

# God on the Throne: A Picture of Holiness

by James MacDonald

---

*God's holiness is a fundamental aspect of His nature, describing separation, demanding caution, and declaring glory.*

**Duration:** 55:26

**Scripture:** Isaiah 6:1, Ezekiel 1:1-26, Daniel 7:9

**Topics:** "Holiness"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the mystery and awe-inspiring nature of God. He references a vision from the book of Daniel, where thrones were placed and the ancient of days took his seat. The speaker emphasizes the significance of the books that were opened during this vision, suggesting that they hold important information. He also mentions the scene described in Revelation, where a great white throne is seen and the earth and sky flee away. The speaker cautions against presuming to understand or challenge God, highlighting the incomprehensible glory of God and the need for humility in His presence.

---

## Transcript

Preferring the comfort of His nearness, we have lost the reality of God's transcendent holiness. God is not the man upstairs. God is not Big Daddy.

God is not an old codger in a white coat or a white beard. He is ineffable glory. He dwells in unapproachable life.

No one can see God and live. Our God is a consuming fire. That's God.

Holiness. Hey listen, take your Bible and please and turn to Isaiah 6. Titled the message today is God on the throne, a picture of holiness. God on the throne, a picture of holiness.

The word holiness means set apart, the Hebrew Kadesh, the Greek Hagias. It means all that denotes separation. When we speak of holiness, we're saying God's not like us.

He's not like us at all. He's not anything close to anything at all that's like us. He's separate.

We would say awesome, unbelievable, unfathomable. That's holiness. More righteous and pure, more piercing and powerful, more strong and impenetrable than we can even imagine.

More holiness than we can comprehend. Now at the core of our sinfulness is a bent or just a sinful inclination to try to usurp God. It's deeply ingrained in our sinful human nature.

We want the place that belongs to God. That was the problem in Genesis 3. Satan lied and said you can be like God. Yeah, yeah, as if.

And that's how sin came into the world. In Genesis chapter 11, they were trying to build a tower to get up to God, to be equal with God. Romans 1 says that because of our sinful bent, we exchange the truth of God for a lie and worship and serve the creature rather than the creator.

In all of us, there is a bent to try to get into a higher place, get God down, get me up. And when we humanize God and deify man, everything gets out of perspective. The goal of the message this morning is to get God in his rightful place.

There's not going to be much in the message at all this morning about us. That's okay. The whole message is going to be about God and who he is and where he belongs.

God on the throne, a picture of holiness. Now I want to just confess to you my weakness. I cannot possibly communicate to you properly a right view or understanding of God.

A.W. Tozer said that what a person thinks about God is the most important thing about them. What you think about God, your view of God, is the most important thing about you. In fact, your entire life revolves around your view of God and you have been conditioned by a hyper-grace environment to overestimate God's love and forbearance and grace and to underestimate God's justice and God's vengeance and God's holiness.

In fact, I would suggest to you that God's holiness is the core of his being. If love were the core of God's being, he would just welcome us all into heaven and say, well, come on up. We'll work it out when you get here.

And that is not what he said. Some people say, well, God is love. Yeah, well, what that doesn't mean is that everything that constitutes God is love.

What that means is that the essence of love is God, not that the essence of God is love. The core of God's being is holiness. That's why sin has to be paid for.

Holiness demanded that sin be paid for. Then, everyone say then, then love found a way. Now, we're getting to the core this morning.

We're getting to holiness and because I cannot communicate that myself, I want to invite you to pray with me. Father, we thank you this morning that while this messenger is weak, that your word is strong. And we pray this morning, Lord, that by the power of your spirit and by your own commitment to your truth, your word is truth.

We pray, Lord, that these realities about you and who you are would come with force upon our minds and upon our hearts that we might rightly align ourselves with this holy God of the universe. Might we see you this morning in our spirits as you truly are, God on the throne of God of holiness. This we pray in the strong name of your son, Jesus.

Amen. Isaiah chapter 6, four verses there I want to focus on. Each one will yield for us an angle on holiness.

And then we're going to turn to four other throne room scenes and see how that characteristic bears out further in the consistent message of God's word. Start here. Holiness describes separation.

