

Seeing the Lord of Hosts By David Feddes

Our society doesn't take God very seriously in our language. When you watch television, you will repeatedly hear people say, "Oh my God, oh my God." Many of those same TV programs censor barnyard language. They act as though it's worse to use a barnyard term than to use God's name flippantly. If you look at Facebook or emails, you see, "OMG, OMG, OMG." "God" is an empty word, a way of exclaiming to show mild surprise or to add a little bit of salt and emphasis to our language. If we truly understood who we're talking about, we wouldn't use that kind of language, but it's very common.

Unfortunately that kind of misuse of God's name is not the only way that we treat God as an empty word. We need to understand that God is a living reality. He's not just a word to exclaim with and He's not just a theological theory. I teach theology. You're studying theology. What does "theology" mean? It means "God-word." *Theos plus logos*.

Meeting the Lord, however, is a lot more than just words about God. It's a lot more than just God talk. The Bible says that the Kingdom of God is not just a matter of talk and of words. Words and talk do matter when we're using the words rightly, but God is always much more than that.

God's attributes, the different words that are used to summarize who God, aren't just fancy words. They are stunning realities that ought to leave us awestruck and have left many people awestruck throughout history. They didn't just talk about God or define their terms and use their words. They actually had a sense of God's greatness and an encounter with the living God.

Consider Thomas Aquinas who wrote *Summa Theologica, Summary of All Theology*, thousands of pages long. He was one of the great thinkers in the history of the world. Thomas Aquinas tried to take the philosophy of the great philosopher Aristotle and put it together with the teaching of the Bible. It can't really be done, but Thomas was so smart he just about pulled it off. Near the end of his life, in 1274, after writing his vast volumes of theology and arguing that people really can't know God directly but only through reasoning and through the words that we use, Aquinas had an encounter with God. After that encounter he said, "I can do no more; such things have been revealed to me that all I have written seems as straw, and I now await the end of my life." Others encouraged Thomas to write more and finish that great work of theology but Aquinas wouldn't. He said, in effect, "I just can't write anymore and what I've written doesn't seem all that accurate or valuable in light of what I've actually encountered and experienced. God is a reality, not just a theory."

I had an outstanding teacher of philosophy when I was in college named Alvin Plantinga. Alvin Plantinga was later described by *Time* magazine as the greatest living Protestant philosopher. Alvin Plantinga is a very brilliant person with a tremendous IQ and knowledge and huge powers of logic. But back when he was a college student attending Harvard University, he had some struggles. He'd grown up in a Christian home but when he met a lot of others who didn't agree with Christianity, who thought it was false, he began to have many debates and also many internal questions about whether God was real.

Then something happened to Alvin Plantinga one night as he was walking across Harvard's campus in the year 1950. He says, "It was dark, windy, raining, nasty. But suddenly it was as if the heavens opened; I heard, so it seemed, music of overwhelming power and grandeur and sweetness; there was light of unimaginable splendor and beauty; it seemed I could see into heaven itself; and I suddenly saw or perhaps felt with greater clarity and persuasion and conviction that the Lord was really there and was all I had thought." In later years Plantinga would write philosophy, and part of his contribution to philosophy was that you don't have to have proofs or be able to provide evidence that God is real. If you know God directly, you don't have to prove it, just as if you meet other people directly, you don't have to come up with proofs that they exist. You know they exist by personal encounter.

Isaiah's Encounter

Scripture tells about an encounter the great prophet Isaiah had with God.

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 off 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." And 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 6:1-8)

This is a stunning account in the Bible of how Isaiah was called to be a prophet. As we think about this encounter in which Isaiah said he saw the Lord of hosts, I want to note four things about that. First of all, **clarity**: seeing the King as He is. Secondly, **conviction** of sin: seeing yourself as you are. Thirdly, **cleansing**: grace that removes guilt and atones for sin. And then fourth, **commission**: going where God sends. This is all part of seeing God and being carried along by God and lifted up into His kingdom and into His work. It was experienced by Isaiah, and these are vital parts of what a real encounter and a real relationship with God has involved throughout history.

