

High Above the Seraphim

6/9/2024

The title of today's lesson comes from a song. A song which describes several scenes found in scripture. In recent weeks we have been looking at the idea of holiness. In Isaiah 6 and Revelation 4 we saw two scenes which speak of heavenly creatures declaring God to be Holy Holy Holy. And in 1st Peter we looked at one of the several places in scripture where the people of God are called to be holy because God is Holy.

One of the scenes referred to in this song 'High above the Seraphim' is that scene in Isaiah 6 where in Isaiah's vision a seraphim of seraph flew to Isaiah with a live coal in his hand to touch Isaiah's lips.

The Hebrew word for seraph comes from another Hebrew word meaning burning like the poison of a serpent or fiery serpent.

The creatures described for us in Isaiah chapter six are unlike any we see here on earth. They are described there as - *"each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying."*

One description I read in a commentary says this of them - 'Each set of the seraphim's wings serves a different purpose; one set covers the face, denoting reverence and awe and acts as protection from the radiance of God's glory—another set of wings is used for flying, to aid in their swift servitude—and the third set is used to cover the seraphim's feet so that they can humbly conceal their unworthiness, while in God's holy presence.'

This morning I would like for us to spend a little time reading and trying to visualize some of the scenes referred to in this song - High Above The Seraphim. But first here are it's lyrics -

High above the seraphim Sounds an everlasting hymn;
Voices echo thro' the hall And shake the temple wall.
Living creatures bless the King, Four and twenty elders sing,
"Worthy, He who overcame;" "The Word of God" His name.
Praise the Seed of Abraham! All dominion to the Lamb!
Sing of Him, in glory slain, "Lord God Almighty reigns!"
Shout the God-breathed prophecy; "He who was will ever be!"
"Kings of earth have passed away!" The Son is Lord this day!
Night to night I come to Him, Kneel before His diadem;
While a thousand thousand sing, I fall before the King.
Soon will He be changing me, Clothed in immortality,
Swallowed up in victory, And evermore to be.

Let's break it down scene by scene

High above the seraphim
Sounds an everlasting hymn;
Voices echo through the hall
And shake the temple wall.

Isaiah 6:1-4

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another:

*“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.” At the sound of their voices the doorposts and
thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.”*

*Living creatures bless the King,
Four and twenty elders sing,
“Worthy, He who overcame;”
“The Word of God” His name.*

Revelation 4:1-11

“After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

*““Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,’
who was, and is, and is to come.”*

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

*“You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being.”*

Revelation 5:1-14

“Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.” Then I saw a

Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. And they sang a new song, saying:

*"You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased for God
persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.
You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth."*

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying:

*"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!"*

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

*"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!"*

The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Praise the Seed of Abraham!

All dominion to the Lamb!

Sing of Him, in glory slain,

"Lord God Almighty reigns!"

Shout the God-breathed prophecy;

"He who was will ever be!"

"Kings of earth have passed away!"

The Son is Lord this day!

Galatians 3:16 Jesus is of the seed of Abraham:

Revelation 5:1-7 As seen above says He was also the Lamb who could open the seals:

Revelation 11:15-18

"The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:

*“The kingdom of the world has become
the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah,
and he will reign for ever and ever.”*

And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying:

*“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
the One who is and who was,
because you have taken your great power
and have begun to reign.*

*The nations were angry,
and your wrath has come.*

*The time has come for judging the dead,
and for rewarding your servants the prophets
and your people who revere your name,
both great and small—*

and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

Revelation 19:6-16 He is qualified to be the Lord God Omnipotent who reigns as King of kings.

“Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

“Hallelujah!

For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

*Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!*

*For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready.*

*Fine linen, bright and clean,
was given her to wear.”*

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.)

Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus.”

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords.”

Night to night I come to Him,
Kneel before His diadem;
While a thousand thousand sing,
I fall before the King.

Hebrews 4:14-16 Tells us that even in this life, there is a sense in which we can come and bow before the King:

“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

While a thousand thousand sing.

Revelation 5:11

“Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.”

Revelation 7:9-12

“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

*“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.”*

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

*“Amen!
Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!”*

Daniel 7:9-10 also speaks of a scene like this.

*“As I looked,
“thrones were set in place,
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.
His clothing was as white as snow;
the hair of his head was white like wool.*

*His throne was flaming with fire,
and its wheels were all ablaze.
A river of fire was flowing,
coming out from before him.
Thousands upon thousands attended him;
ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.
The court was seated,
and the books were opened.”*

*Soon will He be changing me,
Clothed in immortality,
Swallowed up in victory,
And evermore to be.*

1st Corinthians 15:50-54

“I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

Isaiah 25:6-8

*“On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare
a feast of rich food for all peoples,
a banquet of aged wine—
the best of meats and the finest of wines.
On this mountain he will destroy
the shroud that enfolds all peoples,
the sheet that covers all nations;
he will swallow up death forever.
The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears
from all faces;
he will remove his people’s disgrace
from all the earth.
The Lord has spoken.*

The Hebrew writer in his opening chapter speaks of Jesus being superior to the angels. And in Luke 9:35 we read - “A voice came from the cloud, saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.”

The Lord has spoken, let us listen and respond.