That's the essence of the word holiness. It describes separation. Notice it says in Isaiah chapter 6 verse 1, in the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up.

That year, in the year that King Uzziah died, that was 740 BC. Uzziah had reigned for 52 years in the nation of Israel. And until he died of leprosy, he was a fixture in the nation.

You imagine if you'd had the same ruler for 52 years, and all of a sudden he's gone. Everybody's like, man, everything's up for grabs now. And what's going to happen? And who's going to be in charge? And there was perplexity and fear and uncertainty.

Sounds like our world today, doesn't it? Perplexity and fear and uncertainty. And into that uncertainty, God gave a fresh view of his exalted nature for the people to focus upon. It kind of puts everything else into perspective.

In the year that King Uzziah died, notice he says, I saw the Lord. Now there's a lot of people that claim to have seen God, they haven't seen Him. Imagine, I saw the Lord.

Whether waking or sleeping, in a vision or a dream, we're not told. But somehow Isaiah was supernaturally transported to the very throne room of God. And he saw the Lord there.

Notice, lowercase, O-R-D, L-O-R-D. What that means is, is that that means that it wasn't Yahweh, God's personal covenant name. That's not how he referred to Him.

He's using God's title here. He's saying, I saw the ruler. I saw the sovereign.

I saw the Lord. Who could ever be the same? John 12, 41 tells us that whom he saw was actually the pre-incarnate Christ. He gazed upon the second person of the Trinity.

He saw Jesus before Jerusalem, before Nazareth, before Bethlehem. He saw Christ seated on the throne. You say, how do you know? John 1, 18 says that no one has seen God the Father at any time.

No one, at any time. How clear is that? How many people have seen God the Father? No one. How often have they seen Him? Not at any time, ever.

The only begotten Son who's in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. And there as he gazed upon the pre-incarnate Christ, notice he says, I saw the Lord. And what's he doing? We're just going through it a phrase at a time.

I see you're looking in God's following with me? What's the next part? He says, sitting upon a throne. Not pacing back and forth. Not wringing his hands.

Not what are we going to do next. Not God. Why? Because He's not like us.

He's holy. When He thinks about the future, He thinks, no problem. God's not locked in space and time like we are.

He knows the end from the beginning. He's God. He's in charge.

He's holy. I like to say, God rules the universe with His feet up. Okay? You say, why does He do that? Because He can.

All right? God's not stretched or stressed in any way. God could have made a million universes like the one He made. Because He is infinite, they would not tax Him in any way.

All right? He's not like us. Would you agree? He's holy. Every time I use the word holy today, I want you to think separate.

That's what I'm trying to tell you. Separated from us. Not like us at all.

He's holy. Seated on a throne. Notice, high and lifted up.

Somehow, even in heaven. Even in heaven itself, in a space and a realm, in a region that we can't go to now. Though we're going to go someday, amen? Though we're going to go someday, amen? But we can't go there now.

But somehow the angels, the countless angels and the elders and everyone who's there, somehow God's throne is situated. It says high and lifted up. That's not talking about the material of which the throne is made.

It's talking about the way that the throne is positioned in the throne room. Somehow it's lifted up. It's up high.

It's on top of things because everyone there needs to know. Even the sinless angels need to know and always be reminded, God is holy. He's not like the rest of us.

He's not like the angels in heaven. He needs to be high and exalted and lifted up to his rightful place. Notice it says, sitting on a throne, high and lifted up.

Look at that next part at the end of verse one. And the train of his robe filled the temple. The train of the robe is the symbol of splendor.

Some of you ladies who have been married, you normally wear a nice dress on today, but I'm going to guess that when you got married, you probably had a dress that went to the floor. Is that right? And maybe it even went out a little behind you. So your bridesmaids had to help you as you were getting married because why? Well, because it's a day to be honored.

And so you have a little bit of length to your gown to show honor and splendor. Think with me, if you can, back to June the 2nd, 1953. Were you there? June the 2nd, 1953.

Were you alive then? You say, what happened that day? Well, being Canadian, this is very riveted into my mind. I've seen the film clips of this. It's the coronation of Queen Elizabeth.