Clarity: seeing the King as He is

So let's begin with clarity, seeing the King as He is. Isaiah saw that God is the **living** God. It happened in the year that King Uzziah died, in the year 740 BC when Uzziah had been king for fifty-two years. Think of that. Somebody ruling the nation for over fifty years. That was a very important king. And it must have seemed earthshaking when he died. But in the very year that he died, Isaiah had a vision of someone who didn't die. God is the living God. You can study lot of

different attributes about God and they are all very important but this one has got to be among the most important of all. The Bible simply describes Him as the living God and He is alive.

When all else dies and fades away, God lives. Before anything ever existed, God lives. He is the living God, the powerful God, the vibrant, alive God. Jesus Christ is this God come in the flesh and risen from the dead and He said, "I am the living One. I was dead and behold I am alive forever and ever." He's the living God. When you encounter God and see Him as He is, you realize He is living.

You also realize that He is great, that He is **enthroned**. Isaiah saw the Lord seated on His throne. God is not just a pal. God is not just a buddy. God is not just something we can shrink down to our own little preferences or ideas of how He ought to do things. God reigns. He's on His throne.

And He is **majestic**. Isaiah said, "I saw the Lord high and lifted up." We need to have ideas of God that are high and lifted up if they are to match who God really is because He is high and lifted up. He is majestic. He is splendid. Each of God's attributes should give us an exalted or high view of God.

He's **awesome**. The seraphs, the burning ones, the special angels near to His throne use one set of their wings just to cover their faces because even holy, exalted, mighty beings like the seraphs can't take in fully the awesomeness and the majesty and the brightness of God.

He is **holy**. That has at least two meanings. One is that He is just totally pure and has no sin. Holy also means utterly and totally different, completely separate, unlike anything else and far beyond all else. The difference between God and the greatest angel is infinitely greater than the distance between the greatest angel and a mosquito. God is utterly unlike all else. He has made all else and in His presence even the pure angels can barely look upon Him. The holiness of God is one of the stunning vital attributes of God that we must understand and that means that some of God's attributes are also labeled incommunicable. There are some things about God that are utterly unlike anything else. We understand only dimly so we use the word holy to describe that fact about God.

He's **mighty**. He's described as the Lord of hosts. Some translations phrases this as Lord Almighty, and that's certainly true. God is omnipotent, that's one of His attributes. He can do anything that He chooses to do. But this label "Lord of hosts" really captures something else as well, that He is the Commander of armies, that He's the Master of the hosts of heaven and all those mighty angels. According to Scripture, just one angel was enough to kill 185,000 soldiers in one night when the armies of Assyria surrounded Jerusalem. God is the master not just of one angel but of all the hosts of angels, and if you add up all the power of all those hosts, they are not a drop in the bucket compared to the limitless power of God Himself. God is mighty. He is omnipotent. He is all-powerful. He is Lord of hosts.

God is **glorious**. "The whole earth is full of His glory" is one of the refrains that comes through in Isaiah's vision. God's beauty shines forth. He is not just strong and powerful and majestic, but He's wonderful. He's splendid. He's beautiful. And every kind of beauty in the creation around

us is just a dim reflection of the Original Artist and of His beauty. The more we see the King as He is, the more we see the beauty of the glory of God and the face of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is **present**. Sometimes the word “imminent” is used to say that God is close, that He’s near. He’s exalted, He’s high, but at the same time He’s not far away. The train of his robe filled the temple where Isaiah was worshiping, and His glory fills the whole earth. So although He’s utterly unlike us in one sense, in another sense He’s as close as our own breath and as close as our own being and as close as all the glory in the world surrounding us. It’s there all the time. He’s there all the time.

The living God is always present, and yet for much of the time our sensors are too dulled by sin to realize it. But when we meet Him, when we see the Lord of hosts either in a vision as Isaiah did or with the eyes of our heart by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, then we can only be awestruck and amazed at such a tremendous God. As you think about the attributes of God, never think of those attributes as a list or a vocabulary to study but think of those truths as rays of light from the greatness of this majestic Being.

