

Holy, Holy, Holy **Isaiah 6:1-4**

Isaiah chapter 6. We'll only be reading verses 1 to 4 this morning. Before the reading, we'll pray. Please join me in prayer. Father in heaven, we do pray that you would speak to us from your word. I ask, Father, that you would help me as I speak. I ask, Father, that you would help us all as we listen. May you indeed be glorified by your word and by the teaching. Lord, may we be given eyes that see, ears that hear, and hearts that understand and obey. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Isaiah 6, starting at verse 1: “¹In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’ ⁴And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.” Amen.

“In the year that King Uzziah died.” Well, we've read from Second Chronicles chapter 26, and we know that Uzziah was king for 52 years, and though the end of his reign was not, let's say, as famous as the beginning of his reign, the summary of Uzziah in Scripture is still that he was one of the good, or one of the great kings of Israel. And you've got to understand, a king in that day, or I should say a great king of Judah—a king in that day actually had real power. When you lived in a society that was under a king who had real power, he was a very important person—far more so than today.

We're very cynical towards leadership today. We don't actually expect anything good from our leaders. You know, we vote in our elections and most of the time we're just trying to vote for the least evil of the choices in front of us. We don't expect anything good from anyone in leadership. We laugh at them, we make jokes about them, we talk about how foolish they are, how shortsighted, how self-glorifying, how self-interested, how out of touch—you name it.

But in an ancient society where you were reigned over by a true sovereign monarch who had the power of life and death in his hands, the king was a very important person. And you feared the king. And if he was a good king, you would love the king. And if you've had a man reign who was a king for 52 years and he was a good king, you deeply loved your king. And Isaiah was a prophet in the year that King Uzziah died—probably around about 740 B.C.

Uzziah was a king who had real power in an ancient world where there were real problems, where death was at the door, so to speak. Remember, at this point in time, that area that we would call Israel was divided into two kingdoms—the northern kingdom, usually called Israel, and the southern kingdom, usually called Judah. They were the same people, blood relatives, the offspring of Abraham.

When Uzziah died, he had this kingdom off to the north called Assyria, and Assyria is getting stronger and stronger, and more rapacious, more aggressive, and incurring further and further into the territory of their northern neighbor, Israel, which means they're getting closer and closer

to Judah's front door. The nation needed strength, it needed true leadership, it needed a king who was everything—wise, a military ruler, strong, faithful, trustworthy. And your good king dies—the king who was strong, the king who was marvelously helped by the Lord, the king who turned Jerusalem into a fortress. Remember in the reading in Second Chronicles, he set towers upon the walls, and from the towers he set great slingshots. He's turned the place into a military stronghold. And he dies, and the enemies are coming.

Well, what happens to the prophet Isaiah? We don't know this for sure, but let's assume that what we've basically got in Isaiah's book is something of a chronological order—that he ministered and prophesied for a while, and that's what we've got in the first five chapters; and then he has his vision. Let's work on that assumption. As I said, we can't prove it. This could've been the very start of his ministry. But he had to set the book up this way for a reason, and I'm assuming his reason is that his ministry as a preacher and a prophet actually began before he came to this vision.

So let's assume you're Isaiah, and you're preaching to your people and you're warning them. And that's what we've had—five chapters of warning: “God will judge. Your religious hypocrisy is drawing down the judgment of God. You want to call yourselves the people of God, but you want to live like demons, and you can't do it.” There's been promises along the way—promises of a Messiah, promises of deliverance, promises of rescue. But more than anything else, there's been the calling out and the naming of sin, and the calling down of judgment upon sin, and the threat of destruction—the threat of the destruction of God's holy city.

And so Isaiah, with regards to his current world, his current city, must've been in some ways a pessimistic man, a fearful man. He must've known that terrible things were going to happen. And so this was his state of mind, his state of heart when the 52-year-long reign of Uzziah comes to the end. Chaos is threatened. If we were to read more in Second Chronicles, the Scripture seems to indicate that Uzziah's son Jotham was nowhere near as strong as Uzziah himself, nowhere near as strong a king, nowhere near as strong a leader, indeed, nowhere near as strong a servant of the Lord.

So Isaiah goes to the temple to worship. It doesn't say that he was in the temple, but I'm imagining that he was actually in the temple, and he went there to worship—his heart in turmoil, his head cast down, worshiping at the very temple of the living God. And there's something that we need to remember about the temple, and this is something we often forget. We have a tendency, in a way, to think of things backwards—in a backwards way.

