

Guardian of the Galaxy

Isaiah 6: 1-8

1 It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the Temple. 2 Attending Him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. 3 They were calling out to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Heaven's armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!"

4 Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations and the entire building was filled with smoke. 5 Then I said, "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the Lord of Heaven's Armies."

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. 7 He touched my lips with it and said, "See, this coal has touched your lips. Now your guilt is removed, and your sins are forgiven."

8 Then I heard the Lord asking "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?" I said, "Here I am. Send me."

It's a popular movie franchise, and on Trinity Sunday and Father's Day, it is a great way to talk about the true Guardian of the galaxy. *Guardians of the Galaxy* is a movie franchise that first hit the screen in 2014. *Vol. 2* appeared in 2017 (May 5), and *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3* came out in 2023. Volume 4 is scheduled for this year. In these films, a team with quasi, semi-impressive superpowers comes together to be guardians of the galaxy. [NOTE 1]

In *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*, the guardians travel throughout the cosmos as they help team leader Quill learn more about his mysterious parentage. The movie grossed more than \$863 million worldwide, making it the sixth highest-grossing film of 2017, while also out-grossing its predecessor which had made more than \$773 million.

But now, let's think about the *real* Guardian of the galaxy. This Protector is the ruler of everything, the omni-potentate of innumerable universes filled with galaxies we cannot see, and is more powerful, fearsome and wise than we can imagine. And, based on today's text, this Guardian is holy -- more holy than we can imagine -- and just at the same time.

Moreover, this Guardian is triune and thus exists in three forms, each being peculiar and unique and yet each possessing the powers of the other. In a word, this Guardian transcends everything we know or think we know about guardians. A trinity of powers; a unity of personality.

This is the triune deity who stunned Isaiah in our text. The prophet writes, "I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their

faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew."

Go home and read this! Seriously, I think it would make a great video game. All the elements are there: A powerful Being whose glory covers "the whole earth," cool clothes, celestial beings that fly around with six wings, lofty thrones, powerful earthquakes, lots of smoke and a cool name for the all-powerful Being -- "The King, the Lord of Hosts." [NOTE 2]

God is Guardian of the galaxy. Isaiah records the words of the Guardian who says, "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?" (40:12). Not only is God the Guardian, but God created everything that is now guarded.

Moreover, Isaiah says of the Guardian, "All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him?" (40:17-18).

He lays it on even thicker: "Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing" (40:21-23). A quick reading of Psalm 91:5-13 confirms that God is not only the Guardian of the universe, but our Guardian and Protector as well. (Read it) "Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies in the day. Do not dread the disease that stalks in the darkness nor the disaster that strikes at midday. Though a thousand fall at your side, though ten thousand are dying around you, these evils will not touch you ...If you make the Lord your refuge, If you make the Most High your shelter, no evil will conquer you, not plague will come near your home. For He will order His angels to protect you wherever you go. They will hold you up with their hands so you won't hurt your foot on a stone. You will trample upon lions and cobras; ...I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble."

This is Trinity Sunday and Father's Day. Martin Luther is quoted by some as saying, To deny the Trinity endangers your salvation; to try to comprehend the Trinity endangers your sanity. So I decided not to endanger my sanity this morning and focus on the attributes of God rather than try to explain the Trinity. But the analogies of ice, water and steam and root, trunk, and branches are helpful.

So let's review some attributes of the Guardian of the galaxy. *How has the church classically understood the nature of God and what scriptural texts have been used in support of these attributes?*

The list of God's attributes includes at least the following (in alphabetical order): eternality, goodness, grace, holiness, immanence, immutability (which is a big word that means God doesn't change), justice, love, mercy, omnipotence (meaning all powerful), omnipresence (meaning always and everywhere present), omniscience (which means all

knowing), righteousness, self-existence, sovereignty and transcendence. Obviously, these attributes cannot be discussed in one sermon without people getting MEGO, that stands for (My Eyes Glaze Over). So we are just going to go over a few of them today!

