



# SUNDAY SCHOOL FEBRUARY 9, 2025

Prayer:

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## OLD TESTAMENT

### Isaiah 6:1-8

#### *A VISION OF GOD IN THE TEMPLE*

In the year that King Uzziah died, 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. And one called to another and said,

*“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of his glory.”*

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.

And I said, “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said, “Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.”

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!”

#### *OVERVIEW*

Isaiah 6:1-8 records the prophet Isaiah’s profound vision of God’s holiness and his subsequent calling to prophetic ministry. In this passage, Isaiah sees the Lord enthroned in the temple, surrounded by seraphim who declare His holiness. Overwhelmed by his own sinfulness, Isaiah confesses his unworthiness, and one of the seraphim touches his lips with a burning coal from the altar, symbolizing purification. After this, Isaiah responds to God’s call by volunteering for His service: “Here am I; send me.”

#### *BIBLICAL CONTEXT*

Isaiah 6 serves as the prophet’s call narrative and is pivotal in the book of Isaiah. This chapter marks a transition, setting the stage for Isaiah’s prophetic mission to a rebellious Israel.

- **Placement in Isaiah:** While Isaiah 1-5 contains messages of judgment against Judah’s corruption, Isaiah 6 shifts to a personal encounter with God, commissioning Isaiah for a difficult prophetic role.
- **Theme of Holiness:** Isaiah 6:3 presents one of the most well-known descriptions of God’s holiness: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” This triple repetition (a superlative form in Hebrew) emphasizes God’s absolute holiness.
- **Isaiah’s Commission:** The passage foreshadows the difficulty of Isaiah’s task. His message will harden rather than soften the people’s hearts (Isaiah 6:9-10), echoing themes found later in Jesus’ parables (e.g., Matthew 13:14-15).



## *HISTORICAL / NON-BIBLICAL CONTEXT*

Isaiah's vision occurs **"in the year that King Uzziah died"** (Isaiah 6:1), placing it around **740 B.C.** This was a time of significant transition and uncertainty in Judah:

- **King Uzziah (Azariah) of Judah (c. 792-740 B.C.):** Uzziah's reign was one of relative prosperity and military strength, but he was struck with leprosy for unlawfully entering the temple (2 Chronicles 26:16-21). His death symbolized the end of stability for Judah.
- **Rising Assyrian Threat:** The Assyrian Empire was expanding aggressively under Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.), a looming threat to Israel and Judah.
- **Temple Imagery:** The vision of the Lord in the temple aligns with Ancient Near Eastern beliefs where gods were often seen enthroned in temples. However, in Isaiah's vision, Yahweh is exalted above earthly rulers.

## *HISTORICAL TIMELINE / BIBLICAL TIMEFRAME*

- **8th Century B.C. (c. 740 B.C.)** – Isaiah's vision occurs at the beginning of his prophetic ministry.
- **Fall of the Northern Kingdom (722 B.C.)** – Assyria destroys Israel, reinforcing Isaiah's warnings.
- **Fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.)** – Judah eventually suffers the same fate due to continued disobedience, fulfilling prophetic warnings.

## *SCHOLARLY METAPHORICAL & MODERN-DAY INTERPRETATION*

### **Metaphorical Interpretation**

Isaiah's vision can be understood metaphorically in several ways:

1. **Divine Sovereignty Over Earthly Power:** The death of Uzziah, a powerful earthly king, contrasts with the eternal reign of God. This emphasizes the temporary nature of human authority and the supreme rule of God.
2. **Sin and Purification:** Isaiah's unclean lips symbolize human impurity, while the burning coal represents divine cleansing. This can be seen as a foreshadowing of Christ's atonement.
3. **Prophetic Calling as an Act of Willingness:** Isaiah's response, "Here am I; send me," illustrates the importance of free will in answering God's call, despite the difficulties ahead.

### **Modern-Day Context**

- **Leadership and Responsibility:** In times of crisis or leadership transitions (like the death of Uzziah), people may feel uncertainty. This passage reassures believers that God remains sovereign.
- **Personal Transformation:** Just as Isaiah is purified before being sent, modern believers may undergo personal refinement before fulfilling their divine purpose.
- **Hardening of Hearts:** Like Isaiah's audience, people today may reject truth, preferring comfort over conviction. This passage challenges individuals to remain open to God's call, even when it is difficult.