Turn to Hebrews chapter 8. Now this is a discussion about the priesthood of Jesus. It's saying how it is better than the Old Testament priesthood. Let's start reading at verse 3 of Hebrews chapter 8: “³ For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. ⁴ Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. ⁵ They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things,” speaking about the priests who are offering gifts upon the earth according to the law. “They serve a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things.”

What we can get backwards—we get it backwards today, we get it backwards when we read Old Testament Scripture—is that we imagine the temple was the real thing. We imagine that the temple was the real presence of God. Now, it was. It truly was the presence of God. It truly was the place that God had assigned for worship. But all along, we should be understanding that it is a copy and a shadow of the real thing. And what's the real thing? The real thing is the very throne room of God in heaven. We think that solid things are real things. We think, you know, the ground we stand on—this is the earth, this is solid, this is reality. And God says, “No. I'm reality. And where I am is reality. And my throne room in heaven is the throne room where the worship is happening. And in my presence is reality.”

Isaiah went to the temple upon earth. He went to the shadow and the copy, and there he got a vision of reality. The spiritual was not this far-off, ethereal thing—you know, fluffy clouds and you blow at it and it goes away. No, the spiritual *is* the reality. The spiritual is the reality that we will see—I pray and trust, next week—is the true reality that breaks Isaiah down to the point where he basically says, “I'm being unmade. I'm being de-created. I'm being broken down.” The spiritual reality was too much for his physical body. Isaiah went to the shadow and the copy, and there in the shadow and the copy he was given a vision of the reality.

Let's keep reading. Isaiah 6: ⁴“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up.” I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. That Lord there in verse 1, “I saw the Lord,” it's not Yahweh. It's not actually the sacred name of God. It's Adonai, which is the Hebrew word for one who rules with total authority; one who cannot be refused. “I saw the Adonai sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up.” And we've got to stop and look at that phrase “high and lifted up.” “High and lifted up” are very important words.

Turn to Isaiah chapter 52. We're going to read from verse 13. Isaiah chapter 52 is often called “the Fourth Servant's Song.” The song that's in Isaiah 53 starts back in Isaiah 52, and we know that it's a song of Jesus. It's the song that tells us that He was pierced for our transgressions. It's the song that tells us that by His suffering, He will make many righteous.

Now look at what it says in Isaiah 52, verse 13: “Behold, my servant”—now that's the Messiah, Jesus—“shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.” The servant who is going to suffer is going to be high and lifted up, just as God is high and lifted up in the temple. As we're going to see, just as God is exalted and worshiped in the temple by heavenly beings, the servant is to be high and lifted and worshiped in the temple by heavenly beings.

The same phrase is also used in chapter 57 of Isaiah. There we're going to look at verse 15. Now this is speaking of God. “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.’” The One who is high and lifted up.

Now let's look at this just in the light of Trinitarian theology. We've got God in His temple, high and lifted up, being, we'll see, continuously and always worshiped by angels: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.” We've got a Servant upon the earth who is a suffering servant,

who is going to be pierced for our transgressions. By His suffering He will make the many righteous. And He is to be high and lifted up.

But what did Jesus promise in the upper room discourse about dwelling in the hearts of men? Sending forth the Holy Spirit from the Father, through the Son, to the people—the Holy Spirit will come and He will dwell in us, and when we're indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we live in the very presence of the Father and the Son.

Look at Isaiah 57, verse 15: "For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.'" I'm suggesting to you that that is actually speaking of the Holy Spirit. "High and lifted up."

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, high and lifted up. And yet they're all Yahweh. You've heard me say before, "Yahweh Father, Yahweh Son, Yahweh Holy Spirit"—the God of Israel, or Jehovah, as the word Yahweh's been twisted and mangled into some English translations. Yahweh Father, Yahweh Son, Yahweh Holy Spirit—high and lifted up. Exalted.

Back to Isaiah chapter 6: "¹In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple." Notice something. Isaiah doesn't actually describe God. He describes the train, or the hem of His robe. The train or the hem of His robe filled the temple. Once again, hold your finger in Isaiah 6, but this time turn to the book of Exodus, chapter 24. We see a similar thing in Exodus chapter 24. We're going to read verses 9 and 10.

