

(Saturday 13th Dec 2008)

The power of his presence

Isaiah 6.1-4

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.' The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.

Here is Isaiah's vision of God. Let's visualise it. He gives no description of God himself, but the Lord's impact is powerful. The angels covered their faces; they could not look directly at the holy God, any more than our naked eye can stare at the sun on a bright day. They were all ready to obey, to fly where he sent them. The building shook, the smoke of incense (symbolizing God's presence) filled the air. The temple was filled with the sound of angelic worship: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord.' Holiness speaks of God's absolute purity, a purity we can not imagine. Glory speaks of his radiance. Have you ever been praying alone, or with a group of Christians worshipping, when the sense of God's presence was so strong that you could almost cut the air with a knife? I remember a congregation, a thousand strong, that had just sung a vibrant modern hymn with joyful exuberance. At the end a hush fell over the whole church. No one wanted to move; the Spirit of God touched us, held us there in silent worship and prayer. I think it was like that for Isaiah. His whole being sensed the power of God's presence and made him stand in awe of God's holiness.

Meditate and pray

*Be still, for the glory of the Lord
is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire,
with splendour he is crowned:
How awesome is the sight –
our radiant King of light;
Be still, for the glory of the Lord
is shining all around.*

David Evans

*Lord, I pray that I may be still enough
to have the privilege of sensing
your glory.*