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Isaiah 6:1-8¹
Isaiah sees the King,
the LORD Almighty
Trinity Sunday
Supplementary Lectionary Series “B,”
Old Testament

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Grace WELS Durand MI
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MLC 🎵 Emanuel Lansing &
St. Paul Saginaw
🎵 MLS Spring Concert
MLS Graduation

^{6:1} In the year that King Uzziah [aka Azaiah] died, I saw the Lord seated on a Throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. ² Above him Seraphim were standing, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

“Holy! Holy! Holy! Is the LORD Almighty [of Hosts, Armies]!
The whole earth is full of his Glory!”

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the Temple was filled with smoke.

⁵ “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty [of Hosts, Armies]!”

⁶ Then one of the Seraphim flew to me with a live (burning) coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the Altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt (iniquity) is taken away [turned away] and your sin atoned for [covered over].”

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”
And I said, “Here am I! Send me!”

You Have Seen The Lord – The King!

I. He Is The LORD Of Hosts

II. He Is Served By Angels

III. He Cleanses From Sin

IV. He Sends Out Believers

In the Name of The Only True God – The Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Dear Fellow-Redeemed,

For centuries, the Christian Church has celebrated the Feast of the Holy Trinity on the Sunday following the observance of Pentecost – Pentecost, the day on which the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus’ believers in a special way, giving them the ability to proclaim “the

¹ *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984. All Scripture references are taken from this translation unless noted otherwise.

wonders of God” in languages which they had not previously studied (cf. Acts 2:1-12). On Trinity Sunday, believers in Jesus confess that there is Only One True God, for God is One (cf. Deuteronomy 6:1; Matthew 19:16; Mark 12:29; 1 Timothy 2:5). Yet this One God has revealed himself in Three Separate and Distinct Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit (cf. Matthew 28:19; 3:16,17; 17:1-13; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21&22; Genesis 1:26; Isaiah 6:8; etc.) This is the truth we confessed earlier in the Athanasian Creed.² The fact that God is One in Three Persons, is a mystery beyond understanding. Yet this fact is clearly revealed in the Bible, and therefore, we submit our human reason to the Word of God, even as St. Paul says, “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). Isaiah is given a glimpse of the glory of this Holy God.

Isaiah is given a glimpse of the Holy God. Isaiah hears the praise of the Seraphim – angels of high rank in heaven:

***“Holy! Holy! Holy! Is the LORD Almighty [of Hosts, Armies]!
The whole earth is full of his Glory!”*** (6:3b).

Isaiah’s reaction has to be that of every sinner, since Adam and Eve tried to hide from God in the Garden of Eden (cf. Genesis 3:8-12). Isaiah mourns, “Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty [of Hosts, Armies]!” (6:5). This is reality also for you and me for ... ***You Have Seen The Lord – The King! You Have Seen The Lord – The King ... I. He Is The LORD Of Hosts; II. He Is Served By Angels; III, He Cleanses From Sin; and, IV. He Sends Out Believers.***

***You Have Seen The Lord – The King!
I. He Is The LORD Of Hosts***

Isaiah writes,

***6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a Throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. ² Above him Seraphim were standing, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:
“Holy! Holy! Holy! Is the LORD Almighty [of Hosts, Armies]!
The whole earth is full of his Glory!”***

² *The Athanasian Creed, Christian Worship – A Lutheran Hymnal, Authorized by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993), pp. 132 & 133.

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the Temple was filled with smoke (6:1-4).

The time is clearly set. It was 740 B.C., the year that King Uzziah (aka Azariah) died. Isaiah's ministry had a long span. He prophesied during the reigns of Kings Uzziah (aka Azariah), Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah and Manasseh – Manasseh under whom, according to tradition, Isaiah was martyred by being sawed in half (cf. Hebrews 11:37). It is at the beginning of his ministry, that Isaiah sees the “Lord, seated on a Throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the Temple” (6:1b).

Note first of all, how Isaiah refers to God in this introduction. He calls him Lord – Hebrew, Adoni [yn : doa }]. This would be “Lord” spelled with only the first letter capitalized.

This God, the Lord, Adoni [yn : doa }], is the master, the owner – even the Redeemer – who owns those he not only created but also redeemed by paying the ransom price. But then the Seraphim, the angels of high rank, identify further who this Lord, Adoni [yn : doa }] is.

In their song of praise they proclaim: **“Holy! Holy! Holy! Is the LORD Almighty!”** These Seraphim praise the LORD – spelled in all capital letters, capital: L O R D! This is Yahweh, Jehovah [hw : hyō]. He is the God of free and faithful grace who loves sinners instead of punishing and damning them. This LORD God is further identified as “Almighty”; or, LORD OF HOSTS.