## *SUMMARY*

Isaiah 6:1-8 recounts Isaiah's transformative vision of God's majesty, leading to his prophetic commission. Seeing the Lord enthroned, Isaiah realizes his own sinfulness, but through divine



purification, he is prepared to serve. His willingness to accept God's call—"Here am I; send me"—stands as a model of obedience. Historically, this passage is set in a time of political instability, yet it underscores God's unshakable rule. Metaphorically, it speaks to divine sovereignty, human purification, and the challenges of speaking truth in a resistant society. Today, this passage remains relevant, reminding us of our own callings and the need for spiritual readiness.



## NEW TESTAMENT (GOSPEL)

### Luke 5:1-11

#### *JESUS CALLS THE FIRST DISCIPLES*

Once while Jesus was standing beside the Lake of Gennesaret and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets.

He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."

Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets."

When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to burst. So, they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.

But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus's knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!"

For he and all who were with him were astounded at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people."

When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

#### *OVERVIEW*

Luke 5:1-11 describes the miraculous catch of fish and the calling of Simon Peter, along with James and John, to follow Jesus. The passage highlights Jesus' divine power, the disciples' initial reluctance, their astonishment at the miracle, and their ultimate decision to leave everything behind to follow Him. It illustrates a fundamental shift from earthly labor to spiritual mission—Jesus calls fishermen to become "fishers of men."

#### *BIBLICAL CONTEXT*

Luke 5:1-11 occurs early in Jesus' ministry, following His baptism, temptation in the wilderness, and His initial teachings and healings. It closely follows Luke 4, where Jesus announces His mission in the synagogue in Nazareth and begins to attract followers through His miracles and teachings.

This passage is part of a broader theme in Luke's Gospel of Jesus calling ordinary individuals into divine service. The miraculous catch of fish not only demonstrates Jesus' authority over nature but also serves as a metaphor for the disciples' future role in evangelism.

Parallel accounts of the calling of the first disciples appear in:

- **Matthew 4:18-22** – A more condensed version, focusing on Jesus calling Peter and Andrew without mentioning the miraculous catch.



- **Mark 1:16-20** – Similar to Matthew, emphasizing the immediacy of their response.
- **John 21:1-14** – A post-resurrection parallel where Jesus once again provides a miraculous catch of fish, reinforcing their mission.

### *HISTORICAL / NON-BIBLICAL CONTEXT*

#### **Fishing in First-Century Galilee**

- Fishing was a common trade around the Sea of Galilee, and fishermen like Simon Peter, James, and John operated in family businesses.
- They used nets, typically at night, as fishing was more effective during those hours.
- The region was under Roman rule, and fishermen often had to pay taxes or tolls on their catch, making their work difficult.

#### **Rabbinical Tradition & Discipleship**

- Typically, Jewish disciples sought out a rabbi, but in this case, Jesus initiates the call, breaking social norms.
- His invitation was not merely to learn but to leave everything and engage in a new mission.

#### **Economic Impact of the Event**

- The miraculous catch would have been a major financial success. The fact that Peter and his partners abandoned everything despite such an enormous haul emphasizes the radical nature of their decision.

### *HISTORICAL TIMELINE / BIBLICAL TIMEFRAME*

- **Timeframe:** Around **28-30 AD**, early in Jesus' Galilean ministry.
- **Location:** **Sea of Galilee** (also called Lake Gennesaret in this passage).
- **Cultural Context:** Fishing was central to the local economy, and Jesus' use of fishing metaphors would have resonated with His audience.

### *SCHOLARLY METAPHORICAL & MODERN-DAY INTERPRETATION*

#### **From Fishing to Evangelism**

- Jesus transforms their profession, calling them to "**fish for people**" (v. 10). This suggests that their new mission is about bringing people into the Kingdom of God.
- **Modern-Day Parallel:** Evangelism today follows this same principle—believers are called to "cast their nets" through preaching, teaching, and acts of love.