Holiness is one attribute of God that Isaiah 6 emphasizes. Anselm (1033-1109) is credited with developing what we call the ontological argument for the existence of God. Ontological is a big word meaning metaphysics or dealing with the nature of being. Of course, his argument does not *prove* the existence of God. No such argument exists. But it is a rational argument, as are those of Aquinas and other theologians.

One point Anselm makes is that if we can think of a being more powerful and awesome than God, then that conception or being, is actually God, not the one we had before. In other words, God is the greatest God, the greatest Guardian that the human mind can conceive.

So such a Guardian must be all-powerful and all-knowing and must have the superpower of being able to be everywhere at once! This is God -- the Super Guardian of the universe who is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. And, you have to admit, a God with these powers is an amazing God! **[NOTE 3]**

The problem with studying the attributes of God is that it leads to disturbing questions. For example, if God is all-powerful, then why doesn't our all-powerful Guardian of the galaxy use this superpower to do the mighty things we think need to be done on behalf of the welfare of the human race and the planet Earth?

No satisfactory answer to that question exists. We don't know why God uses and does not use these powers. If we believe, however, that God is infinitely wise beyond human imagining, that is, possessing an intelligence that bends galaxies to his will and brings things into being with a mere thought, it's kind of weird that we would question such an intelligence. Well, when you say it like that? We don't actually question God out loud very often but we think it and we act like we question God, doubt His wisdom, and act like we think God doesn't know what He is doing.

It's certainly okay that we doubt and wonder, in fact, there are times when God finds it amusing. On the other hand, *God seems to get testy if we push back too much*. Listen to the Guardian thundering at Job, for example: "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind: 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements -- surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?' (Job 38:1-7). And God goes on and on and doesn't stop until the end of Job 41. It's a pretty long rant.

Let me say this clearly: "there is nothing wrong with questioning God and thinking about the why's of life!" There is nothing wrong with doubting. But there is something wrong with losing your faith and trust in God! Another attribute of God, is that He is GOOD. **[NOTE 4]**

Goodness is one of these attributes. God is not only good in essential nature, but is

the *source* of goodness as well. Consider these verses. In Psalm 34:8 we read, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." The psalmist also declares, "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good" (107:1). See also Psalm 25:8; 31:19; 149:9. Jesus reminded the rich, young ruler that "there is only one who is good (meaning God). If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:16-17).

God is so good that just by understanding the goodness of God, we should forswear the bad stuff we do. This is the apostle Paul's point in Romans: "Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4, NKJV).

Why is the goodness of God an important attribute? You wouldn't want God to be an evil tyrant, would you?

Yet, there are so many who believe that God is exactly that. It is difficult for me to understand that some people think of God as a tyrant, non-loving, or not caring. Anselm would argue that such a God is inconceivable, because a better God can be conceived. If your God is evil, my God does you one better. My God is good. Everything about my Guardian is good and pleasant. An evil god is by definition or according to reason an inferior god to a Super God who is all goodness. **[NOTE 5]**

God can hardly be unfair, even though we may be inclined sometimes to think that God is. But an unfair God lacks perfection. A perfect God is one who is just and fair. And so God is. Life isn't fair ... but God is!

God is not only justice, but God is the judge! Listen to Abraham pleading with God to save the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, "Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" (Genesis 18:25). Notice that God is called the Judge of the earth. God is also described as a judge in Judges, "Let the Lord, who is judge, decide today for the Israelites or for the Ammonites" (11:27). And in James 5, the same thing: "Do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!" (v. 9).

We like someone who is fair and just. It's a quality that we appreciate in those who are our superiors in life, whether an employer, a parent, a magistrate or someone possessing great wealth. If these people are fair, the quality of fairness highly recommends them to us. To be unfair is arbitrary, unkind, unreasonable and mean-spirited. No one could like such a God, much less worship such a God.

