

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Faculty Publications

1-2-2021

Behold Your God

Wilber Alexander
Andrews University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs>

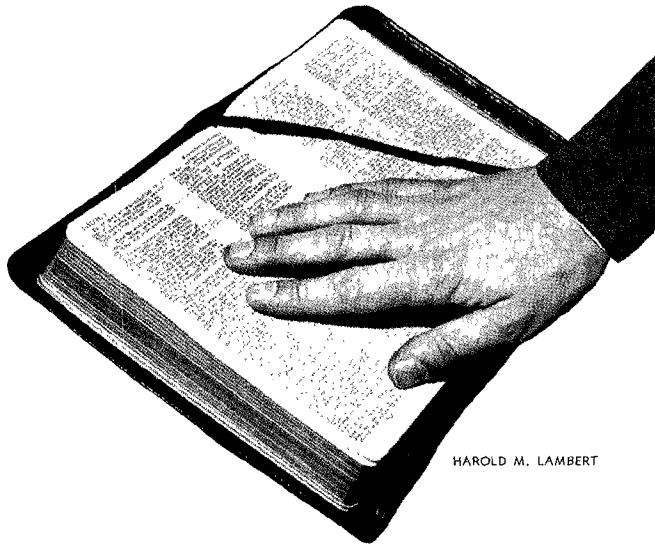


Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Alexander, Wilber, "Behold Your God" (2021). *Faculty Publications*. 3661.
<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs/3661>

This Popular Press is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.



“Behold Your God!”

By Wilber Alexander
Professor of Theology
Andrews University

“The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever” (verses 6-8).

The context of the phrase, “All flesh is grass,” implies two things. First, they were to remember that whoever their enemies might be and whatever their power and advantage, it was all very human and temporary. Second, they were to see the necessity of resting their faith and confidence in the word of God rather than in any mighty men among them. By this time all the strong leaders were fading and dying, all the potential Messiahs had disappeared. To have God tell them “prepare ye the way of the Lord,” when old age and death had taken their great men would be difficult to carry out. However, God was

not directing their attention to anything or to anyone, but to His eternal Word.

Verses 9-11 sound a call to God’s people to begin again the work God gave them—the evangelization of the world: “O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” (verse 9-11).

The gospel message to be given by God’s people was firm but tender. The world was to know Israel’s God as a warrior king, able to fight their battles for them. But He was more than that: He was the Good Shepherd. They could speak these words boldly from personal experience because they had known His power. They had only to call to mind the herd of mixed and feeble folk—babes, old men, young women—in need of leading, and how God had reminded them that He was the God of the gentle hand.

“Behold Your God!”

To this point Isaiah’s picture is complete, but it is only a prologue. Before Israel can say, “Behold your God,” they must behold Him. For many years God’s people were deprived of Temple and symbol. There was a famine of the Word.

Those who believed that heathen gods had carried the day, that Jehovah had cast them off, looked at the idol worship all about them and sought to satisfy starved hearts at local shrines. The tragic result was that they became like what they worshiped—small, meaningless, and empty. Thus they closed their shrunken souls to God’s continuous disclosure of Himself.

To draw their minds back to the incomparable God the prophet uses a series of questions and answers. These questions and answers are designed to reach hungry hearts with starved convictions and to nourish and strengthen them.

Notice the first series of questions addressed to those who have indulged in idolatry: “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as his counselor has instructed him? Whom did he consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the isles like fine dust. Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? The idol! a workman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold, and casts for it silver chains. He who is impoverished chooses for an offering wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skilful craftsman to set up an image that will not move.

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; who brings princes to nought,

(To page 9)

Eternity in the Heart

One day we were discussing the subject of genuine and enduring satisfaction. Does it come to us through the possession of material things, through an easy life of "wooly softness"? Everyone in the group knew that it does not. Then one of my friends remarked: "The human heart craves permanence, and can never be really satisfied without eternity. Because the human heart was made by the Creator, it cannot be truly satisfied without Him." This was a thoughtful and thought-provoking answer.