Now this is the meal of covenant institution. Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel go up the mountain to have a meal in the very presence of God. Let's read, Exodus 24 verse 9. This is before the golden calf incident, if you want to sort of try and fix it somewhere in your mind. "⁹Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, ¹⁰and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness." And that's the description. That's it. They've seen the God of Israel, and all they can tell you is, He was walking on a sapphire pavement that was clear, like heaven, and it was faultless. You get the picture.

Back into Isaiah chapter 6, here's Isaiah, being taken from the shadow and the copy into the very throne room of the Lord of Hosts. There he sees heavenly worship unfolding before his very eyes, and all he can tell us is, the train or the hem of His robe filled the temple. He can't even talk about God. He can't even speak of His face, His body, His perfection. All he can speak of is the train or the hem of His robe, and it fills the temple.

Now there's a couple of thoughts that occur to me when I read this. First of all, if God's train, or the hem of His robe, is filling the temple, what does that tell you? It tells you that you can't walk in there. You can't just step in there. The ground is covered by something that you don't want to step on. Imagine being the clodhopper at a wedding who steps on the train of a wedding dress. Well, that would be nothing as compared to being the fool of a man who walks into the

very throne room of heaven and steps on the hem of the robe of God. It fills the very throne room. There's nowhere that a man can walk.

The next thing that I want to say is that in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, here's where we get the tie-in to the gospel of John in the reading that we took from John chapter 12. In the Septuagint, they don't say "the train of his robe filled the temple," they say, "his glory filled the temple." And that's why John says, "Isaiah saw his glory." Now John was speaking of Jesus. We'll very quickly turn there just to make sure we've got this clear in our mind. Turn to John chapter 12; keep your thumb in Isaiah 6 so we can flick back there in a moment. We'll start reading in John chapter 12, starting in the second half of verse 36.

³⁶ When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. ³⁷ Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, ³⁸ so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: 'Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?' ³⁹ Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, ⁴⁰ 'He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.' ⁴¹ Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him."

You see what John has done—he's taken this prophecy of Isaiah and applied it to Jesus. He's saying that the reason the people accept what Jesus is saying is because it was the very same situation, or it was the fulfillment of Isaiah's vision. Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up. Isaiah saw the glory of God, "Isaiah saw his glory"—and that's the quote from the Septuagint—"and spoke of him." The reason the people don't believe is the very same reason that the people weren't listening to Isaiah, the preacher—because the Lord had blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts. He closed their hearts.

And that's the situation that we've got here. We've actually got a theophany, a vision of God, which is actually a revelation of Christ—the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, Christ in His glory before He came to the earth and took upon Himself flesh. The glory filled the temple, or the train of His robe filled the temple.

Isaiah 6, verse 2: "Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew." Now there's another amazing thing. "Above him stood the seraphim." The seraphim could literally just mean "the fiery ones." Now we know a little bit later that there's at least two of them, because it says one called to another. So there's probably an even number. There could be two, four, six—we don't know how many, but they're worshipping.

But here's the thing, and this is what's amazing—these seraphim are angelic beings, created by God to live and dwell in the very presence of God, and they've never sinned. They are spiritual beings who are clean and perfect and responsible for no sin. They have done no wickedness. They're good angels. They're better than any man, any woman. They're good angels. They are without sin. And yet, in the very presence of God, what do they do? They cover their face, they cover their feet. In the very presence of God, sinless spiritual beings, whom you would think had nothing to be ashamed of, cover up. "I don't want to gaze upon God. I don't want to pry into

things that I'm not told to pry into." They don't cover their ears, because they're always ready to hear and receive the word of God. But they cover their faces. They cover their feet.

Now remember the hem of the robes filling the temple. So even the feet of a holy angel cannot come into contact with the glory of God—holy, perfect spiritual beings, created by God to live in His presence, worshiping Him. They're where they should be. They're doing what they should do. You know, fish are created to swim in water. They've got scales, they've got fins, they've got the ability to live under water. That's where they're created to be. And birds are created to fly through the air. They've got feathers, they've got wings, they've got the bone structure and the right muscle structure. These angels are created to live in the very presence of God. They're where they should be, they're doing what they should do, and even so, they cover up. Even so, they practice awestruck fear. They're fearful of the goodness and the holiness of God.

