

The Song Of The Seraphim To The Triune God.

Text: Isaiah 6:1-8

1) Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts

Suggested Hymns:

2) The whole earth is full of His glory!

501, 141, 140, 282, 139

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Isaiah 6:1-8, *¹ In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.*

² Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" ⁴ And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

⁵ So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged."

⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Since the first Sunday in Advent, the beginning of the new church year, we have been climbing the mountainside of the festivals of the Christian Church. Today we reach the climax, the top of the mountain, in the glorious Festival of the Holy Trinity.

We praised the love of the Father at Christmas time in the sending of His only-begotten, dearly beloved Son. We honoured the redemptive work of the Second Person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ, on the day of His triumphant resurrection.

We rejoiced in the gracious work of the Holy Spirit last Sunday on the Festival of Pentecost, and today we are once more united to shout the praises of the only true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

He is the only true God; beside Him there is no other. From the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter in Revelation shines forth the glory of the Holy Trinity. That is why we begin our services in the name of the Trinity. That is why you hear the apostolic greeting *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all”*¹ as the first word of the pastor from the pulpit.

That is why we confess our faith in this God in the three articles of the Apostles’ Creed or in the words of the Nicene Creed. That is why we close our Worship Services with the Aaronic benediction with the threefold reference to the Lord.

That is why all our doxologies are songs of praises to this selfsame God as we praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the marvellous text chosen for today we hear the chorus of the seraphim in heaven singing to the glory of this glorious God. So let us consider today *The Song of the Seraphim to the Triune God*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Holy, Holy, Holy, Is The Lord Of Hosts

The great Prophet Isaiah was privileged to hear the seraphic hymn of praise to the Triune God. It was in the year of the death of King Uzziah, the year 758 B.C., that Isaiah saw the vision recorded in our text.

It was a vision of ecstasy. He saw, saw in spirit. What did he see? He stood in the throne room of the Lord of heaven and earth and saw the all-powerful Lord Jehovah sitting in exalted majesty upon a throne, high, and lifted up, and his train filled the Temple.

His kingly robe with its majestic train is a fitting emblem of the divine glory. It covered and filled the heavenly sanctuary, the place where God permits angels and saints to see Him.

Seraphim, those heavenly spirits of the highest ranks, the chief of the angels, representing all the holy angels, stand above, hover over and about the throne of the Lord of heaven and earth, ready to serve. They are the guardians of the throne.

Each seraph has six wings; with two he covers his eyes, since he cannot endure the sight of the essential holiness of God; with two he covers his feet, a sign of humility and modesty. For in the sight of the holy God even the angels are not on His level.

There is a great difference between the uncreated holiness of God and the holiness of creatures. And one cried to another. Now there was heard in heaven by Isaiah the antiphonal singing of the angel choirs, who sang responsively, ***“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts,”*** with the other chorus answering, ***“The whole earth is full of His glory.”***

The effect of this singing was tremendous. The very posts of the doors moved; the heavenly temple with its portals down to the lowest foundations of the sills or thresholds, moved at the voice of him that cried, and of them that sang.

The whole house was filled with smoke, as from incense, representing perhaps the prayers of the saints on earth, which here mingle with the songs of praise of the angels, giving praise and adoration to the Lord of heaven.²

This reminds us of the time when the Apostle John heard one of the inhabitants of heaven, as we read in Revelation 14:2, ***2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.***

We now turn to the song of the seraphim, and we find that it is sung in praise of the Triune God. It is the All-Highest, the All-Powerful, the Leader of the hosts of heaven as well as the Leader of the covenant to whom this song is rendered. That is none other than the Triune God.

According to the statement of St. John, chapter 12:41, the Lord whose glory Isaiah saw was the person of Jesus Christ. These things Isaiah said, when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

But the angels sing, *“Holy, holy, holy.”* Why three times? Not merely for emphasis. Twice would then be sufficient. Here is a plain reference to the three persons of the Trinity. In this way the Church has understood this song from earliest days. The true God is the Triune God, three persons in one divine essence. This is already taught in the Old Testament.

