiness of God. What does the holiness of God mean? And what does it mean that our God is holy, holy, holy? The Hebrew word translated holy refers to something that is sacred or set apart. It also implies purity that is set apart from impurity. The Greek word for holy also draws from this concept and is often translated as moral purity, or sanctity, or consecration. Let me give you three passages that give great insight into understanding the holiness of God.

1 Samuel 2:2, There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.

Isaiah 40:25, To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One.

Hosea 11:9, I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.

Did you catch what idea that each one of these verses imparts? Each one of these verses conveys the idea that God is completely set apart from everything else. There is none holy like the Lord; there is none besides the Lord; there is no rock like our God. Nothing can be compared or likened to God; God has no equals. God is God and not man; God is the Holy One in your midst.

J.I. Packer defines the holiness of God as everything about God that sets him apart from us and makes him an object of awe, adoration, and dread.

Thomas Watson remarks that Holiness is the most sparkling jewel of his crown; it is the name by which God is known. His power makes him mighty, his holiness makes him glorious.

God is entirely unique and his holiness is incomparable. The LORD God stands alone, and it is his holiness that marks his unique divine nature.

Exodus 15:11, Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

Psalms 111:9, He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name!

Tozer remarked that the only way to fully grasp the holiness of God was to experience the holiness of God. He writes, "...when you talk about the holiness of God, you have not only the problem of an intellectual grasp, but also a sense of personal vileness, which is almost too much to bear. God cannot tell us by language, so He uses association and suggestion and shows how holiness affects the unholy."

So the best way to understand the holiness of God is through observing those who have experienced it first-hand. You see, we can best understand the holiness of God by learning from those who have been confronted by it, face to face, like Isaiah. And how did Isaiah respond to his encounter with a God who is holy, holy, holy?

Isaiah 6:5, And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for 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!"

In the presence of a holy, holy, holy God, Isaiah pronounces a curse upon his own head. "Woe is me! For I am lost." Isaiah was utterly devastated and laid low by the holiness of God. Why do you think he responded in such a dramatic manner? I mean, Isaiah knew God. Isaiah knew that God was holy; he was familiar with the book of Leviticus and all the laws that were associated with the holiness of God. Isaiah he was familiar with Mt. Sinai, the priesthood, the sacrifices, the sins of Nadab and Abihu—who were killed because they did not treat the LORD God as holy.

Isaiah knew that God was utterly set apart; he knew that God was unique. So why did he respond in such a severe manner? Why the “Woe is me! For I am lost?”

Listen to how a few other men responded in similar situations. Do you remember Moses and the burning bush?

Exodus 3:2-6, And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

How about the prophet Habakkuk? Do you remember how Habakkuk responded in the presence of the Lord? Habakkuk was second guessing God; he was questioning God; complaining to God about the current state of this wicked world. In Habakkuk 2, he says “I’m going to stand here and wait for you to answer; I’ll keep watch, waiting for your word.

Habakkuk 3:16, I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound;
rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me.

Simon Peter had a similar response.

Luke 5:4-8, And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.” And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

In the presence of the holiness of God: Isaiah cried out, “Woe is me. I am lost.” Moses hid his face and was greatly afraid. Habakkuk was a nervous wreck – his insides trembled, his lips quivered, and decay entered his bones. And Simon Peter recognized his complete unworthiness to even lie at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. To come into the presence of God, to know and to understand the holiness of God, is to be utterly devastated because of our sinfulness. The holiness of God exposes the sinfulness of man. The holiness of God is like a giant spot light that shines on our lives and reveals all of our imperfections, all of our wicked thoughts, and all of our flaws. So if we don’t recognize the holiness of God, if we don’t understand the holiness of God, we will never understand our own sinfulness.

R. C. Sproul writes, “Without the holiness of God, sin has no meaning, grace has no point, and faith has no content. Without the holiness of God, sin is merely human failure and not rebellion against God.”

As believers, there is often the tendency to view our sin as personal failure; there is a tendency to view our sin as disappointment –I’m trying to more patient; I am trying to be more kind; I am trying to obey, but it’s really hard.” Beloved, what we need to remember is that the LORD God

is holy, holy, holy. And what we need to remind ourselves is that our sin is rebellion against him; against him who is holy, holy, holy.

As Isaiah's eyes gazed upon the King, the LORD of hosts, he saw his sinfulness, and the sinfulness of his people, and it nearly destroyed him. In the presence of a holy God our sinfulness is manifest; our sinfulness is made completely obvious. In the presence of a holy God our sinfulness stands out like a shining light in a darkened room.

