

God's Glory results in reaction

Isaiah 6:1–8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another:

*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory."*

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

5 "Woe to me!" I cried. I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

*8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"
And I said, Here am I. Send me!"*

What happens when you meet God? I don't know if all of us have really ever considered this question before but I think it's a valuable thing for us to think about as we look into our text. Many of us in prayer have spoken to God in one way or another. And there are at certain points that we kind of wish that we could meet God so that we could ask him some questions face to face, maybe get a little bit of assurance, or on the other side to even give him a piece of our minds. I don't think that's going to happen to us any time soon but maybe as a mental maneuver, let's think on it. But to summarize: God's Glory Results in Reaction

A reaction from humans

Let's take a look into our text and see what exactly happens when you do meet God. The example before us is from a time in Isaiah's life, where he got to see God, face to face. In the temple all of a sudden God appears on a throne. And God just fills everything. Just the hem of the bottom of his robe fills the entire temple. There are Seraphim above, calling out that the whole earth is full of his glory and temple is full of smoke. At the songs of the Angels the temple shakes and vibrates.

Isaiah of course is terrified: "WOE IS ME!" He cried. But that's not all he exclaims. When Isaiah sees God he cries out: "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

This is a profound statement. Not just because it's true, but because of who Isaiah is. Isaiah isn't just a Joe shmoe commoner. Isaiah's father is one of the king's friends, he was educated at a great school in Jerusalem, he's considered to be the most gifted writer in the Old Testament. This might not have even been his initial commission, he might have even been a prophet before this. His lips are considered a strength of his. His words are something he defines himself by but when he comes next to God, his strongest strength is not only pitiful: it's downright offensive.

And this isn't exactly out of the ordinary. When God appears to Ezekiel falls to his face and God has to lift him up. Daniel is bedridden for days after his glorious vision. Peter, seeing Jesus, whose glory was veiled as a man, bring in a huge amount of fish, and he falls at the feet of Christ proclaiming his sin. Whenever God appears, he produces a reaction. And the initial reaction is fear. God, when he is truly seen, is far more glorious than you have ever feared. I mean even the angels shield their faces and their feet from God's glory, and they, angels, are shouting in spontaneous songs: "Holy, Holy, Holy!"

You and I have not ever seen God visually, but when we see God through scripture, the reaction is the same: It's fear. When you understand how Holy God is, you see how absolutely pitiful, and downright offensive everything we've ever done is. Our proudest shining moment in life is just filth and dust to a being so great. I mean even if you distill God down to just one characteristic, if you forget about Holiness, or just, or righteous, or powerful, or knowing, or eternal or the list could go on. If you distilled God down to just his let's go with: patience. And if you compare yourself to just that you scream out with Isaiah: Woe is me! I am ruined! I am so unloving, I am so mean, I am so selfish, I am just downright awful.

And if you go down the line and list off all of God's characteristics, and you compare yourself, you understand just exactly how high above God's glory is over us. Even without seeing him physically, you really cry along with Isaiah woe is me! God really owes me nothing except judgment. God's glory, his sheer mass and magnificence proves of no comfort to us mortals. God's glory is a sheer threat. It shows us how small we are. How condemned we stand. How pretty much terrible anything and everything is about us.

A reaction from God and the redeemed (Isaiah)

But while God is infinitely more Glorious than we fear, he is also infinitely more gracious than we could possibly imagine. If you or I see something that is absolutely putrid and awful, for me that's a spider. You get rid of it. You squash it, you throw it away outside because just seeing it makes you sick. But that's not what God does. When God the Glorious appears and sees tiny Isaiah and does this: **"6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.'"**

God glorious nature brings about a reaction in himself. He sends a hot coal, in the hands of an angel to purify the sins of a man. So that Isaiah can now stand in his presence without fear. God doesn't lower his standards. He doesn't choose to look away. He certainly doesn't make himself less glorious. But what he does is he raises Isaiah up, he atones for his sins, he takes away his guilt. God reacts to his poor condition and lifts him up.

And when Isaiah had an encounter with God's Glory, when he encountered God face to face and seen just how gracious he was to him. Fear is replaced with faith. Quaking turns to confidence. And now those things, his lips, that were his pride and joy. Those things that were considered pitiful and putrid, are now a strength once again. Isaiah hears the word of the Lord, the glorious, the one who raised him up from his feet saying: **"Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"** He can't help but exclaim "Send Me!"

A reaction from God and the redeemed (Us)

And even though you and I haven't met God face to face, even though we see him only through Scripture, he is still infinitely more gracious to you and I than we could have possibly imagined. God didn't send an Angel. God sent his own, his only son. God didn't have it be a hot coal for one prophet, it was the death of his son for the whole world. God looked at you who were despicable, gross, dirty, absolutely meager in comparison to him. And he didn't pulverize you, he didn't cast you into the depths of hell so he didn't have to look at you, he atoned for all those negatives. He took all those sins and laid them on Jesus. He took all of your imperfections and washed them with Christ's blood. He took all your guilt and he paid for it. To raise you up, so you can stand redeemed in his presence.

And if God did all that for us, why would we ever not say "Send me!" Having experienced the grace of God why would we not want others to have what we have? Send me to proclaim the amazing fact that God raises up the worthless. Send me to announce that the God who is above all is the one who is on our side. Send me to proclaim like the seraphim in the temple that Holy Holy Holy is the Lord. The whole earth is full of his glory.

God doesn't ask for you to be successful. It's not in our reading but Isaiah was called and told that no one would listen to him anyways, but it doesn't stop his enthusiasm for declaring the praises of the LORD. I can't promise that your message to others will be met with success. I can't even promise that your message to others will even be met with politeness. But it's something that can be done willingly, not because it will be successful, but because God is just so glorious.

Amen