The Messiah, the Second Person of the Trinity, is made to speak. The word “Me” refers to Jesus as we read in Isaiah 61:1, *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor.* The Second Person is speaking, the Spirit, the Third Person, of the Lord God, the First Person, is upon Him.

In Psalm 110:1 we read, *“The Lord said to My Lord.”* Here one person is speaking to the other. In verse 8 of our text we read, *“Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?”*

This reminds us of Genesis 1:26, ²⁶ *Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...”* Here the three persons of the Godhead deliberate upon an action. And what is merely indicated in our text is clearly expressed, not merely in the Old Testament references quoted, but especially in the New Testament in the Great Commission and in the Apostolic Benediction, and in many other passages such as the baptism of Jesus.³

Another example is John 15:26, ²⁶ *“But when the Comforter comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*

And John 14:16, ¹⁶ *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.* Thus we have here a doxology of the seraphim: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

They praise especially the gracious work of the Triune God for the salvation of sinful men. This our text clearly shows. Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord, because He is sinless, spotless, so clean that even the heavens are not clean in His sight, as we read in Job 15:15.

But He is holy also because He is separate from the creatures, far above them in majesty and glory; far different from them in dealing with men. We read ***“My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD,***⁴ immediately after having said: ***He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.***

Yes, men are sinners and in need of pardon. If ever man’s sinfulness stands out, it is when he is in the presence of holiness. Thus we read in our text, ***“Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”***

The Prophet thinks of his unclean, sinful lips, since the seraphim had just praised God with clean lips. He feels and sees his general uncleanness. Later we read in Isaiah 64:6, ***6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags.***

My eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts for which reason he must say, ***Woe is me, for I am undone!*** I am a lost and condemned sinner. ***For no man shall see Me, and live***” God had said.⁵ But God be praised, ***Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.*** The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 130:4, ***4 But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.***

The Prophet who feels lost and damned is here marvellously comforted from on high. All cause of fear and trembling is removed. A seraph takes a live coal from the altar, touches the Prophet’s unclean lips, and thus iniquity departs from him.

This act is to illustrate the gracious fact that God has an effective atonement for sin and that this atonement is for the benefit of sinful men on earth.

Here Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity. He was seated upon the throne. This Christ is the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. ***Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; ... And by His stripes we are healed.***⁶

God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. And it is not Jesus only, it is the Triune God that effects redemption, for the other two persons concurred in this work.

The Father's love sent Jesus into the world, the Son died as the Substitute for men, and the Holy Spirit makes it known through Word and Sacrament, thus bringing men to faith, by which their sin is covered, and their iniquity removed from the sight of God.

Thus the song of the angels is in praise of the redeeming love and gracious glory of the Triune God.

Is this song your song, my friends? Do not think that it is merely an ancient hymn, heard almost three thousand years ago by a prophet, sung only by angels. It must also be sung by you. It can be sung, today, and always, if only you learn to say with the Prophet: *Woe is me, for I am undone!*

People of unclean lips, of unclean hearts, declare your moral bankruptcy in the sight of the one holy God; realise that you deserve damnation. But then despair not! Be of good cheer! There comes to you a message from heaven; through Word and Sacrament the Lord assures you of atonement made through Jesus for your sins and proclaims unto you the gracious fact: *Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.* Depart in peace.

And this wonderful grace and forgiveness of the Triune God shall be made known throughout the world, as the seraphim sing, "*The whole earth is full of His glory.*"

2. The Whole Earth Is Full Of His Glory

In prophetic vision the holy angels of God see beyond the change of time, behold, as it were, the end of time, and praise God for carrying out everything that He plans to carry out for the salvation of men.