Let's talk about her robe for a minute. A symbol of splendor. Her robe actually went all the way down the aisle of Westminster Abbey and ran right out to the back door of the length of the church.

That's how long her robe was. You're like, who does she think she is, the Queen of England? Well, as a matter of fact, she is. That's why she can have a robe like that.

It's a symbol of her splendor. Now, what does God's Word say about the symbol of God's splendor? It says that the train of His robe, what? It fills the temple. Back and forth, down the aisle, back again, doubling and redoubling until the symbol of God's splendor.

Tell me, what does it do? It fills the temple. It fills the temple. He is holy.

The scripture writers say again and again, who is like you, oh God? It's a rhetorical question. The answer is obvious. I'll ask the question, you give the answer.

Who is like the Lord? I'm listening. Who is like the Lord? Okay, you know. Let's make sure he knows we know.

Who is like the Lord? No one is like the Lord. He is holy. Holiness means separation.

Now, I don't want to leave that subject yet, but I've gone through that passage, so let's keep with the same subject. Holiness describes separation, and let's go to a different throne room scene. Go with me to Ezekiel chapter one.

When was the last time you were in Ezekiel? Oh, Pastor James, it's been a little while. All right, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel. Go to chapter one, you're going to be blessed.

Ezekiel chapter one, verse one says, in the 13th year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. Again, many people claim this, very few have experienced what he's going to experience. Verse three, the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel, the end of the verse, and the hand of the Lord was upon him there.

Now, he goes on beginning in verse four all the way to the end of verse 25 to describe everything that he sees in the throne room, except God himself, and then beginning in Ezekiel chapter one, verse 26, he says, and above the expanse over their heads, there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance the like of, like sapphire, and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. Now, I have to point out to you before I finish reading, 10 times in the passage he uses the word likeness. 16 times he uses the word appearance.

It's like this, it's sort of, it was sort of like, it was, it was, it was, it was, what's the problem Ezekiel? The problem is, I've never seen anything like this before. All right, why? Because he's holy, there's nothing like him, and so he's sort of like, these are just the lamest pictures that I'm trying to, but it's not really, it was sort of like, do you get it? And above the expanse over their heads, there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire, and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with human appearance, and upward from what had the appearance of his waist, I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around, and downward from what had the appearance of his waist, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him, like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around, it was beautiful. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God.

Now notice, and when I saw it, and when I saw it, I fell on my face to rightly understand God. When I saw it, I didn't just kneel down. When I saw it, I fell on my face.

Why? Yeah, because when you see God, when you see how holiness, get as low as you can, as fast as you can. Why? Because he's lofty and exalted, and I'm not. Holiness shouts separation.

Don't appear in any way to think that you're in any way like him. Get low, fast. Now that, loved ones, is a view of God that we have lost in the church, alright? The high and exalted and lofty, separate, exclusive, unparalleled, unprecedented nature of God, God himself.

Preferring the comfort of his nearness, we have lost the reality of God's transcendent holiness. God is not the man upstairs. God is not Big Daddy, alright? God is not an old codger in a white coat or a white beard.

He is ineffable glory. He dwells in unapproachable light. No one can see God and live.

Our God is a consuming, fire. That's God. Holiness.

Holiness. Holiness describes separation. Here's the second thing, and obviously from that, back to Isaiah 6 verse 2. Holiness demands caution.

Do you see? Holiness, rightly understood, demands caution. Isaiah briefly describing, in verse 1, the position of the throne, and the clothing of deity. He really doesn't say anything about God himself.

Not Isaiah doesn't. He tells you about where the throne is, and the train of God's robe, and then he's like, let me tell you about the angels. He's just, I don't know what else to say about that.

And so in verse 2 he says, above him stood the seraphim. The seraph, literally, the burning ones. And what are they doing? Above him stood the seraph.

These angelic messengers, standing, ever standing to serve the seated sovereign. And then he focuses in on one. Each had six wings, with two he covered his face.

Looking now at one of the seraphim. With two he covered his face. Why is he covering his face with his wings? Lest he see God.

Just covering his face. And notice, with two he covered his feet. Why? Lest God see him.

