

THE GLORY OF THE LORD AS SEEN BY THE PROPHET ISAIAH

David McIntyre

John 12:37-41
2 Cor 3:18

What has come before me for this time is a man who saw the glory. Isaiah is the prophet most quoted in the New Testament. He had a unique impression of the glory of Christ.

He was a prophet, and he served in the king's court. He belonged to a high-born family. There came a point in his ministry when he was called. It was in the year of the death of king Uzziah. Uzziah was a good king, but near the end of his reign he presumed to take over the priesthood, and God dealt with him. It is at the time of the death of that king that Isaiah sees the glory of the Lord.

I think that John must have appreciated the prophecy of Isaiah. How he must have looked at it, and how he could have told you that he had seen the glory that Isaiah spoke of! He had seen the elect Servant, Who was so delightful to God. He had companied with Him and seen the things that He did. He was an eyewitness, too, of the sufferings of Christ. John would say to you that everything that Isaiah said was right, because he had seen it for himself. How privileged he was! And so he can say, "These things said Esaias because he saw His glory" (v41). And if anyone is going to take up service for the Lord, they must have a view of His glory. Isaiah saw the Lord "high and lifted up" (Isa 6:1), and he had a sense of his own unworthiness. But the glory of Christ is not to repel us – it is to attract us, brethren! His lips were cleansed. Who of us is able to take up service for the Lord? But the Lord is able to help us. And so he was told to go, and he was told that they would not listen. 'Well,' you may say, 'that was hardly an encouragement for him!' Nevertheless the word had to be given.

Now I would like to refer to some of the passages where Isaiah spoke of the Lord. In chapter 9 he says in verse 6, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given." He brings in the thought

of the Messiah, who would come, but not exactly as the Jew would expect Him to come. He opens up the sufferings of the Messiah later. And the Jews, of course, could not accept the idea of a suffering Messiah. Isaiah here just goes over some of the glories that belong to that great Person.

"His name is called Wonderful." I wonder whether Christ is wonderful to everyone here. I make no apology for weaving the gospel into the address. What does Christ mean to you? Is He wonderful? "The stone which the builders rejected hath become the head of the corner: this is of Jehovah; it is wonderful in our eyes" (Ps 118:22-23). I would to God that Christ may be wonderful to everyone here.

Then, "Counsellor." Who better to be a Counsellor than the One Who has given effect to the counsels of God? Every thought of God has been brought through to fruition by this glorious Person! The whole counsel of God has been given effect.

Then he says, "Mighty God." That is the glory of the Person that was here in manhood: 'The mighty God, a Man become' (hymn 34). As to Who He was, it shone through the human veil. What the apostles were privileged to see on the mount was the divine glory of Christ. He could say to the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). What an absolute statement that is, that He Who was here was none other than the mighty God Himself! We find Him in the boat sleeping. The reality of His manhood was there, as He was wearied and tired. But then He could rise up and still the winds and the waves. "What sort of Man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (Matt 8:27). The Man who was here was the Creator of the universe: "By Whom also He made the worlds" (Heb 1:2).

Then, "Father of Eternity." He could say to His disciples, and to Philip especially, "He that has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). We must understand that we shall never see the Father except in Christ. Such is the glory of the Man that was here that the Father's glory was seen in Him. Indeed, the glory

of the Godhead was seen in Him, because "in Him all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell" (Col 1:19).

Then, "Prince of Peace." This is the One Who "made peace by the blood of His cross" (Col 1:20). We cannot make peace with God. Christ has done it and Christ alone. We can come into the joy and blessedness of peace through accepting what Christ has done. And so He is the "Prince of Peace." No wonder that there is no peace in the world! The world made a choice: "Not this Man, but Barabbas" (John 18:40). Is it any wonder that the papers are full of murder? The world rejected the Originator of life and chose a murderer (Acts 3:14-15). They would rather have a man that took away life, than the Man who originated it and sustained it. What a day it will be when Christ will have His rightful place! "Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end" (v7). And Isaiah takes us right on to the kingdom of Christ in the millennial day. Do you not long to see Christ in such a position?

I turn to chapter 28, verse 16: "Behold, I lay for foundation in Zion a Stone, a tried Stone." You know, Israel had made a covenant with the Assyrian. They had ignored God in His willingness to come in for them. And God said through His prophet, 'You have made an agreement with death' (v15). But what was going to happen? He would bring the Assyrian up over the land. It says, "He shall reach even to the neck ... O Immanuel" (Isa 8:8). Think of the feelings of God coming out as His judgement would sweep in and they would find what they were trusting in was too short and too narrow (v20). The question is, what are we trusting in? Will it fail when the day comes? There is not disappointment for anyone who trusts in this Person.