The LORD God is Almighty; he is the LORD of Hosts. The Hebrew term is Sabaoth [t / ab ; x]]. (This is a term with which the older members of our congregation may be familiar, when we were still using The Lutheran Hymnal. On Communion Sundays, we would sing, “Holy! Holy! Holy! LORD God of Sabaoth; heav’n and earth are full of Thy glory!”³ The word “Sabaoth” [t / ab ; x]] is taken directly from the Hebrew and refers to “hosts” or “armies.” The LORD God is the God of armies and hosts of heaven; he also controls the armies of the earth. The New International Version translation has chosen to translate “Sabaoth” [t / ab ; x]] as “LORD Almighty,” which also conveys the general idea of supremacy.)

³ *The Lutheran Hymnal – Authorized by the Synods Constituting The Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America* (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), p. 26.

This LORD Almighty – LORD of Hosts, of Armies – is over all things. He rules, guides, controls and directs all things. He limits the armies and the peoples of this earth, permitting them to go so far and no further. All things are under his control and direction.

APPROPRIATION

It is this LORD Almighty – LORD of Hosts, of Armies - **t/ab;x] hw:hyÒ**, Yahweh Sabaoth – whom we need in our day and age more than ever. Our own communities are ridden with problems and too often subject to crime and violence. States within our United States of America, permit, condone and encourage homosexuality, same-sex marriage, living together without being married; they too often condone abortion – killing of babies still in the womb; euthanasia – killing the elderly, the terminally ill, those no longer useful to society. Our nation is rife with leaders and politicians who seem to lie and deceive; and, when they are exposed, they claim they did nothing wrong or that it is someone else’s fault. Nations in the Middle East line up against each other. Muslim countries along with nations like China and North Korea persecute those who confess themselves to be Christians. In addition to all of this, natural disasters like the tornados, which struck our Midwest this last week, ravage homes and destroy life. Where is this LORD Almighty? Where is this LORD of Hosts – this **t/ab;x] hw:hyÒ**, this Yahweh Sabaoth – who is supposed to be controlling all things for the benefit of believers in Jesus? (cf. Romans 8:28).

The LORD of Hosts – **t/ab;x] hw:hyÒ** – is still with us. In his Word, he has promised, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5b; cf. Deuteronomy 31:6). He has promised through his Son, “Surely I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20a). He counsels us in his Word, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth” (Psalm 46:10). Trust that this LORD of Hosts – **t/ab;x] hw:hyÒ**, Yahweh Sabaoth – is with us and will guard, protect and keep us as he has promised.

Through the pages of the Scriptures, we continue to join Isaiah in his vision. He tells us,

You Have Seen The Lord – The King! II. He Is Served By Angels

Once again we listen to the first four verses of our text:

6:1 In the year that King Uzziah [aka Azariah] died, I saw the Lord seated on a Throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. 2 Above him Seraphim were standing, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they

covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

***“Holy! Holy! Holy! Is the LORD Almighty [of Hosts, Armies]!
The whole earth is full of his Glory!”***

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the Temple was filled with smoke (6:1-4).

These angels are referred to as “Seraphim.” They are angels of high rank in heaven. We also know of other categories of angels besides Seraphim. There are Cherubim and Archangels. Some sources list others, but Seraphim, Cherubim and Archangels are the only ones listed in the Bible. The name Seraphim is related to the word fire or flame. Thus Psalm 104:4, repeated in Hebrews 1:7, states that God “makes winds his angels – flames of fire his servants.” In our text, these Seraphim are serving the LORD God Almighty – The LORD of Hosts – **t / ab ; x] hw : hyÒ**, Yahweh Sabaoth.

The Seraphim are serving the LORD God Almighty by their worship and praise. They call to each other,

***“Holy! Holy! Holy! Is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his Glory!” (6:3b).***

They are singing that the LORD Almighty – The LORD of Hosts – **t / ab ; x] hw : hyÒ**, Yahweh Sabaoth – is “Holy! Holy! Holy!” Such repeated words of praise are not proclaimed by chance but give a hint to the multiplicity of the God-head – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Moreover, their words and song of praise are so powerful that “at the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the Temple was filled with smoke” (6:4). Their praise and adoration is more powerful than last week’s deadly tornados that ripped through Texas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Iowa. Those deadly and devastating tornadoes are natural disasters. The songs and praises of the Seraphim are supernatural. There is quaking, shaking and shivering that result.

The Seraphim serve the LORD God Almighty by their worship and praise. They also serve him in another way.

The basic meaning of the Old Testament word “angel” – Hebrew mal’ak [**Ja ; l] m '] – is messenger. We see in our text that one of these Seraphim is for Isaiah a messenger of comfort, forgiveness and consolation.**

APPROPRIATION

The angels, Seraphim included, are messengers of hope, consolation and comfort for you. The writer to the Hebrews states, “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those

who will inherit salvation?” (Hebrews 1:14). The writer of Psalm 91 states that the LORD God Most High ...

