**Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD Almighty!**

Isaiah 6:1-13 (Key Verse: 6:3)

*“And they were calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.’”*

On the 02 of January, the leaders and some of members of our ministry took a decision to accept a three day fast. One of the prayer topics was to have a reverential heart before God in the year 2025. When I saw this passage I felt It resonated well with our prayer topic. We tend to loose a proper reverence before God, either because we have forgotten who God is. Through this passage we will learn that, the only way to serve God for his glory is when we have a proper reverence for our God. Isaiah acknowledged that he was a man of unclean lips, he acknowledges that he is a sinner. However through the grace of God he is cleansed. It was after he experienced the glory and grace of God that he is able to voluntary commit his life to God’s mission. May God help each one of us to get a glimpse of God’s glory and to experience his touch of grace, so that we too may participate in going where God wants us to go. It is my hope and prayer that through this passage we too can capture a glimpse of God’s glory, so that we too may commit our lives voluntarily, to serve in His mission of world salvation, Amen!

Look at verse 1, “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.” The passage opens with the words, “In the year that King Uzziah died…” The year was 740 B.C., that is, 740 years before Christ. King Uzziah ruled the southern kingdom of Judah. The Bible says, “as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper” (2Ch 26:5)…”But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the LORD his God and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense” (2Ch 26:16), which was lawful only for priests. When he didn’t listen to a rebuke about this, leprosy broke out on his forehead, and he was a leper to the day of his death (2Ch 26:18-21). So the timing of this event, the year that King Uzziah died, was a year of leadership transition in Judah. Isaiah prophesied from this time and through the reigns of three more kings of Judah–Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (1:1).

So, to say in the year King Uzziah died is to say a lot. It is to say, “In the year a great and wise king died.” But it is also to say, “In the year a great and wise king who had a tragic end died.” Isaiah had great reason to be discouraged and disillusioned at the death of King Uzziah, because a great king had passed away, and because his life ended tragically. Where was the LORD in all this? Isaiah 1 also reveals the sinfulness of this time. It reads, “The ox knows its master, the donkey its owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.” 4 Woe to the sinful nation, a people whose guilt is great, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the Lord; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him.” Isa 1:3-4.

The other part of verse 1 continues to say, “I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.” It seems Isaiah was not asleep and so this was not a dream but rather a vision. Isaiah saw the lord high and exalted, seated on a throne. He saw the glimpse of the glory of God. The train of God’s robe filled the temple. So though there had been rampant sin at a time of a loss of a king who was once great, there was still a throne. And it is not the throne of man but the throne of God. It is a throne that far outweighs any throne in this world. The Lord sits on his throne high and exalted. He does not even need to be exalted, He sits on his throne exalted already. Unlike our president and political parties, who need people’s votes to be on the throne. Our God sits on a throne, high and exalted. Whether we miss out on a job opportunity or keep failing to achieve our own standards, loss of a loved one, struggle to make a decision of faith, whatever situation life can through at us, our God sits on a throne, exalted and lifted up.

Look at verse 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.” The seraphim are usually called the "burning ones" and they are known to be highest-ranking celestial beings, at times referred to as angels. The glory of God is so great, that even the angels covered their faces, could not even look at the Glory of God. This is how great God’s glory is. What were they doing?

Let us all read verse 3, “And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” The angels are not satisfied to only say, the LORD is Holy, or even the Lord is Holy, Holy but rather, God is Holy, Holy, Holy! The bible also has never said, the Lord is Love, Love, Love or the lord is, merciful, merciful, merciful but rather. The lord is Holy, Holy, Holy! What is holiness, it is spiritually perfect or pure; untainted by evil or sin; sinless. There is nothing that can be compared to the holiness of God. It is a display of His glory. That is why the verse continues to say, “the whole earth is full of his glory.” That means whatever our eyes can see in this earth, it is a display of God’s glory. And this is because the whole earth is God’s creation. While the angels called to one another, Holy, holy, holy, verse 4 tells us, At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. How did Isaiah respond to the display of all of this?

Look at verse 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.” Isaiah could see his sin, he could see who he was, he could see how far he was from the holiness of God. He could realize that he was unworthy even to have seen what he saw. Moreover, he could realize instantly that he was a man of unclean lips. Isaiah never knew who Isaiah was, Isaiah found out who he was, after he found out who God was. We do not know who we are until we found out who God is.

When Isaiah saw the angels, in all their holy humility, obedience, and praise to God, he realized not only that he was unlike the Lord GOD, he was also unlike the angels. They could cry out Holy, holy, holy and praise God so beautifully, but he could not because he was a man of unclean lips. “I am a man of unclean lips; I cannot say, Holy, holy, holy! which the seraphs exclaim. They are holy; I am not so: they see God and live; I have seen him, and must die, because I am unholy.” [Clarke] When we do see who God is, we see the glaring difference between his holiness and our corruption. This is what the message of scripture is about and how God address that gap, between who he is and who we are.