#### **Faith and Obedience**

- Peter expresses skepticism ("Master, we have worked hard all night and caught nothing"), but **trusts Jesus' command** and experiences a miracle.
- **Modern-Day Parallel:** Sometimes, believers feel like their efforts are fruitless, but obedience to Christ often leads to results beyond human expectations.

#### **Humility and Call to Service**

- Peter recognizes his sinfulness and unworthiness in the presence of Jesus (v. 8), which is a common reaction when encountering divine power.
- **Modern-Day Parallel:** Many feel inadequate for ministry, but Jesus chooses ordinary people for extraordinary missions.



## Leaving Everything Behind

- The disciples **leave their livelihoods** to follow Jesus, illustrating **total commitment**.
- **Modern-Day Parallel:** True discipleship requires stepping out of comfort zones and trusting God's provision.

## Jesus' Call is Universal

- He calls ordinary working-class men, showing that anyone can be used for God's purposes.
- **Modern-Day Parallel:** The mission of the church is not limited to pastors or theologians; every believer has a role in God's kingdom.

## SUMMARY

Luke 5:1-11 recounts the calling of Peter, James, and John through the miraculous catch of fish. Jesus teaches by the Sea of Galilee, instructs Simon Peter to cast his nets despite an unproductive night, and performs a miracle that fills their boats. Peter, overwhelmed, acknowledges his sinfulness, but Jesus reassures him, calling him to become a fisher of men. The disciples leave everything to follow Jesus.

This passage illustrates themes of **faith, divine calling, transformation, and total commitment to Christ**. It challenges modern believers to trust God beyond their understanding and embrace the call to evangelism.



## ADDENDUM

*Here are some follow up research points from last week, plus one additional.*

### The Israelites Expectations for a Powerful Military Leader

The Israelites' expectation of a **militarily powerful** Messiah seems to contradict the precedent set by humble figures like **David the shepherd**. Yet, historical and theological factors shaped their longing for a **warrior-king Messiah**, even though past leaders, including David, had emerged from lowly origins. Here's why:

#### 1. Biblical Basis for a Military Messiah

While many Old Testament figures, including **David, Moses, and Gideon**, came from humble backgrounds, the **Messianic expectation evolved over time**—especially under foreign oppression. Several biblical prophecies fueled hopes for a **powerful ruler**:

- **2 Samuel 7:12-16** – God promises David that his lineage will endure forever, leading to the idea of a Davidic king who would restore Israel.
- **Psalms 2:7-9** – Speaks of God's "anointed one" who will break nations with a rod of iron.
- **Isaiah 9:6-7** – The prophecy of a ruler on **David's throne** with everlasting dominion.
- **Daniel 7:13-14** – The "Son of Man" will receive a kingdom that will never be destroyed.
- **Zechariah 9:9-10** – The King will come riding on a donkey but also bring peace by destroying military weapons.

These **dual images** of humility (Zechariah 9:9) and power (Psalm 2, Daniel 7) created **tension in interpretation**—was the Messiah a **humble servant** or a **conquering king**?

#### 2. Historical Context: From David to Roman Rule

The Israelites **did not always** emphasize the Messiah as a military leader. This view **solidified under foreign oppression**:

##### A. David's Time: The Shepherd Who Became King

- **David began humbly**, yet he became a warrior and expanded Israel's territory.
- His rise set a precedent: **humble beginnings did not preclude military greatness**.

##### B. Exile and Foreign Domination (586 BCE–1st Century CE)

After David's dynasty collapsed due to Babylonian conquest (586 BCE), Israel lost sovereignty for centuries, being ruled by:

- Babylon (586–539 BCE)
- Persia (539–331 BCE)
- Greece (331–167 BCE)
- Rome (63 BCE onward)

During these eras, **Jewish suffering intensified**, and they longed for **deliverance**—not just spiritual but also political and military.

##### C. The Maccabees (167–63 BCE)





The **Maccabean Revolt** (167–160 BCE) successfully **overthrew Greek rule**, establishing a brief independent Jewish kingdom (Hasmonean dynasty). **Judas Maccabeus**, a warrior-priest, led the revolt, reinforcing **military messianic hopes**.