He was "a tried Stone." Think of the trials of Christ. Think of the way He was tested. Think of the time in the wilderness at the beginning of His public service (Luke 4:1-13). We have three of the temptations of Satan; there were many more. But He never ate in that period, for forty days. And the One who could feed the five thousand with the five loaves hungered at

that point. Satan tells Him to turn the stones into bread. Of course He could have done it. But it would have taken Him out of the place of dependant manhood. Had Satan succeeded at that point, Jesus could not have gone to the cross in my place. But He maintained the position of dependant manhood. And then He is shown the kingdoms of the world, and Satan says that they are all given up to him. The Lord does not contradict him, but they belonged to Christ. And Satan said, 'will I give them all to You if You will do me homage.' The Lord answers him again from Deuteronomy. He would not receive glory from Satan. Then He is taken up to the top of the temple and He is asked to cast Himself down, because "He shall give charge to His angels concerning Thee." It is interesting to see how Satan misuses Scripture. If you read a little further on in the Psalm that he quotes, you see how he conveniently stops before the reference to "all thy ways" (Ps 91:11). But the Lord never succumbed to any of these temptations. His manhood was perfect, and it was tested in the most severe way. Satan comes back at various points, even through Peter, and then in the garden of Gethsemane. I do not think I can enter into the forces of evil that were ranged against my Saviour as Satan tried to divert Him from the pathway of fulfilling the will of God. But He says, "Not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42). The reality of His manhood shrank from the awfulness of what lay ahead of Him. But He had come to fulfil the will of God, and that involved His death, and that the death of the cross. Have you ever thanked the Lord for His devotion? He did it because He loved you, and because He loved me. If He had gone back to the glory from the mount He would have gone back alone. But in the fulfilment of God's will in respect of sin and exhausting the judgment that stood against us, He has secured a people for God's praise. Death for the Lord was a reality. It says that, when the people of Israel went into the land, the Jordan was over all its banks (Josh 3:15). It shows that the power of death in its fullness was met by Christ. For all who trust in Him, the power of death is gone for ever. And so we have here "a precious Corner-stone, a sure Foundation." Everything that God has done in Christ has been done on a

righteous basis, so that we can put our faith and trust in this glorious Person.

I turn to chapter 32:1, "A King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment," speaking again of the millennial reign of Christ. But then he says, "And a Man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind." Make no mistake that the wind of God's judgement is coming over this world. Paul speaks to the Thessalonians of "Jesus, our Deliverer from the coming wrath" (1 Thess 1:10). This is the Man who, today, could be "a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm; as brooks of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land." Think of the refreshment that we find in our Lord Jesus. Think of Him standing up in John 7, in the last, the great day of the feast. Jesus said, "If any one thirst, let him come to Me." Think of that system that had failed men, just as the systems of men always fail. The hymn writer says:

I tried the broken cisterns, Lord,
But ah! The waters failed.
E'en as I stooped to drink, they'd fled,
And mocked me as I wailed.

(Cf Jer 2:13.) The waters will always fail if they do not come from Christ. Let us draw our resources, and let us draw our refreshment, from this Person. Isaiah speaks of all He will be to the remnant in a day to come, but I believe this is opened up to the believer in Jesus now.

In chapter 42 Isaiah begins with the perfect Servant: "Behold my Servant," it says. I believe the blessed God would say that this afternoon, He would say to us, 'Look at Him, look at Jesus.' God has no other man before Him. Mark brings the perfect Servant before us. Mark failed, as we have all failed, but he was recovered. And he brings out that side of the glory of Christ. Mark would tell you that *he* failed, but that this Man never failed. The One "in whom My soul delighteth" – that could only be Christ.

David is a wonderful type of Christ. It is said of David that he was a man after God's heart, who would do all His will, Acts 13:22. And Paul says, "Of this man's seed ... has God brought to Israel a Saviour" (Acts 13:23). Of course David failed, and every servant has failed, except Jesus. He never failed in anything. He excelled in everything. "Mine Elect, in Whom My soul delighteth!" I believe that, if we want to get a true impression of the worth of Christ, we need to get round to God's view of Him, because He has the perfect assessment of the worth of this blessed Person. I feel that my impression of the glory of Christ is very poor. And I believe that in the sanctuary we see Christ glorified there, and we have some appreciation of how the Father appreciates Christ.

In chapter 53 we have one of the most precious Scriptures in the whole Bible. I said that the Jews could not accept a suffering Christ, and so they did not recognise Him in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. How many have been saved through the reading of this word! In Acts 8 we find the Ethiopian eunuch going away from Jerusalem. It does not seem that he had found what he was looking for. But he was going away and he was reading this chapter. Heaven's eye was upon him: Philip was told to leave an area where he was getting a lot of blessing, to intercept this man who was reading about Jesus. He did not understand what he was reading. "Concerning whom does the prophet say this? of himself or of some other?" How Philip must have rejoiced to see where he was reading, and to explain to that man that the Person spoken of was none other than the Lord Jesus!