Granted, God's justice is often delayed. Sometimes the wicked seem to prosper. Evil seems to be winning. In spite of all our best efforts, the tide of evil continues to march forward. But one thing we can safely say is that the Bible teaches that in the end, evildoers and the wicked will face justice. They will meet their Maker, who is justice. They will be judged and thrown in to the lake of burning sulphur.

This God of the universe does not want anyone to face wrath and justice. "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Thus, although God is just and God's justice demands that evildoers receive their just reward, God offers everyone, including evildoers, a path to redemption. God provides

this cross-shaped loophole because God's essential nature is pure, white-hot, all-encompassing, blinding **love**. [NOTE 6] God is love (see 1 John 4). God loves. God loves the world. God loves the natural world. God loves the mountains and lakes, the meadow and its flowers, the deer and the rabbits. God loves saints and sinners alike. God loves children. God loves us when we're good and when we're bad, when we're happy and when we're sad. In fact, there's no power in the galaxy that can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39). God loves us unconditionally without limit!

What's not to like and love about this Super God who loves us, is fair with us and who is essentially good? We stand, like Isaiah, in total awe and amazement in that moment when God's incredible power and fearful essence are revealed to us. The veil is lifted. Like Isaiah, we might say, "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a [person] of unclean lips ... yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" (1:5). .

Granted, God can often seem confusing to us. God is love, yet sometimes God seems testy, capricious, whimsical and moody. Perhaps part of the confusion is generated by our attempts to understand God's nature by using human beings that are created in His image. It is important to always understand that we are finite, bound by time and we have a very limited view and understanding. But that doesn't stop us from trying to define God and get him all wrapped up in a bow and crammed into a box. Yet, even our need for God to be tidy, understandable and rational is a *human* need. We cannot fit God into that kind of tidy box. God will be testy with Job, have compassion on the sinners of Nineveh and forgive someone like David. God will be God.

And the most incredible part is yet to come! *This same God sends us out to speak to the world*. In verse 8, we read, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?'"

Isaiah responded as we, too, should respond: "Here I am; send me."
God then said, "Go and say ..."

Close by singing "Here I Am, Lord."

*I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard My people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin,
My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear My light to them?
Whom shall I send?*

*Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if You lead me.
I will hold Your people in my heart.*

--Lyrics by Dan Schutte.

“Sermon Notes for “Guardian of the Galaxy” based on Isaiah 6

Given in Doster Community Church on June 15, 2025

- I. God, Yahweh, is the real Guardian of the Galaxy. He is holy, He is just, He is omni-present, omniscient, and all-powerful (omnipotent). He is triune. God is the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit separate yet one. Like ice, water, and steam three forms yet all H₂O or like root, trunk and branches (all wood and tree).
- II. Not only is God the Guardian, but God created everything that is now guarded. God is not only Guardian of the Universe but also our guardian and protector as well! MEGO = My Eyes Glaze Over
- III. The problem with studying the attributes of God is that it leads to disturbing questions like if God is all-powerful, then why are people starving and desolate and not healed?
- IV. God is not only good in essential nature but is the source of all goodness.
- V. God is just and fair! Life isn't fair, but God is! God is judge. We will have to answer for our choices and our actions and our words.
- VI. God is love. God loves us and all creation unconditionally and without limit!
- VII. God sends us to the world! God asks, “Whom Shall I send?” Isaiah responded as we should respond: “Here I am, send me!” What are you going to do about it? Please write something

The characters: The characters include *Peter Quill / Star-Lord* (Chris Pratt) who is the half-human, half-Celestial leader of the Guardians of the Galaxy, abducted from Earth as a child and raised by a group of alien thieves and smugglers called the Ravagers; *Gamora* (Zoe Saldana) who is a member of the Guardians and trained to be an assassin; *Drax the Destroyer* (Dave Bautista) who is a highly skilled warrior in search of vengeance against Thanos for his family's slaughter; *Rocket* (Bradley Cooper) who is a genetically modified raccoon bounty hunter and mercenary, and also a master of weapons and military tactics; and *Mantis* (Pom Klementieff) who has empathic powers and lives with Ego and of course, Groot.