You know, we live in a society where, if you look at the census statistics, 70% or 60% of the people claim they believe in God. Look, I don't know what god they believe in, but I'm telling you, I'm sure less than 10% of the people you meet actually believe in this God, the God revealed in Scripture. They might say they believe in God. They've never met Him. They've never had their eyes opened. They've never feared Him. We meet Him in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus comes to us as a lowly, suffering man, and speaks to us of the forgiveness of sins.

But, my friends, anyone who's been a Christian for a while, anyone who's walked with the Lord for any number of years—what you knew when you were converted, what you knew of God when you were converted, and what you know as the years go by, what you learn from Scripture, what you learn by the experience of dwelling in the presence of God, what you learn by growing in faith and grace and fellowship with God's people—you realize you were just a little baby back then when you started. You knew nothing. You were just a child, no matter how old you were. And the funny thing is, as you grow and grow, the closer you draw to God, the more you realize that you're nothing. You're growing, and at the same time you're being convicted that you're less than anything. It's not something you can be proud of.

But the people who say they believe in God, I'm telling you, if they're not worshipers, they don't know this God, because this God demands, utterly and absolutely demands, surrender and worship from His creation. His creation was created to reveal His glory. His image-bearers were created to glorify Him. He utterly demands worship, and if they are not worshipers, if they are not fearers of God, they have not met Him. He does not know them. They do not know Him. The babyest, smallest Christian must be a worshiper.

I'm not saying there's going to be a whole lot of understanding, and I'm not saying that they won't get things wrong. I'm not saying any of those things. I remember my first weeks as a Christian—so little did I know, it's ridiculous. So little did I understand. But I remember the fellowship that I had with God, and the worship that came into my life—the worship of the one true living God. If they truly know God in Christ, they truly worship and they fear to offend God. They fear to offend God. And as the angels covered their face and their feet, true worshipers seek the covering of the righteousness of Christ. They seek the covering that they need to enter into the presence of God.

Verse 3: “And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’” Holy, holy, holy is the LORD; the whole earth is full of His glory! When you’re reading Hebrew, and you’re reading a translation that tries to give you something literally, repetition is used for emphasis. When something is said twice, that means more than when it’s said once; and when something is said three times, that means, Really pay attention.

So, for example, when God spoke to Moses, someone whom He loved and was calling into fellowship, He said, “Moses, Moses.” When Samuel was called, He said, “Samuel, Samuel.” In the book of Genesis, where you see the war between the kings on the plains of the Jordan valley near Sodom and Gomorrah, it says some of them were lost in pits, and more were lost in pits than in battle. If you don’t know it, in the Hebrew, it says, “pit-pits.” They weren’t just pits, they were pit-pits. There was something more dangerous about these pits than your typical pit. They were like bubbling-with-pitch-type pits. You know, you fall into a pit, and you’re in trouble. You fall into a *pit-pit*—look out! You’re going to die.

In another place, you get the phrase “gold gold.” When it speaks of the gold being carried away from the temple in Jerusalem, when Nebuchadnezzar took the people into captivity, it says he took away all the gold. And then it says he took away the gold-gold. What was the gold-gold? The gold-gold was the gold that was used for worship in the temple. So it was the special, sanctified holy gold. He took away the gold-gold.

Well, God is holy, holy, holy—three-fold emphasis. It’s like it’s been underlined, put in capital letters, and highlighted. Holy, holy, holy. That’s what we’re to remember about our God. He’s holy, holy, holy. Why did Christ die upon the cross, fulfilling the righteous requirements of God’s law? Because God is holy, holy, holy. Why is it that no man, woman, or child can work their way into a state of salvation and/or peace with God? Because God is holy, holy, holy, and we are not. We’re not.

My friends, when you meet the love of your life, you might be under the delusion that the love of your life is perfect. But, I’m telling you, praise God that they’re not, because if he or she were perfect, they would want nothing to do with you. If he or she were perfect, you would not be able to fellowship and relate with them.

You know, I like to tell the story—I get in trouble with Leesa every time I tell the story, but she’s not here today. I met this girl. She was an absolute knock-out. I’d never met a girl like her in my life—beautiful, friendly, nice, polite, well-spoken—all the things that I’d never met anywhere. And I remember, we went out to dinner and something happened while we were at dinner. This was our first date. And when it happened, I was actually happy. I was relieved.

