

3. I see the Lord

July 27, 2014

Human eyes are incredibly made by the Creator Jesus. The eye is essentially a living camera with extraordinary sensitivity, yet it is much more superior to any man-made camera.

The most incredible part of eyes, in my opinion, is that everywhere we turn our gaze, twelve separate muscles (six on each eye) move in perfect coordination for us to see the object we're looking at. If our eyes are even slightly misaligned, we see double. This remarkable coordination is like a marksman so accurate with a pistol in each hand that he can make only one bullet hole every time he fires both guns at the same time.

None of man-made cameras give three dimensional depth accurately and consistently, but the human eyes that are created by God do.

Even Charles Darwin conceded that "to suppose that the eye could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest possible degree." Nonetheless, having abandoned his Christianity, Darwin was obliged to appeal to the "absurd" to account for the origin of the eye by random change and natural selection.

As wonderful as our eyes are, they only see the physical domain. They cannot see the spiritual world, yet. But in this chapter 6 of the Book of Isaiah, we will have the most awestricken scene – entering into the throne room of God in heaven and seeing the glory of God.

If you have to read this Book chronologically, I would not doubt that chapter 6 should be the first one in line, because it is Isaiah's call to ministry. Before he announced any 'woes' from the Lord to others, he first confessed his own sin and said, "Woe is me!" I find four stages in Isaiah's incredible experience with the Lord. Through these four stages, I believe that the Lord will speak to us loud and clear.

A. THE SIGHT OF GOD'S HOLINESS

Isaiah 6:1-4 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. 2 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. 3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

King Uzziah died in 739 B.C. He was one of Judah's greatest kings after king David. In his later years, his pride got the best of him and walked into the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the incense altar. Promptly the Lord struck him with leprosy, and he was an isolated leper until his death.

Two things Uzziah did wrong:

- 1) Only the priests were allowed to do this by the law that was given to them by the Lord
- 2) Uzziah thought that he could do whatever he wanted including ignoring what the Lord told them in His law. He didn't go into the temple to worship the Lord, rather

he went in to show off and to display that he was as powerful as the Lord. A bad idea.

During 52 years of Uzziah's reign, people looked up to him and depended on his leadership rather than seeking the Lord. When he was taken out of their sight, they were lost like Isaiah was. That is the reason the Lord gave the prophet the sight of His holiness.

A great king may have left his throne on earth, but the King of all kings was still seated on the throne of heaven. Nothing has changed essentially. The Lord was reminding Isaiah of putting complete trust on the Lord, not on Uzziah.

When symphony orchestra members tune their musical instruments before their concert, they tune theirs to a very particular frequency, usually 440 hertz, a note known as A 440. It is A key that is played by the oboist, and the rest of the orchestra tunes their instruments to match it. Because it is least affected by humidity or other weather conditions. The Lord should be our spiritual tuning fork at all time.

For Isaiah, the outlook for the nation Israel was bleak, but when he made an uplook, it was a completely different story. God was still on the throne and reigning as the Sovereign of the universe.

Like Isaiah felt after Uzziah died, your situation might be bleak to say the least. You might be facing utter difficulty, or job loss, or family crisis. Whatever that might be, the Lord is still on the throne and He has complete control over everything. What you are facing didn't come to you without His permission because the Lord knows that you will be able to handle it with His strength. And He is with you.

Let's talk about the holiness of God. Love is central in God, but holiness is the center of His love. Because God's love is a holy love. Love without holiness is a monster that can destroy God's perfect law, while holiness without love would leave no hope for the lost sinner. Both are perfectly balanced in the divine nature and works of God.

The holiness that our God wants us to have is not something we can grab from here or there. It only comes from Him as He ministers to us daily. I find four important facts we must understand and do:

1) God wants His people to be holy.

Eight times in Scripture, God said, "Be holy, for I am holy." Since God's commandments are His enablements, this commandment assures us that it's possible to live a holy life. What health is to the body, holiness is to the soul. And the Great Physician can give us the spiritual health and wholeness that we need.

Holiness requires living the way the Bible tells us without compromises. Is it popular? No, you will be isolated and rejected by others, but you will be welcomed by our God.

2) Holiness begins at the altar.

The idea behind the ancient Hebrew word for 'altar' is essentially, "killing-place." The ancient altar – a place of death – was made holy and was consecrated to God through the atoning death of animal. Like that ancient altar, the altar of the New Covenant – the cross – is transformed from a place of death to a place set apart to bring life.

