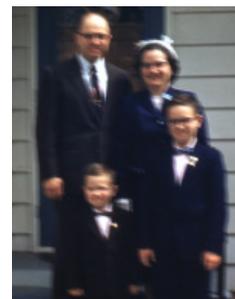


Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts!
Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!

Psalms 96:8-9 ESV

DUE HONOR, DUE RESPECT



In the time of my childhood and youth, people dressed up for a flight on an airliner. It was considered a special occasion for the average person to travel on a commercial airliner, and, back then, people dressed up for special occasions.

Worship Services and Sunday School at our Baptist Temple were special occasions, as well. Though our family had limited means when we were children in the 1950s, my older brother and I always wore a suit or sport coat, white shirt and tie. Our dad was a stickler especially for shined shoes: every Saturday evening we polished our best shoes in preparation for Sunday morning.

Today there are fewer special occasions than there were in the '50s. But some have endured. At a wedding a short while back I noticed how nice everyone looked. Most everyone in attendance had dressed up for the special event; there were men from our church I had never before seen so attired, wearing suit and tie.



The psalmist calls us to a special occasion: the worship of a holy and glorious God. And he tells us to give Him what He is due. We are to enter His sanctuary not with our hands empty, but with an offering. More than that, in our worship we are to acknowledge and proclaim the full weight of who God is. That is, we are to give God the glory due Him.

"Glory" is one of those noble-sounding church words with its sharp edges worn smooth from centuries of use and misuse. At its core, the word *kabod* means weight. It is the Lord's glory, the full weight of His majesty, that takes our breath away. It is the Lord's glory that sent a fearful Israel running from Him.

All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die."

Exodus 20:18-19

It is the Lord's glory that caused the prophet Isaiah to assume he was about to die when he was permitted a vision of His throne.

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Isaiah 6:1-5

Some will say, "Well, that's the God of the *Old* Testament. Because of Jesus, we don't have to fear Him now."

The first answer to that short-sighted response is that the same God whose glory caused Israel to run from His mountain, the same God whose glory caused Isaiah to tremble in fear, is still on His throne. And He does not change.

The second answer is that God the Father's giving us His Son for our redemption should ignite in us *more* respect, *more* honor, *more* worship and praise—not less.

We should revere Him all the more because of the gracious gift of our eternal salvation.



The psalmist then tells us to worship "in the splendor of holiness"—or, "in holy attire" (NASB). Just as the high priest under the Mosaic Law would change into his finest garments before entering the holy of holies, we too should change into our "good" clothes when we gather together for corporate worship.

God alone can read the contents of a heart. Only He knows if our outward apparel reflects the level of reverence—or irreverence—for Him we carry into the sanctuary.

Because our heart-condition is more important to God than our outward appearance, it is true that we can honestly, authentically, reverently worship God wearing frayed jeans and a T-shirt. (And it goes without saying that if our poverty dictates that that *does* comprise our best wardrobe, then the point cannot be made.)

Still, does not our manner of dress reflect our level of consideration—or respect—for the occasion itself? What does it say about the condition of our heart when we dress better for a wedding, for a concert, for a funeral, for an anniversary party than we do for worship of a holy, glorious God? Are we not then stating, even tacitly, that adoration of the Lord of the universe, the one God and Savior of mankind, is less important to us than a friend's nuptials—that we do not consider worship of our God to be a special occasion?

Should we not dress better for meeting with our God than we do for running to the store for a carton of milk? Is He not worthy of that respect?

