

## “SONGS IN HEAVEN – 1.) THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES”

The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" (Revelation 4:8 NKJV)

Songs play an important part in our lives. Today before the Super Bowl game begins Carrie Underwood, the *National Idol* winner, will sing the National Anthem. During the game dozens of sponsors will pay millions of dollars to have their advertising jingles heard by millions of viewers. The halftime show will not feature a singer as in the past. An episode of *CSI* will be performed on the 50 yard line.

Songs like the National Anthem and high school and college anthems are meant to create loyalty to the country or to the school. Even today, at times parts of a school song will run through my head.

There are thousands of love songs that express the feelings of a man and woman in love with each other. As they hear the songs and perhaps sing them over and over to themselves, the love songs give expression and understanding to their feelings about a special person.

In some types of work, singing makes the work easier. I'm sure you have seen films of field hands in the South, in Europe, and Asia singing while they work.

Hymns are intended to remind us, to help us remember, Christian teachings. "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise", "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty", "Come, Thou Almighty King" innumerate the attributes of God. "Amazing Grace" reminds us of our great salvation.

There are songs in heaven. The shepherds heard the angels sing when Jesus was born. John went to heaven and heard singing there.

1.) "Holy, holy, holy,..."

Who are the "four living creatures" or as the King James Version calls them the "four beasts." In Ezekiel's prophecy they are seen several times accompanying the throne of God. Most of the first chapter of Ezekiel is devoted to describing them. In Ezekiel the King James Version refers to them as living creatures. In Isaiah's prophecy the angelic beings called seraphim around God's throne sing "Holy, holy, holy" and resemble the four living creatures. I think the living creatures in Revelation, the living creatures in Ezekiel, and the seraphim in Isaiah are the same. They are the angels closest to God.

"Holy, holy, holy" Here is an allusion to the Holy Trinity – God the Father is holy, God the Son is holy, God the Spirit is holy."

What does it mean to be holy? The word means to be set apart as sacred from all that is common. The word sanctify means to make holy. In communion we sanctify the bread and wine before we commune. In baptism we sanctify the water before baptizing.

As it pertains to God, holy means that He is wholly other than humans. The false gods of the heathens are larger than life humans or other creatures. The true God is wholly other than any of His creation.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9 NKJV)

"Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders? (Exodus 15:11 NKJV)

In both the Old and New Testaments God's purpose is a holy people: 'And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine. (Leviticus 20:26 NKJV) But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Peter 2:9 NKJV)

2.) “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,…”

He is LORD because all else must obey Him. The stars and heavenly bodies obey Him. The plants and animals obey Him. The angels in heaven obey Him. All human creatures are commanded to obey Him. There are consequences for those who do not obey Him. Satan and one-third of the angels were cast out of heaven for their disobedience. When humans disobey Him it is called sin and “The wages of sin is death.” Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for the disobedience of those who trust Him as Savior and to restore them to obedience.

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:19 NKJV)

He is God because He is the one we revere (that is fear) and therefore worship. Why are there so many religions? Those who do not know the true God can see that some power greater than themselves is in control of the weather, the fertility of crops, animals, and humans, determines the destiny of nations, and will somehow reward those who are good and punish those who are bad. Therefore they fear and worship gods of their own imaginations. But the true God: Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea. (Micah 7:18-19 NKJV)

He is Almighty. There is nothing, and no one more powerful than our God. There is no problem that is equal to His strength. There is no enemy powerful enough to be a worthy challenger. When all the people on earth turned against Him, He sent a Flood and destroyed them all except for one righteous man and his family. He sends the thunder and the lightning. He causes droughts and floods, war and peace, blessing.

3.) "...Who was and is and is to come!"

There was nothing before God was. He was in the beginning. Before the earth was formed, God was. He can say to any other being as He said to Job, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Paul tells us that our salvation was planned by God when God was all that was:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, (Ephesians 1:3-5 NKJV)

God is. The most certain and sure thing in life right now is that God is. In Him we live and move and have our being. So often we think of the Bible and the hymns of the faith as nostalgia, our heritage, history. Every one of us who are children of God by faith in Jesus Christ need to be conscious that God is with us now. God is with us at home. God is with us at work. We are citizens of His kingdom. He is at work in the world today and He will use every one who seeks His will. God is.

God is to come. He will come in the person of His Son to judge the whole world's peoples.

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. (Matthew 25:31-32 NKJV)

He is to come in the person of His Son to reward His faithful believers

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:1-3 NKJV)

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