Isaiah wasn’t the last to have a sense of God’s great glory. People who’ve had a sense of God’s glory have been stunned and empowered and transformed by it. Jonathan Edwards was one of the great preachers who led in America’s Great Awakening during the mid-1700s, a tremendous spiritual revival by which thousands and thousands of people were saved. Edwards himself as a pastor knew the living God. He wrote:

Once, as I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension.

This grace that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception, which continued as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity.

This was not Jonathan Edwards’ conversion. He had already become a Christian before that, but this was a special sensing of the majesty and glory and love and grace of God that overwhelmed him. And he had other such experiences that he describes. You don’t really understand Jonathan Edwards until you understand that he was a man enraptured, amazed, delighted and in love with the God whom he had encountered.

Dwight L. Moody lived a little more than a century after Edwards. Moody had already been successful in running a Sunday school and wanted to reach out to people. Then he met some people who encouraged him to seek greater power from God, so he was praying for that. In 1872

something happened. "One day in the City of New York—oh! what a day, I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it. It is almost too sacred an experience to name. I can only say, God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand." Moody couldn't take any more and he thought he would die unless God held back. He had a strong sense of God's glory and of God's overwhelming love being poured out on him. Before that, Moody had had some success in his ministry, even though he was a former shoe salesman and wasn't very educated. After that experience, he had a stunning impact. When people heard Moody speak, they were coming to God. It was because God's hand was upon him and because he had encountered the living God.

That's the first thing in seeing the Lord of Hosts: clarity and really grasping something of who God is.

Conviction: seeing yourself as you are

Once you see the King as He is, you come under conviction and you start seeing yourself as you are. What did Isaiah say? "'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!" (Isaiah 6:5)

When your eyes see the King as He is in His beauty and His glory and His splendor, you want to praise Him. But you have unclean lips and you can't rightly praise Him. When you see the King as He is, you want to tell other people about this fantastic and wonderful and great God, but your lips are dirty and unworthy to carry the good news of God. All you can say is, "Woe is me. My lips aren't worthy to speak of Him. I live in the midst of a foul people." You realize in light of God's holiness how sinful you are.

Light has a way of showing things. We all look half decent in the dark. When you can't see what you really look like, you may think you're not very dirty. You may think your hair looks great when you get up in the morning until you flip on the light, look in the mirror, and say "What a mess!" That was Isaiah's experience. He looked at God and then he considered himself in the light of who God is and he said, "Oh, what a mess."

This has been the experience of all people who meet God. We get a sense of who we are as fallen sinners in His sight. We are small. We're sinful. Abraham, when he was conversing with the Lord Himself said, "I who am but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27). Abraham was one of the great men of the Earth, but he was dust and ashes before God.

Moses, when he met the Lord at the burning bush, "hid his face because he was afraid to look at God" (Exodus 3:6).

Joshua met a man he didn't recognize at first. Joshua went to him and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" And he said, "No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped (Joshua 5:13-14). That's always the experience: to be afraid, to fall to the earth, to be astounded by God.

Job went through a lot and suffered a lot. He had been faithful to God before all of his suffering, but when God finally came to Job and revealed something of His majesty and wisdom, Job could only say, "I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). Previously Job had been going on hearsay. He had believed it and walked with God based on what he had been told. But now he had had a direct encounter. The only response when you're in the presence of God is to repent in dust and ashes, and realize how different He is from you.

Jesus told Simon Peter to throw his nets on the other side of the boat when he hadn't caught anything all night. He then dragged in a huge pile of fish. "But when **Simon Peter** saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord'" (Luke 5:8). Suddenly Peter realized he hadn't just gotten good fishing advice from an ordinary friend. He realized who this was. He sensed something dreadful about being in the presence of this Jesus and all he could say was, "Go away from me, Lord. I'm a sinful man." Jesus didn't go away, of course. He went on to deal with Peter in mercy, making Peter a fisher of man.

Saul was a killer of Christians. When he first met Jesus Christ after Christ was glorified, there was a tremendous light from heaven, and Saul was flattened to the ground. He was blinded by light from heaven (Acts 9:3-9). He realized how sinful he was in the light of Jesus' revelation to him.

When you get clarity about who God is and who Jesus Christ is, you'll also have conviction about your own sin. In the light of His Holiness, you see your own filth.

