



**Worship – Part 12**  
**Holy Worship – Part 3**  
**GCSP – 07/21/2007**

What is your first inclination when you face a problem? If you are similar to most Christians you may say a quick prayer, but you then proceed to worry about the problem and begin making an attempt to figure out what in the world you are going to do next.

If this sounds familiar, your "god" is too small. And I use quotations when I say god because I mean god with a small "g" and not the one and only true God of the universe. As long as you think you can solve your problems, even if you need a little help from God, you are the sovereign one and God is the servant.

That may seem harsh, but prove to me I'm wrong.

There is a terrible saying that has become popular amongst Christians over the years. It has become so popular that 75% of believers, in one study, think it is a verse in the Bible. The saying goes like this: "God helps those who help themselves."

This saying sounds good doesn't it? It not only sounds good but it feels good. But beloved, it is as far from the truth of Scripture as you can get. God doesn't help those who help themselves; He helps those who cannot help themselves. Those who help themselves are self-sufficient and self-reliant. God allows those who help themselves to have at it and see just how far they can get. Those who help themselves are really saying they don't really need God – at least not all the time.

If you are genuine about wanting to worship God in spirit and in truth, and if you are genuine about wanting to understand the depth and breadth and width of the holiness of God, then you must decide emphatically who is the servant and who is the Sovereign.

The Sovereign is the only One who is all-sufficient. The Sovereign is the only One who does not require help. The Sovereign is the only One who can go it alone. The servant is helpless apart from the Master. The servant does not even exist apart from the Master.

So before we even make the attempt tonight to learn more about God's holiness, you have to determine in your heart, mind, and soul who is the Master of your life – is it you or is it God?

If it truly is God, then you and I both need to start acting like it on a more consistent basis.

Let's pray.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Isaiah**.

**Isaiah 6:1-7**

We have been looking at holiness in the last two sermons. We first saw from **1 Peter 1:13-16** the importance of preparing our minds, of being consistently engaged in the spiritual disciplines (Bible intake, worship, fasting, prayer, meditation, solitude, etc.), of having a firm resolve to fix our eyes and our minds on the things of God and His Word, and of making the commitment to leave the things of this world behind us.

Last week we looked at the life of Moses; particularly his burning bush experience. We spent most of our time looking at the holiness of God as represented by the flames in the bush and how God has used fire to describe His nature to us.

God appeared to the children of Israel in a pillar of fire. We spoke about the Shekinah fire, or glory of God. When Moses was on the mountain with God for forty days receiving the Ten Commandments and the Law of God, he requested that God allow him to see His glory. God told him it would kill him, so instead He carved out a cleft in the rock, hid Moses in that cleft, and allowed Moses to see just a passing glance of His glory (**Exodus 33:19-23**). From that passing glance, Moses' face glowed to the point that he had to hide it from the Israelites with a veil.

We then spoke about how God is also a consuming fire from **Deuteronomy 4:24** and **Hebrews 10:29**, and how this form of fire represented His perfect justice and judgment and wrath against sin. We spoke of how often we lack genuine reverence and awe for who God is and for the unlimited power He possesses. Christians today are much too casual with God. They call God their buddy, the big man upstairs, and many other irreverent and degrading names.

We also saw God depicted by fire in a refining capacity from **Isaiah 33:14-16**. I used the illustration of putting iron in a fire and how that iron would absorb the heat and eventually glow. As we continue to grow and mature in Christ, as we draw closer and closer to God, we will reflect His glory to those around us just like that iron reflects the heat of the fire it has been in.

And when we reach this point in our Christian existence, we will become like the prophet Jeremiah, who says, **"But if I say, 'I will not mention Him or speak any more in His name,' His Word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot"** (**Jeremiah 20:9** - NIV).

And lastly, we saw how God requires us to be cleansed before we can come into His presence – depicted by Moses having to remove his sandals in God's presence. The holiness of God demands us to come before Him in repentance and humility.

Tonight we want to spend some time with the prophet Isaiah. Let's read the passage again before we start to examine the majesty of these few verses.

### **Isaiah 6:1-7**

#### **v. 1**

Isaiah has a vision of the Lord. He is allowed to see Him in His glory seated on the throne high and exalted. The vision must have been exhilarating and terrifying at the same time. Can you imagine the sight? Can you envision being allowed to see our Lord high and exalted on His throne in heaven? The magnificence of His glory displayed before your eyes would be breathtaking and at the same time it would drive you to the ground in awestruck fear and reverence.