Revelation 19 says that his eyes are like a flame of fire. With two he covered his face. With two he covered his feet.

Ever serving, never seeing this holy God. With two he flew. Four wings for relating to God.

Shielding my eyes from him. Shielding his eyes from me. Only two for serving.

All three of these verbs, covered, covered, and flew, are continuous action. Their motion is ceaseless as they do the bidding of almighty God. Holy.

They're so careful, these seraphim. Don't you think? They are extremely careful about everything that they do. Do exactly what God says.

Do it immediately. Do it totally. Every time.

He's holy. Fly right. Never stop.

Don't look at him. Cover yourself. He's holy.

Caution. Caution. He's God.

We're not. Caution. Let's go to another throne room and see this same thing.

Turn with me to the last book in God's word. Revelation chapter 20. Revelation chapter 20.

The vision of John is coming to an end. In chapter 4 he began the vision of heaven with a view of the throne room. We'll see that in a moment.

Now he refers to it again. The last thing remaining at the end of human history. God's throne.

Revelation 20:11. Then I saw a great white throne. Why is the throne white? It's a picture of purity.

It's a picture of holiness. God's throne is white. It's actually the same term there, translated white.

It's the same term used in the transfiguration of Jesus. When Jesus appeared to Peter, John, and James. And he was transfigured in all of his glory before them.

Mark chapter 9 says that the white was a white like no launderer can whiten. F.B. Meyer, the great bible commentator who lived from 1847 to 1929 was visiting a Scottish woman. And she was proudly hanging her freshly bleached linens out on the line.

Everything looked so beautiful and white it started to snow. And F.B. Meyer, maybe not as sensitive as a pastor might be, kind of said to her, hey now that it's snowing your laundry doesn't look as white as it used to does it? The Scottish woman said, man what can stand against God Almighty's white? Isn't that great? Let me ask you, what can stand against God Almighty's white? Who in their life can stand up against this holy, holy, holy God? No wonder John says in his vision, then I saw a great white throne. And him who is seated on it.

Notice from his presence, that means literally from his face. You could write in your bible there. From his face earth and sky fled away.

The created order itself is fleeing from the presence of God. The earth sees holiness and retreats. The sky sees holiness and pulls back.

Just like a plant can grow toward the sun. So a creation faced with holiness pulls back. Earth and sky fled away and no place was found for them.

Literally they disintegrated. The old earth was passing away. 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 10 describes this time.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise. The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will pass away with a roar.

And be burned up and dissolved and the earth and the works that are done in it will be exposed. Earth and sky fled away and no place was found for them. The point clearly, caution, caution, caution.

Always grieves me when very occasionally people will say to me, you know James if I ever meet God I'm going to tell him a couple of things. What are you talking about? You don't know what you're talking about. That's the truth.

You have no idea what you're saying. You think you're talking about God. You're showing yourself.

You're showing how very little you understand of the God who spoke this universe into existence. I always want to kind of say to people, could you just like step away from me when you say that? The Bible describes in the end, on the last day, Luke 23 30 says, speaking of the day when we will all meet this holy God, then they will say, let the mountains fall on us. Let the hills cover us.

Hiding, trying to hide, futilely so, from the presence of a holy God. Holiness rightly seen only makes you want to hide. Holiness rightly understood says caution, extreme caution when talking about and thinking about and living before a holy God.

Here's the third thing. Back to Isaiah 6 now, verse 3. Notice holiness declares glory, describing the activity further of these angelic seraphim. And one called to another and said, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. You think of all the things that God could have had said in his presence. Loving, loving, loving, merciful, merciful God.

And how true those things would have been. How many people would agree that the seraphim probably didn't make up this song by themselves? How many people would agree that they're probably singing exactly what God wants sung? Would you agree? I'm thinking there's probably not a whole lot of autonomy in the seraphim around the throne. I'm thinking they probably do pretty much exactly what God wants them to do.

And isn't it interesting that God has ordained that the characteristic, the central defining feature of his nature that would be spoken through eons of time and through all of eternity. It's going on right now. It never stops.

And what are they saying? They're saying, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. And keep in mind that they're calling out to one another. See verse 3, and one called out to another.