George Whitfield (1714-1770) was with Jonathan Edwards in the Great Awakening. He was a mighty preacher, one of the great preachers who ever lived. He tells about one of the many times when he spoke with great power and people were moved by the Lord to salvation. He says, "I then began to pray and to give an exhortation. In about six minutes one cried out, 'He is come! He is come!' and could scarcely sustain the manifestation of Jesus to his soul. But having heard the crying of others for the like favour obliged me to stop, and I prayed over them as I saw their agonies and distress increase. My own soul was so full that I retired and wept before the Lord, and had a deep sense of my own vileness, and the sovereignty and greatness of God's everlasting love. Most of the people spent the remainder of the night in prayer and praising God. It was a night much to be remembered." An encounter with God brings this terrible conviction of sin but also then a wonderful sense of pardon and of cleansing.

In the early 1900s, God began a mighty work among missionaries and the small churches that had begun on the Korean peninsula. Within a century, Korea had become the second largest sender of missionaries in the world. Korea has many, many millions of Christians. Here's a sample from 1907 of how things began with a deep conviction of sin in the light of God's presence. William Blair, a Presbyterian missionary, recalled,

Each felt as he entered the church that the room was full of God's presence... a sense of God's nearness impossible of description... He came to us in Pyongyang that night with the sound of weeping. As the prayer continued, a spirit of heaviness and sorrow for sin came down upon the

audience. Over on one side, someone began to weep, and in a moment the whole audience was weeping.

My own cook tried to make a confession, broke down in the midst of it, and cried to me across the room, 'Pastor, tell me, is there any hope for me, can I be forgiven?' and then he threw himself to the floor and wept and wept, and almost screamed in agony.

A Korean elder confessed hatred for the missionary, and the two of them fell to the floor before God as the Spirit came upon the assembly in power.

Pale and trembling with emotion, in agony of mind and body, guilty souls, standing in the white light of that judgment, saw themselves as God saw them. Their sins rose up in all their vileness, till shame and grief and self-loathing took complete possession; pride was driven out, the face of men forgotten.

Looking up to heaven, to Jesus whom they had betrayed, they smote themselves and cried out with bitter wailing, "Lord, Lord, cast us not away forever!" Everything else was forgotten, nothing else mattered. The scorn of men, the penalty of the law, even death itself seemed of small consequence if only God forgave... I know now that when the Spirit of God falls upon guilty souls, there will be confession, and no power on earth can stop it.

Just as Isaiah cried out in God's presence, "Woe is me," so it has been in every age when the Holy Spirit comes in power and when the majesty and holiness and justice of God are made evident to people. They fall under conviction.

Cleansing: grace removes guilt

Thank God it doesn't stop with this sense of devastation and conviction. After conviction comes cleansing, God's grace removing guilt. Isaiah says, "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 6:6-7).

What tremendous news! Notice that the cleansing comes from the altar. If we're going to stand before God's throne, we can't do it without the cleansing that comes from the altar. This is a picture of Jesus' atonement and of His sacrifice and of how our guilt was taken away by the mercy of God and by the sacrifice of Jesus on that great altar on the cross. Isaiah earlier wrote of God's invitation to His people, "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

Later in the book of Isaiah, God reveals more about how that cleansing will happen. The prophet says of God's suffering servant, the Messiah, "But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his

own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:5-6). Our sins are put on Him; His righteousness is put on us.

From His altar comes the cleansing, the atonement. Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, but he also saw God's mercy to those who sense their lostness. "For thus, says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isaiah 57:15). What a gift, what a blessing, that this high and lofty God comes to those who are lowly and revives us and lifts us up!

In the early 1500s, Martin Luther began to think more and more about God and about the righteousness of God. He said the more he thought about the righteousness of God, the more he felt far from God, and the more he even hated God because he knew he was unrighteous, and he knew he was condemned in God's sight.

Luther began to study the Bible more and more, and he was already a priest by this time. He was also a monk trying to earn his way into God's favor. Then one day while he was reading in the book of Romans and studying also the book of Galatians, he began to understand what it meant to say "The just shall live by faith." It was a free gift of God received by faith that we could become right with Him, righteous before Him.