"He shall grow up ... as a root out of dry ground" (v2) – a life sustained from heaven, deriving nothing from what was round about. "A Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (v3). I think there are only two references in the Gospels to the Lord rejoicing. Of course He had private joy in His Father, His relationship with His Father, but in general He was a Man of sorrows.

But when it came to the cross, He bore our sins, He bore our sorrows. The life of Christ was so different from any other life.

He never spoke out of turn, He never said anything wrong. He never apologised for anything that He said. He never asked for forgiveness for Himself, He asked for it for others. That was the Person that was able to take up my liability at Calvary's cross. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed" (v5). Can you fail to be affected as you read these words, to realise what the Lord went through in order that you and I might be redeemed, in order that we might be liberated from sin and death? We cannot enter into the sufferings of Christ. They were His, and His alone. But we will praise Him eternally that He bore the judgement for us. Is it true of everyone here? Can you truly say that Jesus took your place, that He bore your sins in His body on the tree? It is a very personal thing, you know! Is Christ your Substitute? He has made provision for all, but only those who accept Him will come into the benefit of what He has done.

It goes on, "I [will] assign Him a portion with the great" (v12). There was an added reason for the glorification of Christ: He was great. There was no one to be compared with Christ. Men speak about who will be the greatest. But what it says of Christ is, "He shall be great" (Luke 1:32). There is no one to be compared with Christ. Well, we all know Him; is He precious to us? Are we prepared from this day on to commit our lives fully to Christ? The Man of Isaiah 53 gave everything. What are you prepared to do for Christ? What am I prepared to do for Him? Let us commit ourselves afresh from this day forward. Let us turn away from the glory we see in the world. Let us remember that the path in the world leads but to the grave. Let us turn away from such a place and look upon the glory of Christ.

I think that was what Paul meant when he said, "We all, looking on the glory of the Lord." Think of the Godhead revealed in Christ, the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus – and we are able to look on that glory by the Spirit. You cannot look on the glory of Christ and be unaffected by it. When Moses came down the mountain his face shone, and he did not even realise it. But he had seen the glory, and it had

changed him. And this is the way that we are changed by the Spirit. As we look on the glory of Christ, it affects us. And we are changed, and the work of the Spirit goes on to form Christ in the believer. That is the work of the Spirit, and so it is "from glory to glory." We will never exhaust the glory of Christ. Eternity will not exhaust the glories.

I would encourage my brethren, and myself, to set aside time to study and contemplate the glory of Christ. You may not understand it as you read about it. I do not think Peter got the gain, exactly, of the experience on the mount until much later. He did not remember that he spoke out of turn. But what he remembered was the majesty of Christ. He says, "[We were] eyewitnesses of His majesty" (2 Pet 1:16). And so by the Spirit he could look back on that experience, and how the glory of Christ was embedded in his soul. And with John, too, what he saw comes out in his ministry. These men were changed by occupation with the glory of Christ.

The key to this, brethren, is the Holy Spirit. Stephen, a man full of the Holy Spirit, gave a faithful address to the Jews. How fearless he was! What a privilege it is to speak to persons who love the Lord Jesus. Stephen was speaking to men who hated Christ, and they grew more and more angry the more he spoke the truth to them. What Stephen gave them was a powerful testimony by the Spirit as to the glory of the Christ they had rejected. And there is a wonderful reward, shall we say – he gets a view right into the glory, and he sees Jesus standing there. In a few moments he was to be with his Lord and Saviour, but for the moment we have the testimony that he saw Christ at the right hand of God. That is where He is now. Stephen saw Him standing. He was ready to come back to Israel, had they accepted Him. But now we know that Christ has set Himself down at the right hand of the greatness on high. And the Spirit is testifying to the glory of Christ where He is.

Let us seek to make way for the Spirit in our lives. We have times during the day when we can do things, but when we can think as well. Let us use these times to give the Spirit the

opportunity to occupy us with Christ. We will gain a tremendous amount, because every impression received of Christ is retained. And may it be that we would know more how to encourage one another. Who of us does not get down from time to time? What we need to lift us up is an impression of Christ. Am I able to bring an impression of Christ to souls, just as the Lord did on the road to Emmäus?

May we be encouraged, brethren, that we may be built up, that the Spirit's work in us will go on unhindered, and that the impressions we have received of this glorious Person may be able to be shared, so that others may be recovered and restored to a path of closeness to the Lord Jesus. Every one of us here is as close to the Lord Jesus as they want to be. He is ready for the closest walk with you. Are you prepared to take that path? You are as close to the Lord as you want to be. Let us take up John's position in the bosom of Christ – in an area where His love is known and appreciated. These hearts, which are so full of Christ, will be exercised in response to Him, because, let us remember, there must be an answer to this glorious Person. He has asked us to remember Him. There is opportunity to have part in the service of praise. These are the most precious things that the believer can be engaged in here. The testimony is important, we have our part in that. But what is first and foremost is an answer to the heart of Christ. May we be all in it, brethren, for His Name's sake.

Cologne

6

March

2010