Picture two lines coming out from the throne. Back and forth, back and forth, calling out, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. An antiphonal chorus that never ceases.

In the Hebrew language, repetition shows force. If you want to communicate, you repeat. For example, if you wanted to say, did you see that storm this week? That'd be one thing.

But if you said, oh, did you see that storm, storm? They would use repetition to show force. Describing maybe Katrina or something, we would say, that was a storm, storm, storm. And that was part of the idiom of their language.

Now notice that in regard to God, only of this attribute, other attributes are mentioned twice in scripture, but only of this attribute and only here. God is not holy. God is not holy, holy.

He is holy, holy, holy. And then that next phrase, notice, the whole earth is full of his glory. Do you know what that means? That means there's no place that you can go.

There's nothing that your eyes can gaze upon that don't declare the reality of God. Everything that is made shouts the existence of the maker. Everything that is created shouts the existence of the creator.

All of this flowing from the infinite holiness and creative genius of Almighty God. The weather systems are full of his glory. We've been thinking about that.

Katrina, just that hurricane, 20 times the energy of the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima, 20 times the energy. We measure extreme weather and the thousands of people it kills and the millions that go without power for weeks and the hundreds of billions of dollars spent to repair the ravaged area of the country. Now what do they call them? Acts of God.

Well, yeah. The weather systems declare the glory of God. Something's driving all of that power.

You might tend to think that God isn't paying attention, but, oh, he is. The earth is full of his glory. Do you know that the planet earth sits on a 23 degree axis in relationship to the sun? Do you know that if that was just 25 or 20, if it was just changed two or three degrees, the entire earth would be an Arctic polar ice cap? Where do you live, Arctic? Where do you live, Arctic? That'd be the whole world.

We wouldn't be here for sure. What keeps it just like that? What keeps it just, God keeps it just like that. The Bible says that God sustains the universe that he created.

By his power, all things are created and sustained. Colossians chapter 1 says that he holds all things together. The earth is full of his glory.

The solar system is full of his glory. Do you know that our sun is so massive that you could fit 1.3 million planet earths inside it? That's the sun. And that's just our solar system.

Pluto is so far away that it was undiscovered until 75 years ago. The Milky Way is so expansive it would take a thousand lifetimes traveling at the speed of light to cross it. A thousand lifetimes at the speed of light.

Just our galaxy, the Milky Way. And all this stuff is in our backyard, okay? All of this stuff is just like right next door to us in this massive universe. The universe is full of his glory.

Astronomers now number galaxies at 140 billion. Yeah, like they counted them. Do you know how much 140 billion is? Do you know how much 140 billion is? Think frozen peas.

It takes 140 billion frozen peas to fill Chicago Stadium, all right? With every one of those representing a galaxy of which our solar system is only an infinitesimal part, the universe is full of his glory. But listen, Augustine, one of the church fathers, rightly observed. He said this, quote, men go abroad to wonder at the height of mountains and the huge waves of the sea.

Men go abroad to wonder at the long courses of the rivers and they pass by themselves without wondering at all. Maybe the thing closest and most understandable to us is the glory of God revealed in our own human bodies. The things that we fail to really comprehend.

Think about this. Did you know that there are 60,000 miles of blood vessels in your body? 60,000 miles. He's like, yeah, I knew that.

That's two times around the earth inside you, blood coursing through that right now. Did you know that your heart beats 100,000 times every day? You probably didn't even work on that. I think it's still going now as a matter of fact.

Thank God. Your body creates 25 million new cells every second. Again, again, again.

Nerve impulses travel 130 meters per second. So the fact that you felt that, you felt that, faster than the speed of lightning that's traveling and you're comprehending that. We are fearfully and wonderfully made and our bodies themselves shout the existence of a God who spoke.

The Bible says that God stood in eternity past. He spoke and the worlds were formed. Let me ask you a question.

Can you do that? That's why the glory goes to God. There is none like him. No one can do what he does.

He is holy. He is unparalleled. He is unprecedented.