Luther wrote, "Then I grasped that the righteousness of God is the righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy, God justifies us through faith. I felt myself to be reborn and have gone through open doors into Paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning. This passage became to me a gate to heaven." Luther had been touched with the coal from the altar. The blessing of what Jesus had done for Him was received by faith.

Luther later wrote a commentary on Romans which would have a powerful impact on someone else. John Wesley was a man who wanted to know God and be right with Him. He and some other friends started what they called The Holy Club. They prayed and they fasted and they sought the Lord. Those were good things to do, but they weren't enough. Wesley realized he didn't have a clear assurance of salvation, of being right with God. This troubled him; it tormented him. On May 24, 1738, John Wesley was listening to someone reading a preface to Luther's commentary on Romans. He says, "About a quarter before nine while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for my salvation, and an assurance was given to me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

What a tremendous cleansing comes to us by faith in the work of Jesus Christ!

Commission: going where God sends

After we've seen the Lord as He is, seen ourselves as we are, and received His cleansing as His grace in Jesus Christ removes our guilt, then there comes the commission, going where God sends. You never truly meet God and have a transforming, saving encounter with God without being sent. This was certainly true in Isaiah's case. "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 6:8) Isaiah went on to be a mighty prophet of God who had a tremendous sense of the majesty and power of God. Those whom God saves, He sends.

Sometimes evangelical Christians in their doctrine can get a little skewed. We focus on God's grace, His forgiveness and how to be saved and made right with God--and we should; that is enormously important. But let's not forget all that's involved in an encounter with God. Seeing God as He is, knowing God in His majesty, glory, power, splendor, justice and mercy and really coming to know Him is not just a matter of being forgiven and getting off the hook. It's a matter of knowing God and being stunned by Him, and it's a matter of facing our own sins. Too often we want to hit the fast forward button. We want to skip Good Friday and go to Easter. We want to skip conviction of sin and feeling sorrow for those sins and feeling the filth and stink of those sins. We just want to feel clean and forgiven. But we do really need to see ourselves as we are. And then we don't stop at being forgiven and saved. When He saves us, He sends us. Salvation is tremendously important and thank God for it. Much of our doctrine and much of our meditation should focus on salvation but also on the attributes and majesty and glory of God, on human sin and fallenness, and on God's sending.

When you've really met the living God you're not nearly so intimidated by other people. When you see Him as the living God, as the ultimate reality, then other people's opinion of you doesn't matter nearly so much. God told Isaiah, "Don't fear what others fear. I'm the one you are to fear" (Isaiah 8:12-13). Jesus said something similar: "Don't fear those who can destroy your body and after that can do no more. Fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in hell" (Matthew 10:28). If you want to take somebody seriously, if you want to be scared of someone, then let God be the One.

If you're going to do God's work at all and be an ambassador for Christ, you need to know the living God and have this sense of being sent, or you'll give up when the going gets tough. But when you know Him you keep speaking regardless of people's response. Right after Isaiah said, "Here am I send me," then God said, "I'm going to send you but even though they have eyes they're not going to really see. Even though they have ears, they're really not going to hear. Their hearts are going to be hard and that's just going to continue." Most of your ministry people are going to be hardened to what you have to say.

That can be pretty discouraging. If you're called to be a pastor, if you're called to be a witness to friends, you will sometimes not see the results you wanted. According to ancient accounts, Isaiah ended up sawed in two under the reign of the wicked King Manasseh. Isaiah was faithful to God no matter what. This was true of many, many people throughout history. They were sent by God and they kept on going, no matter what, because they knew the living God. We go where God sends.

When God revealed Himself to Moses, He didn't say, "Now Moses, you've seen the burning bush. That was an interesting revelation wasn't it? Now go back to the sheep." He said, "I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." (Exodus 3:10) If you've met the living God, then the living God is sending you, not just saving you.

When Joshua met the Commander of the Hosts of the Lord, the Lord Himself, the Lord said, "I have given Jericho into your hand with its king and mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city."(Joshua 6:2-3) When you meet the Lord you get your marching orders.