And Beloved, the LORD God hates sin. And let me get personal for just a moment –the LORD God hates your sin, he hates my sin.

Habakkuk 1:13, Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil, and Thou cannot look on wickedness with favor.

Sin is the barrier that separates us from God. Sin is the obstacle that completely hinders and disrupts our relationship with him.

Isaiah 59:2, but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

This is something that we often forget –we forget that our sin separates and hinders our relationship with God; we get so preoccupied with other things, with the temporary things of this world that we forget about God's holiness, and that God hates our sin.

It is easy to remember that God loves us, it is easy to remember that God forgives us; that God is patience and long suffering towards us; that God has prepared a place for us. These thoughts are a great comfort and a great encouragement to us, but when we forget that God is holy, holy, holy, when we forget the seriousness of our sin, it inevitably begins to happen –we start to stray from God, and as we stray from God, our view of him diminishes.

The high view of God that every believer should possess is exchanged for a low view of God. The thrice holy God who is over all, is replaced with a god of our making, fashioned after our own desires, but the more we strive to know God and the more we reflect upon his holiness, the more we will hate our own sin and strive to please him.

Early in his ministry, the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church.

1 Corinthians 15:9, For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Later in his ministry, he wrote to the Ephesian church.

Ephesians 3:8, To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

And finally, towards the end of his ministry, towards the end of his life, he wrote to his true child in the faith, his beloved Timothy.

1 Timothy 1:15, The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

Did you catch the progression in those verses? Paul went from being the least of the apostles, to the least of all saints, to the foremost of all sinners. Well, what was happening in Paul's life? As Paul grew in his knowledge of God, as he grew in his relationship with God, the more exposed his sin became. And the closer that Paul got to the light of God's holiness, the more sin and wickedness was exposed in his life.

What about you? Is your knowledge of God following the progression of the apostle? Does your knowledge of God and the guilt of your sin seem more magnified today than yesterday, or last month, or last year? Is your god, holy, holy, holy? As you approach him, do you cover your face? Do you cover your feet?

God is holy, and in his holiness, he has called each one of us to be holy –from before the foundation of the world, God chose us to be holy and blameless before him.

1 Peter 1:15-16, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

For those of you who do not know God; for those who have never confessed with your mouth and believed with your heart that Jesus Christ is Lord, the holiness of God demands payment for your sin, and that payment is blood, that payment is death, that payment is eternal suffering. There is nothing that you can do to gain favor with God, even the good things that you do are as filthy rags in the light of God's holiness, but there is hope. As Isaiah saw the Lord God, and as his sinfulness was exposed, and as great fear gripped him, the LORD God took away his guilt.

Isaiah 6:6-7, Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

Isaiah's confession and contrition was met with God's gracious provision of mercy. A burning coal was taken from the altar, it touched the mouth of Isaiah, and his guilt was taken away, and his sin atoned. And just as Isaiah's guilt was taken away and his sin atoned, so is our guilt and our sin taken away and atoned for through the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jerry Bridges writes, "As Isaiah anguished over his newly discovered sinfulness, God sent one of the seraphim with a burning coal from the altar and touched Isaiah's lips. In this good news, Isaiah heard the gospel and experienced both the deep conviction of his sin and the assurance of God's gracious forgiveness. Isaiah's response: when he heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" he responded, "Here am I! Send me." Isaiah gave his life in service to God. He essentially offered himself as a blank check, to be filled in as God saw fit. With Isaiah we see a three-step process: first, acute realization of one's own sinfulness in the light of God's holiness; second, hearing the gospel that one's sins are forgiven; and finally the response of gratitude, love, and surrender leading to action.

As we behold the LORD God, as we experience the power of the gospel, as we surrender our will to the will of God, our lives will be progressively transformed, from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

In closing, I think there is an important lesson that is to be learned from Isaiah's description of the seraphim –they used four wings for adoration, and two wings for service. What about you? Does your adoration of God exceed your activity for God? Does your existence revolve around the

praise, adoration, and worship of God? As you come into the presence of the Lord is your face covered? As you come into the presence of the Lord are your feet covered? Do you come into his presence in lowliness and humility, or are you prideful and self-absorbed? Is your view of God a high view of God? Or is it a low view?

Beloved, our God is holy, holy, holy, and his presence is awesome. Isaiah saw the Lord, sitting on the throne, lofty and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.

Isaiah saw the seraphim, he saw their worship, and their service, and after this vision I suspect that Isaiah was never the same again. And as we behold the LORD God in the Scriptures, we should never be same either.