How did the Lord restore Isaiah? Look at verse 6-7, “Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” A live coal also symbolizes that this was a painful process, for it was even taken with tongs from the altar. As we know our Lord Jesus Christ became sacrificial lamb in order to atone for our sin. He laid down his life on the cross so that me and you can have our sin forgiven. This is the graceful work of God, as it is also with Isaiah. Jesus took upon himself our sin, and the burning coal burned all our sin that was in Jesus. Isaiah could be confident now before the Holiness of God that he was cleansed. Immediately after this, Isaiah heard a voice.

Look at verse 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!”” When Isaiah had reverence before God, reverence of who God was, he could firstly, be broken in his heart, he could see the sinner he was. No one had to tell him, just seeing the vision of who God is, he could realize he was good as dead.

The Lord is Holy and his glory fills the whole earth. And so when a voice came, whom shall I send? And who will go for us? Isaiah could say, “Here am I, Send me!” He could voluntarily commit to serving in God’s mission work. This service had no human centered agendas, he was not doing it out of the goodness of his heart, or because he feels he needs to help God. He was definitely not doing it because he had some free time. He could respond this way because of his reverence before God is. He had the vision of the holiness and glory of God. Reverence before God, firstly, made him realize his unworthiness to be in the presence of God, his unworthiness even to see a glimpse of the of glory of God, he even felt it was the end of his life. Secondly, because of a reverential heart before God, his sins could be atoned for. Thirdly, because of his reverential heart, when an opportunity arose to serve God, he could respond in confidence and voluntarily commit his life to God’s mission. In view of the holiness of God, he could respond with his full life not some parts or portions of his life. Because he had just realized who he was due to the holiness and glory of God.

So I keep saying because of his reverential heart, please do not make the mistake to think am implying that it was because of his heart, which would imply that, he got his sins atoned for because of his heart. Not at all, his heart could be that way because first and foremost and of utmost importance, he saw the holiness of God almighty, he saw a glimpse of the glory of God. And that contrast could reveal his sin and need for atonement. Before people Isaiah might have been this great person, even himself when he compares himself to others, he may have come out top 5. However, when he became aware of the holiness and glory of God. He could then see who he really was. Then he could become a great instrument of God’s salvation work.

The mission he was given was not an easy one as clearly stated from verse 9-10. One commentary even said, his mission was to “preach people into hell”. To make the heart of these people calloused, their ears dull and close their eyes. It was a message of doom, very hard and heartbreaking message. To the point that even Isaiah asked for how long Lord in verse 11. God response was until everyone is sent far away and the land is utterly forsaken. However, there was hope, verse 13b says, But as the terebinth and oak, leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land. This is hopeful because things can still grow from the stump, the tree was not utterly uprooted.

In our ministry we have a number of activities, three key ones are, weekly bible studies, testimony writing and Sunday worship service. In between this we may be doing other things striving to live for the glory of God’s the best way we can. However, I am realizing through this passage that, Firstly, without a reverential heart before God. All these activities are actually filthy rags before God. They all but become works of man for man. I believe this is the reason why within the body of Christ, there would either be hate or fights among church members. Some either feel they have served God for many years and deserve certain position. Or that they have made huge sacrifices for the ministry making them feel justified to be recognized by the church. Forgetting that even the bible teaches that, our service to him should not be before people but before Him. Matthew 6:3-4 reads, “But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” Secondly, without reverential heart before the holiness of God, we become powerless towards sinful desires. We become stubborn to doing things our own way instead of allowing the word of the lord become a light unto our feet. Before we know it we are muddily stuck in things. Feeling a sense of no return. One that prominent area in our lives is marriage decisions or relationships with the opposite sex. Because those feelings are most powerful and can even cloud our vision on the holiness and glory of God.

To genuinely serve and live for God, for the sake of God’s glory, is until we are confronted with the holiness and glory of God. It is until we are fully aware of who God is. When we have this reverence before God, we will firstly know who we are. Many times we think we know who we are because of what others say we are including what we tell ourselves we are. All of that cannot be relied upon. When we come to know our God, we also come to know who we are. It is from here that our true life begins actually. That is why Jesus could tell a grown up man, Nicodemus that he has to be born again in order to enter or see the kingdom of God. Secondly, having the reverence before God, leads to genuine repentance and ultimately by the grace of God, forgiveness of our sin. We are made holy by what Jesus did on the cross and instantly become instruments of God. With the vision of God’s holiness and glory, we will be able to respond to God’s calling, and say, Send me, lord. We will be able to make decisions of faith and commit our lives to God. It will not matter how difficult the mission is, how emotionally and mentally demanding the mission is, or how difficult the message we carry is. Because actually by the way, God’s message actually makes others resent us, however in spite of all of that. When our vision is fixed on the holiness and glory of God, we can voluntarily commit to go and serve Jesus with our life. The source, strength and energy of our commitment is knowing who God is. Amen!

**In conclusion**, the angels said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD God almighty, the whole earth is full of His glory. It is my prayer that our study of the bible is because we too have a small glimpse of a vision of the holiness of God, and we want to know more of Him. Whatever service to God, we have voluntarily committed towards, sharing the gospel with others, it be serving in the worship team, preparing and delivering Sunday message (now talking to myself), preparing Sunday lunch meal, serving and caring for God’s people, at our workplaces, etc. May it all be in reverence, may it all be in view of the holiness and gloriousness of God. Amen!