The first step toward holiness is the admission of our own sin and the recognition of Christ as our Savior and Redeemer from sin. If we think that we are going to become holy because of our sincere resolutions, our religious habits, or our theological knowledge, we are heading for absolute failure. True, we need spiritual knowledge, and we ought to resolve to cultivate godly habits. But apart from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, all these good things are useless if not harmful.

3) Holiness involves obedience and discipline.

It wasn't enough for the Jewish worshipper to bring a sacrifice to the altar and go away knowing that his or her sins had been forgiven. That worshipper also had to obey God's commandments.

Believers today should do the same. What the Bible tells us, that we must do. Even though there are many things from the OT that do not apply to us because they were for the ancient Israelites. But there are plenty of things we must follow in the New Testament. Worshiping the Lord does not stop at the exit door of the church on Sunday. It continues throughout the week, everyday, 24/7.

James 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

4) Holiness must be from God and be genuine.

We must beware of "false zeal." God killed Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, because they brought "strange fire" and false zeal into the sanctuary, violating the holy law of God. God doesn't do that today, if He did, not very many believers would be left.

Hyped-up religious feelings are no guarantee that we're pleasing God, and the absence of them doesn't mean we're failing Him. Satan is a deceiver, and we must be careful to detect and reject his counterfeits.

True worship of God comes from the Spirit of God according to Scripture – in context – and it magnifies and glorifies God alone, not anyone else and all done in order .

B. THE INSIGHT OF HIS OWN SINFULNESS

Isaiah 6:5-7 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." 6 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. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."

When I do ride-along with the Sheriff's Dept. deputies, I get to walk into some places that are filthy beyond description. I had to wonder how anyone could live in such places. When I saw that filth, the Lord spoke to my heart, "This is what I see in a human heart who sins against Me."

The sight of a holy God and His holiness only reveal the truth of Isaiah's heart. Unclean lips are rooted in an unclean heart.

Matthew 12:34-35 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

When Isaiah realized how filthy his heart and lips were, he cried out to the Lord. Look at what the Lord did for him in v6 and 7 again:

Isaiah 6:6-7 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 . 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."

The Lord met his desperate need immediately without any probation period as He forgives our sins right away when we confess them to Him.

If this scene had been on earth, the coals would have come from the brazen altar where sacrificial animal's blood had been shed. Isaiah's cleansing came by blood and fire. Forget the soap, God's coal works much better for a filthy mouth.

Because God is holy, He has made holiness the moral imperative of His creation. Anything that is unholy must be purified. It is no accident, then, that God's holiness is associated with fire throughout the Bible.

We are to be authentic in an inauthentic world; and speak the truth in a truthless world. And the place to start is in our minds, our mouths, and our morals. If you use profanity, stop it in the name of Jesus. You are not glorifying the Lord.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

C. THE VISION – THE CALL TO MINISTRY

Isaiah 6:8 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."

It was only after forgiveness that Isaiah was ready to hear the voice of God and respond to His call. Isaiah didn't ask what the assignment was, nor did he ask about the employment benefit package like whether he should get Obamacare or not.

When the Lord asks us to do His work, we don't need to know what's ahead or what kind of qualification we should have. He will take care of all the details. He wants us to trust Him and answer to Him with the same answer like Isaiah, "Here am I! Send me." Remember, where God guides, God provides.

Never underestimate what the Lord can do with one willing worker. How strange it is that this God of majesty, sovereignty, and power asks for volunteers! He could easily create very obedient robots to do His work, or command powerful angels to carry out His will. But God wants willing, surrendered servants. Have you been waiting for God to force you to serve Him? He looks for volunteers. Are you one of God's willing volunteers?

D. BLINDNESS – THE NATION CHOSE NOT TO SEE

Isaiah 6:9-13 And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' 10 "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." 11 Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered: "Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate, 12 The Lord has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. 13 But yet a tenth will be in it, And will return and be for consuming, As a terebinth tree or as an oak, Whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump."

The Lord was telling Isaiah what to expect from the people to whom he was going to minister. Actually Isaiah's ministry would make some people's eyes more blind, their ears more deaf, and their hearts more calloused. In other words, he was not going to have a ministry that you are going to write home about.

How would you like to be a prophet who would be rejected by people day in and day out? It is no wonder the prophet asked the Lord how long.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) In our minds we must counteract our depravity with godly thoughts. As our minds go, so go our lives.

1 Peter 1:15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

2) True worship of God comes from the Spirit of God according to Scripture – in context – and it magnifies and glorifies God alone, not anyone else and all done in order.

3) We are responsible to be faithful. God is responsible for outcomes.