After Peter said, "Go away from me Lord I'm a sinful man," Jesus said, "Do not be afraid. From now on you'll be catching men" (Luke 5:10). Jesus gives Peter that pardon and that sense of not being afraid. Then He gives a commission: "From now on, let's catch some men."

When God spoke to Saul (who later became the apostle Paul), Jesus told Saul, "I have appeared to you for this purpose" and the purpose wasn't just to save Saul from his sin, although it certainly accomplished that. Jesus said, "I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness... I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:16).

When Jonathan Edwards met Christ, it was to lead a great awakening and to preach with power. When Whitfield met Christ, it was for the same purpose. When Wesley met Christ and was overwhelmed by His grace and mercy and was commissioned by Him, he carried out that mission. Luther sparked a great reformation after discovering justification by faith.

When you see the Lord of hosts, it's not just for your own personal pleasure. It is a delight, of course, and you should delight in Him and in His salvation. But then go and share His reality and His truth with others.

Doctrine is not meant to just be stashed away in your brain. Doctrine matters so that you can accurately proclaim and share with others the reality of the living God. That's what you always want to keep in mind when you're studying the things of God, when you're using words about God, *logos about theos*, theology.

You want to know that you are dealing with the living Lord of Hosts and pray that he will continue to show Himself to you, that you will see the King as He is with clarity, that wherever anything is amiss in your life, He'll bring conviction upon you so that you see yourself as you are in your sin but then also as one redeemed and made new by Him, that you will be cleansed by His gift from the altar of Jesus Christ. Grace will remove your guilt. Then you will be sent. You will not just hear His words of sending, but you'll respond, "Here am I. Send me." You will be His willing ambassador to tell others the things you have seen and heard.

Seeing Jesus' glory

Isaiah was not just talking about God in general. He was talking about Jesus Christ. Already before Jesus was incarnate, Isaiah was speaking of the glory of the Second Person of the Trinity. Scripture says, "When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled...Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. (John 12:36-41)

May we all see Jesus' glory and then speak of Him. We need hearts to see that glory. "God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). Words about God are not just words but the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

And so we pray with the apostle Paul "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened" (Ephesians 1:17-18).

Whether God gives you a vision like He gave Isaiah or whether He just opens your heart to the tremendousness of the reality of who He is and shows who you are and how He's atoning for you and how He's sending you, pray that God will more and more open the eyes of your heart. As a song puts it, "Open the eyes of my heart. I want to see you."

Many of us long for transformation in the people around us. We long for transformation in our society. We long for revival. But the key to revival is this, "Lord, please send revival, and let it begin with me."

Seeing the Lord of Hosts
Slide Contents
By David Feddes

Reality, not just theory

- Theology = theos (God) + logos (word)
- Meeting the Lord is more than God-talk.
- God's attributes are not just fancy words but stunning realities.

Thomas Aquinas (1274)

“I can do no more; such things have been revealed to me that all I have written seems as straw, and I now await the end of my life.”

Alvin Plantinga (1950)

It was dark, windy, raining, nasty. But suddenly it was as if the heavens opened; I heard, so it seemed, music of overwhelming power and grandeur and sweetness; there was light of unimaginable splendor and beauty; it seemed I could see into heaven itself; and I suddenly saw or perhaps felt with great clarity and persuasion and conviction that the Lord was really there and was all I had thought.

Isaiah's Encounter

In the year that King Uzziah died [740 BC] 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.”

And 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 6:1-8)

Seeing the Lord of Hosts

- **Clarity:** seeing the King as He is
- **Conviction:** seeing yourself as you are
- **Cleansing:** grace removes guilt
- **Commission:** going where God sends

Clarity: seeing the King as He is

- **Living:** not dead like King Uzziah
- **Enthroned:** reigning with all authority
- **Majestic:** high and lifted up
- **Awesome:** seraphs can't look
- **Holy:** totally pure, utterly unlike all else
- **Mighty:** Lord of hosts
- **Glorious:** beauty shines forth
- **Present:** His glory fills temple and earth

Jonathan Edwards

Once, as I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contemplation and prayer, I had a view that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension.

This grace that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception, which continued as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I know not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity.

Dwight L. Moody (1872)

One day in the City of New York—oh! what a day, I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it. It is almost too sacred an experience to name. I can only say, God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand.