Just him, no one else and no close second. Can you keep the earth perfectly tilted like that? Can you keep the planets and the stars and the solar system moving in a choreography that staggers the mind? Can you do that? If God says, I'm not doing that anymore, do you have someone to suggest that might take over for him? There is no one like him. There is none like him.

Words fail in helping us to comprehend the unalterable, incomprehensible holiness of God. Another passage that bears this out. Let's go to another throne room scene, Revelation chapter 4. Revelation chapter 4 verse 1, after this I looked and behold a door standing open in heaven and the first voice which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, come up here and I will show you what must take place after this.

At once I was in the spirit and behold a throne room in heaven with one seated on the throne and he who sat there had the appearance of jasper, that's like quartz, and carnelian, a reddish brown jewel and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. Notice the similarity of these descriptions, the throne, the seating, the rainbow. Isn't it interesting that these writers of scripture living 700 years apart, they never met, they never talked, they never read each other's writings, but they're saying the same things.

Why? Because they're seeing something that is real and it all looks, they're using the same words to describe these things. John the final one to get this vision says in verse 4 of Revelation 4, around the throne were 24 thrones and seated on the thrones were 24 elders. You're like who are they? Well some people say it's the apostles, 12 of them, and then the 12 sons of Jacob.

Some people say it was angels. Some people say we don't know who it is. I'm like those people.

24 elders clothed in white garments with golden crowns on their heads, not for long. From the throne came flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire which are the seven spirits of God. What's that mean? I thought there was just one Holy Spirit.

Well some suggest that the word seven there means fullness in the Bible, the word seven like seven days for creation. Many examples could be given that's the seven year tribulation. Daniel talked about sevens of sevens and so on.

It's a picture of fullness. It means the fullness of God's Spirit. Some people reference Isaiah 11.2 which has a seven-fold description of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, Isaiah 11.2 says. The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. I'm not sure which explanation is

accurate.

And before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass like crystal and around the throne on each side of the throne are four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. The first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, and the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. And the four living creatures each of them with six wings are full of eyes all around and within.

Day and night they never cease to say, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come. See holiness declares glory and whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne who lives forever and ever. The 24 elders, what do they do? Fall down before him who is seated on the throne and they worship him who lives forever and ever.

They cast their crowns before the throne. Why? Why off with the crowns? Because nobody rightly viewing God wants anything with themselves that's associated with honor. No honor to me, all the honor to him.

He's holy. Notice this, worthy are you our Lord and God. I love that word worthy.

The word worthy, actually it's the idea of scales. That's what the word worthy means. Balances.

It's like if you have all of the specific weight on this side and you have some precious stones on this side you make sure that it balances out. That they really are what they claim to be. That it balances and the word worthy here used of God is saying in effect there's no amount of praise and adoration that we could heap on our side of the scale but it measures out perfectly with who he is.

We cannot come close to overdoing our expression of praise and adoration to him. It will always balance out. Worthy, that's what it means.

Worthy, isn't that a cool word? Worthy are you. It's appropriate, it's fitting, it balances. Worthy are you our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things.

How clear is that? How much of it did God make? How much of it? You created all things and by your will they existed and were created. Incredible. Holiness declares glory.

It describes separation, it demands caution, it declares glory and finally holiness determines mystery. Go back to Isaiah 6 please. There's a part of holiness that declares mystery.

There's a part of knowing and comprehending God where you get this sort of this far and no further. In Revelation 10 John was doing what he was told to. He was writing down his vision of God.

In Revelation 10 for the messenger said don't write that down. He's like I really want to write this part down. I think this is really good.

Do not write that down. It goes on and says that that will be a mystery until the trumpet sounds which means that until Christ returns everything about God will it'll all there will always be a mystery to us. We won't get it.

I'm always a little concerned with people who say I've got this all kind of figured out. No, no, there's mystery. There's always a certain amount of this far no further step back.

Isaiah 6, 4 that happened to Isaiah. He had just seen the throne room, the angelic messengers. He had heard their song which never ceases.

Verse 4 and the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice. Apparently God said something. We don't know what God said but as soon as he said it the house was filled with smoke as if to imply that's enough.

You've seen enough. That's all you are allowed to see now. Someday the Bible says we will know fully even as we are known.