You want to know what happened? She spilled her food down the front of her dress. Now, I wasn’t happy in any spiteful way. I was happy because I realized—Hang on. She’s not perfect. I wasn’t a Christian at that time. Leesa was. But—hang on. She’s not perfect. I can spill my food just as well as she can spill her food. This girl and I might have something in common. We might be able to relate. You see, if she was truly perfect, she would want nothing to do with a clod like me. And if I were truly perfect, I would’ve wanted nothing to do with a girl who spilled her food.

God is holy, holy, holy. Perfect. No wrong, no sin. He can't be accused, He can't be charged, He can't be stained. So good is God that, in a way, He is utterly separate from us. He's unapproachable. If you want to know the root meaning of the word "holy," it means separate, divided, cut off, apart from, divided away, wholly other, completely different. He's perfect. Holy, holy, holy, and we are creatures of the dust, worms and sinners and selfish fools.

But God sent His Son. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son who could live a perfect and holy life as a man—perfectly righteous in the sight of God, who cannot be called in any way a sinner, who did all things right, and who submitted to His Father upon the cross—submitted to the will of God saying, "Not my will, but yours be done." And then He died, fulfilling the righteous requirement of the law. But the law had nothing on Him. Therefore, He was able to overcome the penalty of the law, which is death. He, being as God was and as God is, holy, holy, holy—He becomes our righteousness.

It appears to me that Isaiah never actually went into the throne room. He was standing at the gateway. We'll see why in verse 4, but it appears to me that he was just standing at the gateway. He never actually went in. He couldn't. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts.

And here's the thing, my friends, Christians—Jesus died for your sins. And upon the cross, two things happened. Always remember *two* things happened. The transaction at the cross works two ways. Not only did your sins go upon the cross in Christ, but His righteousness came to you in Christ. Sin went to death, righteousness came to life. Sin when to Him, His righteousness came to us. The transaction upon the cross was two ways.

You see, it's not enough to dwell in the presence of God and that the scales get put back to even. If you want to imagine justice or if you want to imagine God's judgment in terms of a set of scales, your sins put you down here and the sins weigh down the scales, and then Christ steps on the scales and brings it back to even.

But my friends, that's not enough. It's not enough to start from even. It's not good news if I tell you, "You've been in church here today and it's good, and you've been washed clean, and now you walk out and you're on an even balance, and you've got to be very careful how you walk now for the rest of the week. Keep it on even." No. That's not enough. You've got to be righteous. You've got to be positively righteous, positively holy, to live in the presence of God.

Jesus didn't just set the scales to right. He didn't just put it at balance. He threw His righteousness upon you so that you can actually live and dwell in the presence of God. You can actually live and dwell in the presence of God. You can pray, knowing that your prayers are coming before God, enthroned in heaven. This one who is holy, holy, holy—whose robe fills the throne room, whose glory fills the throne room, whom we can't approach—in Christ, we can approach Him. In Christ, we can come into His presence. The whole earth is full of His glory.

Let's keep reading. Verse 4: "And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke." So the picture here is, you've got the throne room—the heavenly temple, the real thing, the true thing—and there is seated Yahweh, Lord of

hosts, the Lord of all creation. And He's being worshiped by angels who are calling one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts," and once again, you've got something created to be in a certain place. "The foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke." Even inanimate things.

Now we're not told what these thresholds were made of—stone, wood, marble, gold. You might be able to draw some pictures from the book of Revelation, who knows. They were created, or made by God to be there. That's where they were meant to be. They are in that place. They were designed for a purpose. Just like this building was designed for a purpose, they were there in their place. And such is the holiness of God that even an inanimate structure trembles at the proclamation of His holiness. The threshold of the gate trembles, or quakes, at the proclamation of the holiness of God.

What did Jesus say when He was told to silence the crowds? "If I silence the crowds, even the stones will cry out." The inanimate world, the non-conscious world, things that have no conscious being—the inanimate world trembles at the proclamation of the holiness of God. Do you want to know how sinful humanity is? We're so sinful that we don't tremble when God's name is proclaimed. God's presence is in all places—"Do I not fill the heavens and the earth," God says in Jeremiah. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?"