And just so there is no mistake about it, this is Jesus Christ Isaiah is seeing – **John 12:41** confirms this.

Can you imagine being in Isaiah's position and being able to write down the words, **"I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted?"**

Before we continue, let me point something out to you. Most Bibles will show the word "Lord" in **verse 1** with a capital "L" and then lower case "o-r-d." If your Bible distinguishes the different Hebrew words for Lord, this rendering is for the Hebrew word "*Adonai*." *Adonai* means sovereign

one. Down in **verse 3** and **verse 5**, you should see the word "LORD" in all capital letters. This represents the Hebrew word, "*Jehovah*" or "*Yahweh*." *Jehovah* was the name of God. It was so holy the Israelites would not even dare say it or even spell it out when they wrote. If they had to write it down they would only use the consonants – YHWH. So Isaiah specifically calls Jesus the Sovereign One to signify His rule and authority.

He sees the Sovereign One on a throne. The throne is the place of prominence. The throne was reserved for the Sovereign of the kingdom. Only the One who ruled could sit on the throne. The One who sat on the throne is the One who has complete and supreme authority over all. Whatever the One on the throne said or decreed or decided regarding any of the subjects of His kingdom was as good as done. No one could refute or argue the words of the One on the throne.

Yet we push the Lord off His throne all the time. We have the audacity and the arrogance to ignore the decrees of the King and boldly tell Him by our actions, if not our words, "You don't know what You are doing! I know what's best for me and for my life, and You obviously aren't paying attention or must have missed something along the way. How else can You explain why I am in the situation I am in?"

Who is the Sovereign Master and who is the servant? We have absolutely no right to question God's plans and purposes! His Word tells us, "**And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose**" (**Romans 8:28** – NASB). And "**all things**" means all things! Pain and tragedy and financial hardship and sickness and suffering and death are included in the "**all things**" of God's promise. It doesn't matter that we disagree with it being worked together for our good – we are not the Sovereign One we are the servant, and we have no right to question how the Sovereign One chooses to rule!

But besides that, His promise is that if we truly love Him even pain and tragedy and financial hardship and sickness and suffering and death will ultimately be for our good. With this promise from the Lord we can learn to say, "Count it all joy" along with James. We can truly be thankful in all things! We can truly rejoice always! And we can truly be content in whatever circumstances we find ourselves in!

So again I ask you, who is the Sovereign Master in your life and who is the servant? And be careful how you answer – don't be guilty of giving lip service to God. Jesus blasted the Pharisees for this kind of sin when He declared, "**These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me**" (**Matthew 15:8** – NIV). It is better to admit your sin and repent than to give lip service to being a true servant of God.

Beloved, we need to pray and ask God to give us the same vision Isaiah had. We need to see in our minds and our hearts the Lord high and exalted sitting on His throne. We need to be struck with this vision to better help us understand the holiness of God and to better understand our place as His servant as opposed to us acting like He is our servant.

Isaiah sees more in this vision of our Sovereign Lord. The rest of the verse says, "**with the train of His robe filling the temple.**" The train of His robe signifies His presence and glory. Last week we saw how God's Shekinah glory filled the Tabernacle and later filled the Temple as the people genuinely worshipped with pure hearts. Isaiah is now seeing the Lord's glory filling the temple – but Isaiah is seeing the Lord in heaven, and the Temple did not have a throne. And while His vision could be of the New Jerusalem after the Millennial Kingdom, this vision could also be representing the current temple of God – you and I, or the church.

The glory of God is manifest in all of His creation, but as we live pure and holy lives, His glory will also fill each of us and we will reflect that glory. But it requires purity and holiness in our lives in order for His glory to be fully manifested in our lives. We must totally submit to our role as His divine servants and forever surrender the throne of our hearts to Him alone.

Listen to me – You do not want to engage in a struggle over who should be on the throne of your life. Not because you will lose that battle, but because God will allow you to rule your own life if you choose to do so. And choosing to rule your own life as opposed to allowing God that rule is the second worse decision you could ever make; the first being rejecting His glorious salvation. When it comes to who rules your life, God basically steps back and says, “We can do this the easy way or we can do this the hard way.” The hard way is very hard because of our pride and stubbornness. And you will struggle and fall and struggle some more and fall some more until you choose to get up off the throne and allow the Lord to take His rightful place.

