

Guardian of the Galaxy *Isaiah 6:1-8* | 5/27/2018

Guardians of the Galaxy is a burgeoning movie franchise that first hit the screen in 2014. *Vol. 2* appeared almost precisely a year ago (May 5), and *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3* is scheduled for release in 2020. They also appeared in *Avengers: Infinity War*. In these films, a team with quasi, semi-impressive superpowers comes together to be guardians of the galaxy. *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* 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 omnipotent 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.

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."

Wouldn't that make a cool 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." Way better than Odin or Thanos!

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.

A saying attributed to Martin Luther goes, "To deny the Trinity endangers your salvation; to try to comprehend the Trinity endangers your sanity." So let's go with this! Rather than trying to explain the tripartite nature of God on Trinity Sunday, let's assume it, and instead review some attributes of the Guardian of the galaxy. *How has the church classically understood the nature of God and which scriptural texts have been used in support of these attributes?*

Anselm (1033-1109) is credited with developing what we call the ontological argument for the existence of God. 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 others. One point he 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, (all powerful) omniscient (all knowing) and omnipresent (present everywhere and always). And, you have to admit, a God with these powers is an amazing God!

The problem with studying the attributes of God is that it leads to disturbing questions. For example, “Why doesn't our all-powerful do the mighty things *we think* need to be done on behalf of the welfare of the human race and the planet Earth? If we believe, however, that God is infinitely wise beyond human imagining, we can trust that Our Father knows best, far better than we ever could.

Goodness is one of the attributes of God. God is not only good in essential nature but is the *source* of goodness as well. The psalmist declares, "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good" (107:1). Jesus reminded the rich, young ruler that "there is only one who is good."

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. 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 an inferior god to a God who is all goodness.

Another attribute is that God is just. 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 God is.

God is not only just, 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). 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. 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 the Just Judge.

Perhaps the most important attribute of God is this: God is Love. 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). So God offers everyone, including evildoers, a path to redemption. God provides this cross-shaped escape clause because God's essential nature is pure, white-hot, all-encompassing, blinding love. 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).

So 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 awesome essence are revealed to us.

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: "Here I am; send me." Our response should be the same: "Here we are; send us!"

Pastor Keith