We live in the presence of God and though in heaven the foundations of the thresholds shake when the holiness and the goodness of God is proclaimed, we're so sinful that we don't even bow our heads, let alone tremble. That's how sinful humanity is. That's how lost we are. That's how apart or separate from God we are. That's what sin has done to us.

Honestly, honestly, God would be doing no wrong if at any time He simply culled the human race off. "It's time! Sick of you. Finished. No more." He would be doing no wrong. If God had canceled the human race when Adam and Eve sinned, He would've done no wrong. There was no reason nor need, there was no requirement of justice that God be gracious and forgiving. He's gracious and forgiving because not only is he holy, holy, holy—He loves. He loves. He's good. He's merciful. He's compassionate.

Scripture tells us again and again and again that He has steadfast love, covenant-keeping love, love that keeps its promises. He actually binds Himself to us by His word. He binds Himself to us by His word and by His promise. Nothing binds God. He is a truly free and independent being. Nothing binds Him, nothing can thwart Him, nothing can hold Him down. He can do as He pleases and do no wrong, because He is so purely and perfectly good. And yet, He makes promises to us in His word, that we may cling to His promises, and He binds Himself to His promises and keeps His promises, that we may live in His presence.

In the presence of God, inanimate things tremble in worship, and we sinners, fools that we are, know no better. Hardened hearts, darkened eyes, deafened ears—that's humanity. That's where we would be, apart from the grace of God. This one who is holy, holy, holy, loves us. And in His holiness, He's declared that He will save for Himself a people, and He has declared that His image-bearers will glorify Him. We, the people of God, are going to join these seraphim, these creatures, created to live in His presence. We're going to join them in eternal worship. We're

going to yell it out with them—“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!” “The house was filled with smoke.”

You see, at that moment, crying eyes are pushed away. Isaiah’s been given enough. He’s been shown enough. He’s seen worship. He’s seen worship in the true heavenly throne room. He’s seen the glory of Yahweh, the Lord of hosts—the hem of His robe, the glory of Yahweh. He’s seen the glory. He’s seen the heavenly creatures that worship God eternally. He’s seen enough. Any more might destroy him. What did Paul say? Paul had to be given a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble, lest he become conceited because of the revelation that was given to him. And so, smoke fills the temple, smoke fills the house of God, and Isaiah sees no more of the heavenly worship. He’s seen enough. He’s seen all that he needs to see. God is gracious. God does not destroy a sinner like Isaiah.

And God has revealed Himself to us in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The God who is at the Father’s side, the only God who is at the Father’s side—He has made Him known. What comes out of the smoke? I’m using a little bit of imagination now. What comes out of the smoke? I mean, the temple, the room fills with smoke. What comes out from the smoke? The Saviour. The Saviour. Not Yahweh, Lord of hosts, holy, holy, holy, in whose presence we cannot live, and whose very holiness demands our destruction, who’s now hidden behind this smoke—but the one who comes is Yahweh the Son, incarnate. He walks among us. He comes to earth. He lives among humanity. He eats with them, sleeps with them, walks with them, talks to them, lives with them—the Lord Jesus Christ, the suffering servant, the sprout.

From here on in, Isaiah gets more and more particular about the coming Saviour. You know, all the signs—He tells us that the Saviour will be born of a virgin. He tells us that the Saviour will be called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” He tells us that He’ll be filled with the Holy Spirit, and will always do what is right. He tells us that He will be the servant in whom God is well-pleased. He tells us that this servant in whom God is well-pleased will die for the sins of many, making them to be accounted righteous. He tells us that this servant, this Saviour, will come back to earth, bringing in His train a new creation, where righteousness dwells.

Isaiah’s still a preacher of woe in many ways. We’ll find as we keep moving forward, the Lord willing, that Isaiah still speaks much of the judgments of God. But from the smoke, coming out of the smoke, is the light of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it gets brighter and brighter and brighter and brighter, until it becomes this magnificent vision of our Saviour, our King, the one whom we must worship. And in worshiping Him, we are worshiping this one—“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.” We’ll close in prayer.

Father in heaven, our Lord and our God, we praise you. We know that our words are not enough. We know that we are sinners. We know that in our humanity, we do not love you as we should. And yet, Father, your word has called us to worship. Your Spirit has enabled us and empowered us in worship. May we worship you in spirit and truth. May we love you as we should. Father, may we glorify you with every part of our being—body, soul, spirit. We ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.