**¹¹ ... will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;
¹² they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone
(Psalm 91:11,12).**

Even though the devil misused these verses when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness (cf. Matthew 4:6; Luke 4:10), the truth of these psalm verses is a comfort for you and for me and for every Christian. We may not see them, but God’s angels are there for you and for me.

Angels were sent by God to rescue righteous Lot and his family from the destruction coming upon Sodom and Gomorrah (cf. Genesis 19:1-29; 2 Peter 2:6-8). God sends his holy angels to protect you and me. We also see angels in their capacity as messengers.

It was the Angel Gabriel who brought to Zechariah the good news that he and his wife Elizabeth would be parents even in their old age (cf. Luke 1:5-25, 57-66). Of them was born John the Baptizer. It was the Angel Gabriel who brought the good news to the virgin Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus – the Messiah, Immanuel (cf. Luke 1:26-38). It was an angel of the LORD who proclaimed to Joseph in a dream not to be reluctant to marry Mary, “for what [was] conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:20b). Angels brought to shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem the good news that the Savior had been born (cf. Luke 2:1-20). It was an angel of the LORD who warned Joseph again in a dream to take Mary and the baby Jesus and flee to Egypt because King Herod wanted to kill the baby (cf. Matthew 2:13-15). It was also an angel who strengthened Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane when his soul was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death (cf. Luke 22:43; Matthew 26:38; Mark 14:34). Through the Old and New Testaments, angels are shown to be messengers, comforters and rescuers of God’s people. The same is true for you today.

Dr. Martin Luther caught the truth of this comfort and protection, which angels give, when, in both his morning prayer and evening prayer, he said, “Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me.”⁴ God sends his angels to guard and protect you and me. Finally, angels escort us to our home in heaven when we die.

In Jesus’ parable of the Rich Man and the Beggar Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), we are told that “when the beggar died ... angels carried him to Abraham’s side” – in heaven (Luke 16:22a). What wonderful comfort you and I have as we look forward, through faith in Jesus, to when the angels carry us into heaven at the end of our time on this earth!

⁴ *Christian Worship – A Lutheran Hymnal, Authorized by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993), pp. 152, 153.

When you and I die, our souls will be carried into heaven to Jesus, and, on the Last Day, Jesus will raise up our bodies glorified, so that in both soul and body, we will see Jesus face to face.

In heaven, we will see Jesus face to face. That means that our sins have to be taken away – for “the eye of sinful man [God’s] glory may not see” (CW, Hymn 195:3) Therefore ...

**You Have Seen The Lord – The King!
III. He Cleanses From Sin**

Having seen the King, the Lord, the LORD God Almighty – The LORD of Hosts – the LORD of Sabaoth – **t / ab ; x] hw : hy Ò** – Isaiah is overwhelmed with terror, despair, and hopelessness. Isaiah cries out, “Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty [The LORD of Hosts, Armies]!” (6:5). Isaiah confesses his sinfulness. Isaiah confesses the sinfulness of the people among whom he lives. Isaiah’s eyes have seen the LORD, who told Moses, “No one may see me and live!” (Exodus 33:20b). Isaiah could only expect death, punishment, and terror everlasting. But God sends one of his Seraphim to Isaiah. Isaiah describes this:

⁶ Then one of the Seraphim flew to me with a live (burning) coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the Altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt (iniquity) is taken away [turned away] and your sin atoned for [covered over]” (6:6,7).

The LORD of Hosts – of Sabaoth – **t / ab ; x]** – sent one of the Seraphim to the altar – probably the altar of incense that was located in the Holy Place of the Temple. The incense on that altar represented the prayers of the saints (cf. Revelation 5:8; 8:3&4), which ascended up to heaven. Indeed, Isaiah had offered up such a prayer when in terror he had confessed, “Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips ... and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty [The LORD of Hosts, Armies]!” (6:5). And so the Seraph brings the LORD’s forgiveness to Isaiah.

The Seraph proclaims the LORD’s forgiving message to Isaiah. “Your guilt, your punishment, is turned aside” – turned away from you. “Your sin is covered over.” How could the Seraph proclaim this?

Did the Seraph, whom God the LORD sent, take away Isaiah’s guilt, punishment and sin? No. But the Seraph is a messenger, who carries to Isaiah the good news of forgiveness. In the future, centuries after Isaiah had died, the Messiah would come – the One to whom the LORD referred as Immanuel – God with us (7:14; Matthew 1:23). It would be Jesus,

who would turn aside from mankind to himself the punishment that mankind deserved for sin. It would be Jesus who covered over mankind's sin with his holy precious blood, poured out on the cross for sinners. This truth is emphasized by John in his Gospel, when he says that "Isaiah ... saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him" (John 12:39). It was to this very reference in Isaiah Chapter Six that John was referring.