We'll be like him for we'll see him as he is. I think in our humanness we can't even handle it and so God in his mercy withholds and there there's mystery. There's mystery.

A final throne room scene bears this out. Look with me at Daniel chapter 7. Daniel chapter 7 verse 9. Daniel another prophet with another vision. Partial though just a partial vision of this holy mysterious God.

Daniel 7, 9 as I looked thrones were placed and the ancient of days took his seat. His clothing was white as snow. The hair of his head like pure wool.

His throne was fiery flames its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him. A thousand thousands served him and 10,000 times 10,000 stood before him.

The court sat in judgment. Notice and the books were opened. What are you talking about books? Yeah yeah the books.

Do you know about the books? Hey hey you need to know about the books. Okay there's some books in heaven and you need to know about them. Last passage back to the end of your Bible revelation 20.

Let's see about these books. Revelation 20:11 reviewing now. I saw a great white throne him who was seated on it from his presence earth and sky fled away no place was found for them.

Here it is and I saw the dead great and small standing before the throne and books were opened. Then another book was opened which is the book of life and the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done and the sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them and they were judged each one of them according to what they had done.

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death the lake of fire and if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life he was thrown into the lake of fire. Now please don't answer.

Is your name in the book of life? Your name's not in the book of life because you say it is. Your name is not in the book of life because you told God to put it in. Your name is in the book of life because you practice what you profess.

That doesn't get you there but it assures you that you are. In Matthew chapter 7 Jesus said many people will be like I prophesied in your name. I cast out demons in your name.

I did many wonderful works in your name. Then Jesus will say to them I didn't even know you. It's not what you say it's what God says and what God says is that faith without works is dead.

All right you might have prayed some prayer in Awana 20 years ago but if you don't love Jesus Christ in increasing measure if he's not the pearl of great price to you if he's not the treasure of your affection if he's not all that you live for and long for in increasing measure your name's not in the book. If any man is in Christ 2 Corinthians 5:17 he is a new creation. Old things are passing away.

All things are becoming new. There's an increasing pattern of righteousness in your life. If you don't have it your name's not in the book but it can be.

You have to have a true conversion experience where the because of that point in time that crisis decision to give my life to Jesus to turn from my sin because of that point in time after that everything became different. I'm not perfect after that. I'm not flawless after that but in increasing measure I am hungering and thirsting after righteousness and I am being filled.

Jesus is the object of my greatest joy and affection. He is the pleasure that I am pursuing with my whole heart. That's what it means to be converted and we need to wake up to that reality.

There have been a number of great awakenings in our country. The first great awakening took place in the 1730s and 1740s. It swept up and down the Atlantic seaboard from Nova Scotia to Georgia.

Conversions in the colonies increased more than four-fold during the first great awakening. Jonathan Edwards was one of the real leaders of the first great awakening. He was a preacher and a theologian.

He was tall and thin. He was unimpressive in his oratory skills. He would read his hour-long sermons to his congregation directly from his notes.

Yet he possessed a deep and profound belief in the reality of hell and the holiness of God and that's what he preached and that's what brought an awakening. His most well-known sermon is called Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. It was preached July the 8th, 1741 in Enfield, Massachusetts.

It marked the great awakening in New England. The point of his message was to awaken people to the utter holiness of God and the need to be reconciled with him. One man, Stephen Williams, an eyewitness account to that message says this, we went over to Enfield to hear Mr. Edwards who preached the most awakening sermon.

Before it was done, there was moaning and crying out through the whole house, what shall I do to be saved? Oh, I'm going to hell. What shall I do for Christ? So much were the shrieks and cries that the minister was obliged to desist. Here's a couple of quotes from his message.

Listen, the wrath of God is like great waters that are damned for the present. They increase more and more and rise higher and higher till an outlet is given and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course when once it is let loose. It is true that judgment against your evil works has not been executed hitherto.

The floods of God's vengeance have been withheld, but your guilt in the meantime is constantly increasing and you are every day treasuring up more wrath against yourself. The waters are constantly rising more and more and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw His hand from the floodgate, it would immediately fly open and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of this holy God would rush forth with inconceivable fury and would come upon you with omnipotent power.