Angels are interested in the things that happen on earth for the salvation of men. Not only did they sing praise to God at the creation,⁷ but they joined in the first Christmas anthem, "*Glory to God in the highest.*" They were present on Easter Sunday, at the ascension into heaven, and they will be with Jesus when He returns in glory.

When they say, "*The whole earth is full of His glory!*" they refer to the glory of His grace unto all men, as we read in Ephesians 1:6, "*To the praise of the glory of His grace.*" What the angels say is in accord with the Lord's own words in Numbers 14:21, ²¹ *but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with*

the glory of the LORD. All His works, creation, redemption, sanctification, serve to magnify Him as the supreme and only God.

If you ask, How is this done? How is the earth filled with the glory of His grace? The answer is given in our text. ***“Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?”*** says the Lord. He wants to send men out as His messengers, as His ambassadors. They are to do important work for Him.

They are to proclaim what Isaiah saw in the vision, the holiness of God, manifesting itself in the atonement. In the light of the holiness of God they are to hold before men the demands of God’s stern law: ***“You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy”***⁸ and show them the utter impossibility of measuring up to the Lord’s standard and their own lost estate.

But then they should show that atonement has been made by the Lord’s Christ, that God wants to forgive man’s sins. ***“We implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”*** By this wondrous message of the grace and mercy of the Most High God, the Triune God, these messengers are to fill the earth with His glory. That was the Prophet’s call, that is the call of all true preachers of the Gospel today and always.

In our text we note how Isaiah is called to be the Prophet of the Lord. From him we may learn the qualifications of the Christian minister. He must be called by God, the Triune God, although the call is extended through a congregation.

He must be a man that has seen the King, the Lord of hosts, and in His presence must have been overwhelmed by the consciousness of his own guilt. He must have received pardon for all his sins. He must be able to proclaim the message of forgiveness to others.

And he must be ready to do the work, volunteer for services, not perform the task under constraint, but say, ***“Here am I, send me.”*** Thus God has committed unto us the word of reconciliation and by the preaching of that word throughout the world is making true the words of the angels: ***“The whole earth is full of His glory.”***

Thus we have come out, this day, my friends, from the throne room of the all-powerful God. We have in spirit seen Jesus on the exalted throne of His

divine majesty. We have listened to the thrilling song of the angelic hosts as they praise the mercy of the Triune God.

Our eyes have seen the King, and yet we have not perished, *and of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*¹⁰ Can we restrain ourselves and not join the song of the heavenly host *“Holy, holy, holy, the whole earth is full of His glory”?*

And if we join, are we sincere if we do not make every effort to make the earth full of God’s glory? We know the question *“Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?”* We know the command *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”*¹¹ We know the answer of those who have had their sins purged and their iniquity taken away: *“Here am I! Send me.”*

Are we ready to volunteer for this service of the Triune God? We know the great need. Many people speak of God, but not of the Triune God. Many, like the Unitarian Universalists, Jews, and others, have no God. Many religious sectarians today are no better. Lodges worship a higher being, but leave out the mention of Jesus in order to please everybody. They think they worship God in a manner pleasing to Him, while they mock God, and worship an idol, rather than the true God.

Many people will say, *“We all believe in the same God,”* but they do not know that it is NOT THE SAME, unless it be the Triune God. Millions perish for want of true knowledge.

What else can we do but say, *“Here am I! Send me.”?* Let us confess the Lord, help spread His glorious Gospel that all the world may be filled with the wondrous message of the glorious grace of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

May we and others, join the seraphim in saying, *“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!”* Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ 2 Corinthians 13:14

² Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4

³ Matt 3:16-17

⁴ Isaiah 55:8

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- ⁵ Exodus 33:20
 - ⁶ Isaiah 53:4-5
 - ⁷ Job 38:7
 - ⁸ Leviticus 19:2
 - ⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:20
 - ¹⁰ John 1:16-17
 - ¹¹ Mark 16:15