Isaiah saw Jesus' glory. Isaiah saw the glory of God's One and Only Son, who would take away the sin of the world. This is the One who took away Isaiah's sin. This is the One who has taken away our sin – yours and mine.

APPROPRIATION

This Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – has taken away our sin. This Triune God has cleansed us from our sin. He has turned away the punishment we deserve, and placed that punishment on his Son, Jesus. He has covered over our sinfulness with the blood of Jesus, God's Son, that cleanses us from all sin (cf. 1 John 1:7b). But, do we realize our great need for this forgiveness? Do we cry out with Isaiah, "Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a person of unclean lips ... and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty"? (cf. 6:5).

Too often, you and I are lulled into thinking that our human condition is not that bad. "Yes, I am a sinner, but I am not that bad, am I?" "I know I am a sinner, and I know that I ought to be punished, but let's put that thought behind us; let's not think about it." It is only when, through the pages of Scripture, that we come to face with a holy and righteous God who tolerates absolutely no sin or imperfection – it is only then that we begin to realize just how detestable to God we sinners really are! We know that by nature we are sinful and wicked. What does God say about his reaction to that? God reveals his hatred for sin and for sinners, when King David says in Psalm Five:

**⁴ You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil;
with you the wicked cannot dwell.**

**⁵ The arrogant cannot stand in your presence;
you hate all who do wrong.**

**⁶ You destroy those who tell lies;
bloodthirsty and deceitful men
the LORD abhors (Psalm 5:4-6).**

By nature, you and I are wicked and arrogant. By nature, you and I do wrong. So by his perfect and holy nature, God hates us – detests us, abhors us, does not want anything to do with us. This is true until our sin is covered over and our punishment turned away. This is exactly what Jesus does – to whom Isaiah pointed.

Isaiah pointed to the virgin-born Immanuel – God with us (7:14). The New Testament points out that Jesus is Immanuel – God with us (Matthew 1:23). Isaiah proclaimed that this Immanuel would be the Suffering Servant upon whom God would lay the sins of the world (52:13 – 53:12). Isaiah said that this Immanuel, this Suffering Servant, would bring salvation to the nations – to the entire world (49:5&6). This is the Immanuel – Jesus the

Christ – who has turned God’s wrath away from us, and who has covered over our sins with his blood, poured out on the cross.

It is Jesus who has cleansed us from our sins and prepared us to work in his Kingdom. So with Isaiah, we too declare,

***You Have Seen The Lord – The King!
IV. He Sends Out Believers***

Having been cleansed of his sin, Isaiah is then permitted to overhear the council of the LORD. Isaiah writes,

***⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send?
And who will go for us?”
And I said, “Here am I! Send me!” (6:8).***

An Isaiah, who was still covered in sinfulness, would never have been included in overhearing the council of the Lord. An Isaiah, who was still in his sinfulness, would never be able or bold to say, “Lord, here am I! Send me!” But, a forgiven Isaiah could indeed say this. A forgiven Isaiah was eager to serve his Lord. So also, forgiven Christians, believers in Jesus, can and are eager to say: “Lord, here am I! Send me!”

APPLICATION

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians, “It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (Philippians 2:13). Do we have that will and desire and eagerness to act? Do we have that will and desire to testify and tell others about Jesus? If we do not, then perhaps we do not rightly understand and comprehend the depths from which God has rescued us through his Son Jesus. Without Jesus, we have no hope; without Jesus, we have only despair and damnation. But, in Jesus and in Jesus alone, we have forgiveness, salvation and the will, the desire, the eagerness, to tell others about him. From where and from whom does that eagerness and desire to testify come?

Once again, St. Paul says,

¹⁴ For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that One died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again (2 Corinthians 5:14,15).

One of the ways in which we believers in Jesus live for Jesus, is by telling others about Jesus. Jesus said, "You will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8b). Moreover, God gives us a promise as we speak his Word to others. He says, again through the Prophet Isaiah,

***¹⁰ As the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return to it
without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower
and bread for the eater,
¹¹ so is my Word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it
(55:10,11).***

You and I have the comfort and confidence of knowing that, as we proclaim God's Word to others, God will see to it that his Word achieves its purpose.

CONCLUSION

Today, we are celebrating Trinity Sunday. We celebrate our joy in knowing, through the Scriptures, that God created us, preserves and protects us; that God redeemed us through Jesus Christ, the God-man; that God calls and keeps us in faith through the work of the Holy Spirit in his Word. Through that Word of God, our sins are forgiven and eternal life in heaven is ours.

God now sends us out with this same saving Gospel – the Good News of Jesus. He gives our timid hearts courage, and he blesses our faltering speech, so that others may hear of their salvation in Jesus, be brought to faith, and be saved. Amen.