And if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it. The bow of God's wrath is bent and the arrow is made ready on the string and justice bends the arrow at your heart and strains the bow. And it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God and that of an angry holy God without any promise or obligation at all that keeps the arrow one moment longer from being made drunk with your blood.

Listen, listen. Thus all you that never passed under a great change of heart by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls, all of you that were never truly born again and made new creatures and raised from being dead to sin to a state of new and before altogether unexperienced light and life. I want to read that again.

Thus all of you that never passed under a great change of heart by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls, all you that were never born again and made new creatures and raised from being dead to sin to a state of new and before altogether unexperienced light and life are still in the hands of an angry God. However you may have reformed your life in many things, however you may have had religious affection and may keep up a form of religion in your family and in God's house, it is nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction. However unconvinced you may be now of the truth that you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it.

Those that are gone from being in the like circumstances with you see that it was so with them for destruction came suddenly upon most of them when they expected nothing of it and while they were saying peace and safety now they see that those things on which they depended for peace and safety were nothing but thin air and empty shadows. This is a holy God, you cannot fool him or trick him or play games with him and the true condition of your soul this morning is known perfectly to him and so the call goes out for some of you to turn to the Lord. Truly turn from your sin and yourself and your pleasure seeking and look at me and aren't I a good boy and all of your reputation building self-consuming godlessness, turn from it and embrace Christ by faith as the great treasure of your soul.

Turn and for those who have made that turning and have experienced life in Christ hear with me the call to return. Return, come let us return to the Lord as the great prize and object of our life and affections. Let us return to the Lord, God on the throne, a picture of holiness.

Let's bow together in prayer just quietly there. Father in heaven, great God of the universe, holy and high, lifted up and exalted, be exalted in our minds, be the object of our greatest thoughts, be the end of our deepest affections. Even as we bow here this morning, Lord God, eternity is racing upon us and will be here in just a moment.

Help us to rightly estimate the brevity of this life and the endless ceaseless nature of eternity. Help us to calculate afresh that we are here for you and for your glory. Thank you for life, thank you for things that we enjoy.

Let them not be our life, Lord, that you would be our life and you alone. Lord, forgive us for using grace, amazing grace, as an excuse to keep on sinning. Forgive us, Lord, for wallowing in a cheap substitute for the God of the Bible and spending ourselves for our own fame so worthless and fleeting rather than spending ourselves for you, for you truly, for you and for your glory, that the fame of your name might be resounding throughout the earth and in every place that we set our feet.

Holy God, seated on a throne, high and lifted up, reign in me. Rule over my affections, rule over my attentions, rule over the thoughts and intents of my heart. Let me give myself wholly to you and to you alone.

Revive me according to your word. Will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you? Help us, we pray. Thank you, Lord, for some in this moment who are turning from sin.

By faith, I believe some will be changed through all of eternity because of faith expressed in Jesus Christ alone in this moment. Be with those young in faith just now. Nourish and grow that faith into deep, satisfying, lifetime following of Christ.

Lord, we don't want to be a flash in the pan. We don't want to be a quick moment. We don't want Christ to be a phase that we went through.

So be with those turning now and with those returning. Lord, we return to you. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.

Prone to leave the God I love. Thank you for your persistent grace. Thank you for your stubborn love that calls me back again and again.

Here I come. Holy God, we turn. We return to you.

Thanks for listening to Walk in the Word. Our mission is to ignite passion in the people of God through the proclamation of truth. And you'll find more biblical teaching on this topic as well as many other resources on our website, [walkintheword.com](http://walkintheword.com). You can request a complete catalog or order online.

Or if you'd like to call us, our toll-free phone number is 888-581-WORD. Again, that's 888-581-9673. And you can call 24 hours a day.

If you'd like to write to us, our website has both the U.S. and Canadian address information. And the website again, [walkintheword.com](http://walkintheword.com). Well, thanks for listening to God's truth taught here on Walk in the Word. Our prayer for you is that you will continue to grow in Christ as you walk in the Word.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22326.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-macdonald/god-on-the-throne-a-picture-of-holiness/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**