### **v. 2**

Did you know that this is the only place in Scripture where seraphim are mentioned? They are most likely implied into other passages but this is the only verse that the word seraphim (or “*sarap*” in the Hebrew) is recorded.

*Sarap* literally means, “burning ones.” This suggests a burning purity and zeal for the Lord. The seraphim have only one duty – they surround the throne and praise the Lord continually.

But notice their posture before the throne. They have six wings but only use two of them to fly around. The others are used to cover their eyes and their feet. We are not specifically told why, but we can deduce the two that cover their eyes is to show humility and unworthiness to be in the Lord’s presence. The two that cover their feet could represent their reverence for the Lord, indicating they are not worthy to stand before Him. The two they use to fly with could show their readiness to go wherever they are charged to go.

### **v. 3**

Here we see the content of their praise – “**Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.**” The construction in the Hebrew suggests that the seraphim were calling out to each other in a responsive manner. One would cry out, “**Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts**” and another would respond, “**The whole earth is full of His glory.**”

Let’s try that – I will start and you respond.

And we must pay very close attention to the fact that the seraphim don’t simply say, “Holy is the LORD of hosts” but that they say, “Holy, holy, holy.” It is repeated three times to show tremendous emphasis.

No other characteristic of the Lord is given this emphasis in the rest of Scripture. You will not find a verse that says the Lord is love, love, love; or peace, peace, peace; or mercy, mercy, mercy; or any other attribute. The holiness of God is the characteristic and attribute that we must pay the most attention to because God’s Word proclaims that emphasis.

When we contemplate God our first thought should be of His holiness, then we can contemplate His love and His mercy and His forgiveness and His power and His patience and His wisdom and His knowledge and His glory, etc. The Lord’s holiness is the very first attribute that should be considered when we approach Him.

How did Jesus teach the disciples to pray? "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." It doesn't say love be thy name or joy be thy name, but hallowed – a word that depicts reverence and awe and holiness.

I think the vast majority of Christians in this world miss this important fact of Scripture. We like to emphasize the love of God and the peace of God and the joy of God, but rarely is the holiness of God emphasized in churches today. And this is the primary reason that true and genuine worship is weak and/or non-existent in many churches. This is why true and genuine worship is weak and/or non-existent in the lives of His children, because we only look to God to fulfill our needs, and thus emphasizing His love and goodness and mercy, and ignoring His holiness almost altogether.

#### **v. 4**

The seraphim must be powerful creatures, for the sound of their voices of praise, shake the very foundation of the throne room.

#### **v. 5**

If seeing the Lord was not enough to jolt Isaiah and knock him to the ground, the thundering voices and the shaking of the throne room definitely does the trick. Isaiah is hit with the full force of his un-holiness in the presence of the pure blazing holiness of the Lord. His sin and the sins of his people, Israel, are too much for him to bear in the Lord's presence.

And more often than not, we treat our sin very casually. And because of the indwelling holy Spirit, we are in the Lord's presence every moment of every day. Where is our sense of doom and woe when we realize our sin? Why are we not crying out in terror before the Lord? Where is the weeping and the shame and the horror over the sins we commit?

It's not there because we are primarily clueless when it comes to the Lord's holiness. Beloved we are utter fools for not living our lives in the fear and awe and reverence of the holiness of God. Our Christian lives are like bald tires spinning in the mud when we refuse to recognize the holiness of the Lord. We will never experience the presence of God in our lives and in our church as long as we continue to ignore God's holiness.

#### **v. 6-7**

When Isaiah recognizes his sinfulness in the presence of God's holiness, the Lord forgives him. All God wants is the reverence that is due Him, then He can assume His rightful position on the throne of your heart.

And how does Isaiah respond after he experiences God's holiness and forgiveness?

#### **v. 8**

Understanding the holiness of God will lead you to being the true and committed and pure servant you are called to be. You will begin every day on your knees saying, "**Here am I, send me!**" And when you reach that point in your life, the circumstances of your life, no matter how tragic or disconcerting, will fade into the background. Your trust in the Lord will be magnified and you will experience God's presence like never before

Let's pray.