

“Holy, Holy, Holy Is the Lord of Hosts”
(Isaiah 6:1-8 – Holy Trinity – June 15, 2025)

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. ²Above 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. ³And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!” ⁴And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵So 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.” ⁶Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. ⁷And he touched my mouth with it, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.” ⁸Also 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.”*

Dear Redeemed of God in Christ:

“Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!” (vs. 3). This is the cry of the angel hosts as they surround the throne of their Lord in heaven. The word “*holy*” in Hebrew is *Kadosh*, which basically mean to be separate or set apart.

The angels worship Him who is set apart in His Triune nature. They see Him as He is. They see God the Father, who has existed from all eternity; they see God the Son, not created but eternally begotten of His Father; they see God the Holy Spirit, not created but eternally proceeding from the Father and Son. “*Holy, Holy, Holy*” they cry, worshipping Him as just one God, yet three divine Persons sharing equal majesty, power, and glory.

The angels worship Him who is set apart as Creator of all things in heaven and earth. These *seraphim*, as their name implies, are fiery beings created by God. As Hebrews 1:7 says: “[*He*] makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.” The angels themselves are awesome and powerful; yet as creatures of God, they are His humble servants. As Isaiah sees the seraphs hovering around God’s throne, ready to serve at His command, he reports: “*each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew*” (vs. 2). Even these awesome beings must cover their faces and their feet in humble reverence in the presence of their Creator’s holiness.

“Holy, Holy, Holy Is the LORD of Hosts!” As Isaiah sees the angel hosts worshipping the thrice Holy One who is set apart from all His creation, he is moved to holy fear and awe in the presence of God. And like the prophet, as we come before the holy Lord in

worship: **1) We fearfully confess our sinfulness before Him; yet 2) We thankfully see how He takes our sin away; and then 3) We joyfully proclaim His salvation to others.**

1) We fearfully confess our sinfulness before Him

As the angels join their voices in worship, Isaiah reports: *“One cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!’ And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 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’”* (vs. 3-5).

In heaven, the angels join their voices in perfect, joyful worship of Him who is holy. For the angels themselves are holy, in that they have no sin. Just their praises were enough to shake the doors of God’s heavenly temple and fill it with smoke. But what filled Isaiah with fear was not the angels; it was the holy Lord God Almighty, whom he saw *“sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple”* (vs. 1).

God’s holiness means He is completely set apart from sinners as the perfect, sinless God. As such, by His very nature He hates sin. Because of His holiness, God judges sin as evil that is opposed to His very being. He must destroy sin, as an antiseptic must kill bacteria. God would cease to be holy if He did not oppose sin, punish it, and destroy it.

In His holy Law, our Creator rightfully demands of us, as His creatures: *“You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy”* (Leviticus 19:2). Anything less than holy and perfect is unacceptable to God (Mathew 5:48).

In the presence of the Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, Isaiah feels his absolute unworthiness as a sinner. Instead of joining the joyful praises of the holy angels, he is filled with fear. In the holy presence of God, sins that might seem small in the eyes of man loom large. Isaiah heard the angels praising God with pure lips, but he was consumed with the uncleanness of his own lips before God, as one who lived among a people of unclean lips.

So also, as sinners living among a fallen race of humanity, as flesh born of sinful flesh, must we not fearfully confess our sinfulness before the Holy Lord? Sin begins in the heart with evil thoughts and desires; and how often it shows itself in unclean words on our lips. In moments of frustration, our lips have uttered filthy language and said regrettable things. In moments of anger, we have lashed out with unloving words. In moments of revenge, we have gossiped and slandered to hurt another’s reputation. James 3:8-10 laments our sinful condition before the Lord, so often heard in unclean words: *“But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.”*

If coming into the presence of the Holy, Holy, Holy Lord depended on us, where would we be? Not with the holy angels in heaven, joyfully singing His praise; but as miserable sinners lamenting: *“Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips.”*

2) We thankfully see how He takes our sin away

But as we join Isaiah, fearfully confessing our sinfulness before Him, we thankfully see how He takes our sin away. As Isaiah reports: *“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. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged’”* (vs. 6-7). The Lord of hosts sent one of His angels to comfort Isaiah with His message of atonement for sin and peace with the holy Lord. So Isaiah saw that His holiness also means He is set apart as the God who forgives and saves.

Here is good news for us all. The holy God who hates sin has not treated us as our sins deserve (Psalm 130:10). We could never make ourselves holy in the sight of God. But in His infinite love and mercy, He has reached across the great gap between His holiness and our sinfulness; He has found a way to cleanse us and present us holy in His sight.

Here the Lord demonstrated this to Isaiah in a symbolic action. One of the seraphim carried a live coal from the altar and touched the prophet’s lips with it, announcing the Lord’s absolution: *“Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged”* (vs. 7). Fire represents a purifying power. But according to God’s holy Law, no cleansing from sin came from His altar unless a blood sacrifice was made on that altar. That coal of cleansing taken from the altar of sacrifice in the temple pointed to the cleansing for sin God gives by the once and for all blood sacrifice of His Son for us (Hebrews 9:22, 26).

While we were still unholy sinners, yet in love for us God the Father sent His eternally-begotten Son into the world as our Savior. Jesus was born in our flesh so He could live the one and only holy life under the Law that counts for our righteousness; and He could suffer and die on the cross as the one and only sacrifice that takes away our sin. In Christ, God absolves us of all sin. In Christ, He forgives every unclean word we have spoken; every unholy deed we have done; and even every sinful thought and desire in the heart. In Christ, the holy God has perfectly reconciled us to Himself, no longer counting any sin against us; instead, He is counting the holiness of His Son to us (2 Corinthians 5:19-21).

In His perfect love for us, God the Father and God the Son have sent God the Spirit into our hearts. The Holy Spirit has applied Jesus’ cleansing and holiness to us in Baptism. Through faith in His Son, God has made His holy children and heirs of eternal life.

Therefore, in thankfulness to Him who takes away our sins, now we can join our hearts and voices in holy worship as His saints in Christ. And we can look forward to living in His holy presence, and joining the holy angels in singing His perfect praises without end.

3) We joyfully proclaim His salvation to others

In view of His grace for sinners, we are led joyfully to proclaim His salvation to others. This was Isaiah's response, as he concludes: *"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'"* (vs. 8).

As we hear the Triune God speaking to Himself in both the singular "I" and the plural "Us," we see that it is the will of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to send His message of salvation in Christ to all people. And who can best share His Gospel, but sinners who have been saved by His grace, saints who can joyfully proclaim His praises? By that grace of God, Isaiah was transformed from his fearful lamentation, *"Woe is me, for I am undone!"* to his joyful exclamation: *"Here am I! Send me."*

That same grace of God transforms us into His joyful witnesses. He puts His Gospel in our hearts; and by that Gospel He puts new words on our lips, moving us to proclaim His praises, and to share His forgiveness and love with others. What better Word can we speak to those around us than what the Triune God gives us? To the one who feels his sinfulness and unworthiness under God's Law, fearful of coming into His holy presence, we can proclaim the comforting Gospel God sends us to share: *"Take heart! God loves you so much that He gave His only-begotten Son to take away all your sin and save you from all condemnation. And for Jesus' sake, He gives you His gift of forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life!"* As we share His Gospel, the Holy Spirit graciously works the faith that receives all these gifts.

So today we join all the angels and saints through the ages worshiping our Triune God. As His holy children in Christ, He opens our lips to show forth His praise: *"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD."* We worship Him who is our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier:

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.