Seeing the Lord of Hosts

- **Clarity:** seeing the King as He is
- **Conviction:** seeing yourself as you are
- **Cleansing:** grace removes guilt
- **Commission:** going where God sends

Conviction: seeing yourself as you are

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!” (Isaiah 6:5)

- Unclean lips cannot rightly praise God or proclaim God to others.

Small and sinful before God

Abraham: “I who am but dust and ashes.” (Genesis 18:27)

Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (Exodus 3:6)

Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped. (Joshua 5:13-14)

Job: I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” (Job 42:5-6)

But when **Simon Peter** saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” (Luke 5:8)

Saul was flattened and blinded by a light from heaven. (Acts 9:3-9)

George Whitefield

(1714-1770)

I then began to pray and to give an exhortation. In about six minutes one cried out, “He is come! He is come!” and could scarcely sustain the manifestation of Jesus to his soul. But having heard the crying of others for the like favour obliged me to stop, and I prayed over them as I saw their agonies and distress increase.

My own soul was so full that I retired and wept before the Lord, and had a deep sense of my own vileness, and the sovereignty and greatness of God's everlasting love. Most of the people spent the remainder of the night in prayer and praising God. It was a night much to be remembered.

Korean Pentecost (1907)

Each felt as he entered the church that the room was full of God's presence... a sense of God's nearness impossible of description... He came to us in Pyongyang that night with the sound of

weeping. As the prayer continued, a spirit of heaviness and sorrow for sin came down upon the audience. Over on one side, someone began to weep, and in a moment the whole audience was weeping.

My own cook tried to make a confession, broke down in the midst of it, and cried to me across the room, 'Pastor, tell me, is there any hope for me, can I be forgiven?' and then he threw himself to the floor and wept and wept, and almost screamed in agony.

A Korean elder confessed hatred for the missionary, and the two of them fell to the floor before God as the Spirit came upon the assembly in power.

Pale and trembling with emotion, in agony of mind and body, guilty souls, standing in the white light of that judgment, saw themselves as God saw them. Their sins rose up in all their vileness, till shame and grief and self-loathing took complete possession; pride was driven out, the face of men forgotten.

Looking up to heaven, to Jesus whom they had betrayed, they smote themselves and cried out with bitter wailing, "Lord, Lord, cast us not away forever!" Everything else was forgotten, nothing else mattered. The scorn of men, the penalty of the law, even death itself seemed of small consequence if only God forgave... I know now that when the Spirit of God falls upon guilty souls, there will be confession, and no power on earth can stop it. (William Blair)

Seeing the Lord of Hosts

- **Clarity:** seeing the King as He is
- **Conviction:** seeing yourself as you are
- **Cleansing: grace removes guilt**
- **Commission:** going where God sends

Cleansing: grace removes guilt

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

White as snow

Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. (Isaiah 1:18)

Our sins are put on Him

But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have

gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:5-6)

The High saves the lowly

For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite. (Isaiah 57:15)

Martin Luther (early 1500s)

Then I grasped that the righteousness of God is the righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning. This passage became to me a gate to heaven.

John Wesley (May 24, 1738)

About a quarter before nine while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for my salvation, and an assurance was given to me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

Seeing the Lord of Hosts

- **Clarity:** seeing the King as He is
- **Conviction:** seeing yourself as you are
- **Cleansing:** grace removes guilt
- **Commission:** going where God sends

Commission: going where God sends

And 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 6:8)

- Those God saves, He sends.
- Keep speaking, regardless of response.

Commission: going where God sends

I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. (Exodus 3:10)

I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and mighty men of valor. You shall march around the city. (Joshua 6:2-3)

Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” (Luke 5:10)

I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness... I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me. (Acts 26:16)

Seeing the Lord of Hosts

- **Clarity:** seeing the King as He is
- **Conviction:** seeing yourself as you are
- **Cleansing:** grace removes guilt
- **Commission:** going where God sends

Isaiah saw Jesus’ glory

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled... Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. (John 12:36-41)

Hearts to see glory

God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor 4:6) ... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened. (Ephesians 1:17-18)