Looking into my Bible, the greatest answer book in the world, I read a statement by Solomon. It is in the eleventh verse of the third chapter of Ecclesiastes—"[God] has put eternity into man's mind" (R.S.V.). You may recall the story in one of our childhood readers regarding the son of a certain king in old Europe. The lad was stolen from the royal palace when very young, and grew up among strangers. But all through those early years the lad felt that he belonged to a king's family, and often dreamed that one day he would find his old home. When he grew to manhood he did just that. So it is with us today.

We are in the enemy's land and "our home is far away, upon a golden strand." But God has placed the heavenly vision in our hearts, a sense of eternity, and there is a longing for our eternal home, a belief that someday the King will deliver us from this present earthly state and take us to Himself in the earth made new. This is the teaching of His Word. We are grateful for its last two chapters, which depict a little of the glory of our homeland. Yes, God has set eternity in our hearts, and we are to keep the sense of it there. Let us cultivate the "blessed hope," which is soon to be realized.

ERNEST LLOYD

should view adverse conditions as opportunities to strengthen the core of our lives, and not look forlornly upon them as crosses to be borne. God bids us to count our blessings and see in the unpleasant experiences mere specks on the ocean of life—specks lost in a sea of blessedness! Those who would bear adversity in the spirit of Christ have the ultimate promise of "the oil of joy for mourning, [and] the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isa. 61:3).

Which Will It Be?

Half empty or half full? Which will it be? Which kind of person are you? After speaking of abiding in Him, Jesus said to His followers, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11).

Our joy as followers of Christ is not confined to the present time, for if it were we would be of all people most miserable. But it begins now and extends into eternity. Isaiah tells of the experience of those who ultimately receive the eternal reward: "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

Decide today whom you will serve. You can't serve two masters. If you cling to the master who advises you to be sorry for yourself, then you turn away from the Master who wants His joy to remain in you, "that your joy might be full."

Life can be what you believe it to be. If you see it as empty, filled with

foreboding circumstances, then it will be just that! If, on the other hand, you give your life into God's care and keeping, trusting Him to give you strength, then the dissonant experiences of life will be bravely borne, and you will then have every reason to be optimistic, for, come what may, eternal life stands before you as an open vista.

"Behold Your God!"

(Continued from page 3)

and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One" (Isa. 40:12-25, R.S.V.).

These words need no commentary. They speak eloquently of divine power, divine knowledge, divine wisdom, divine majesty—He is God!

Finally the prophet turns to those in deep despair who do not question the God of the universe, but have doubts as to His being the God of the one.

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?"

"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (verses 26-31).

Among all the peoples of earth, Israel felt lost and insignificant, without help and without hope. But from the crowded confusion the stars were visible one by one, from the evening star on into the night. Even so, God knew them by name and was acquainted with their strengths and weaknesses. This makes Him an even greater God. More than this, God not only knows, He understands, He cares, and He is able to help.

A new group called the objectivists is gaining in membership across the nation. The leaders of the movement claim that their new philosophy is a fresh approach to solving the world's problems by establishing moral values through rationality. Any such movement is doomed to fail if it relies on rationality alone because it places man at the center of his problems instead of God.

We can acknowledge man's capacity to advance in knowledge, but we must turn away at his stupidity, cruelty, and pettiness in human relationships, his continual weakness of flesh. We see man claim self-sufficiency to the point of attempting to manage his own affairs, but soon he is helplessly over his head.

God is greater than any human philosophy, any human fetish, any human idol, any human! Isaiah's message is fresh and timely—"Behold your God!"—God, Creator and Sovereign of all nations; God at work in history, in judgment, in redemption; God graciously forgiving His people; God choosing, training, empowering His people to win to Him all peoples.

Your God is greater than anything you can imagine. Your God is more personal than you have yet known. Your God seeks entrance into your life through His constant revelation of Himself.

Your God calls you to look away from the human scene which can absorb you, to look away from your self. He calls you to look up and listen:

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."