By Jesus's time, the memory of the Maccabees fueled the **expectation that the Messiah would be another military liberator**, this time against **Rome**.

### 3. Jesus vs. David: Similar Humble Beginnings, Different Expectations

Jesus's early life closely **mirrored David's humble origins**:

- **David**: A shepherd, the youngest son, overlooked even by his family.
- **Jesus**: A carpenter's son, from an insignificant town (Nazareth).

However, David **eventually became a warrior**, which **fulfilled expectations**. Jesus, in contrast, **did not take up arms**, which confused many:

- When Jesus fed the 5,000, people **tried to make Him king by force** (John 6:15).
- Even **John the Baptist** questioned whether Jesus was truly the Messiah (Matthew 11:3), likely because He wasn't fulfilling military expectations.
- On **Palm Sunday**, the crowd shouted "**Hosanna!**", expecting a king (Matthew 21:9), but He rode a donkey—signaling peace, not war.

### 4. Why Did the Israelites Miss the Humble Messianic Prophecies?

Several **key factors** contributed to the preference for a **military Messiah** over a **humble** one:

#### A. Selective Reading of Prophecy

- The Israelites emphasized passages about **victory and kingdom rule** while **overlooking suffering servant prophecies** (Isaiah 53, Zechariah 9:9).
- The suffering Messiah didn't fit their immediate needs—they **wanted political deliverance, not spiritual renewal**.

#### B. Oppression and Desperation

- The Roman occupation was brutal—Jews **longed for justice**. They wanted a Messiah like **David after Goliath, not David before he was anointed**.
- The desire for **revenge and liberation** colored their expectations.

#### C. Misunderstanding the Nature of the Kingdom

- Jesus preached the **Kingdom of God**, but not in **military terms**.
- His message was **spiritual renewal, not violent overthrow**.
- The disciples themselves **struggled to grasp this**—even after His resurrection, they asked: "*Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*" (Acts 1:6).

### 5. How Jesus Redefined Messiahship

- Instead of **conquering Rome**, Jesus **conquered sin and death** (Isaiah 53).
- Instead of **seizing earthly power**, He ushered in a **kingdom "not of this world"** (John 18:36).
- Instead of **defeating enemies**, He commanded love for them (Matthew 5:44).



The irony? **Jesus will return in power** (Revelation 19:11-16), fulfilling the prophecies of a mighty ruler—but first, He had to **be the suffering servant**.

## Conclusion

The Israelites' expectation of a military Messiah was shaped by:

1. **Biblical prophecies** that emphasized a ruling Davidic king.
2. **Historical suffering under foreign rule**, intensifying their longing for political liberation.
3. **The success of military leaders** like Judas Maccabeus, reinforcing the warrior-king image.
4. **A selective focus** on triumphant prophecies, rather than the suffering servant passages.

Jesus **did** fit the pattern of David's humble beginnings, but **unlike David, He never transitioned into a warrior-king**. Instead, He redefined Messiahship as a **spiritual mission** before the final fulfillment of His reign in power.

## How Did Young Kings Rule?

When **young kings** like Josiah (who became king at **8 years old**) ruled, they were almost always **guided by adult advisors, regents, or high-ranking officials** until they were old enough to make independent decisions.

Since an **8-year-old** (or even a teenager) lacks experience in governance, a young king would typically be **influenced by others**, such as:

1. **Regents or Guardians** – Trusted officials who acted as rulers until the king was of age.
2. **High Priests & Religious Leaders** – Spiritual advisors who often shaped policies.
3. **Royal Family Members** – Sometimes a mother or close relative acted as co-regent.
4. **Royal Officials & Military Commanders** – Advisors who ensured stability in the kingdom.

## Examples of Young Kings & Their Rule

Here are a few young kings in biblical history and how they ruled:

### 1. Josiah (8 years old) – A Righteous Reformer ✓

- Became **King of Judah at 8 years old** (*2 Kings 22:1*).
- Likely ruled under the **guidance of officials & priests**.
- At **16 years old**, he began to seek God (**his personal faith began to develop**).
- At **20 years old**, he launched **major religious reforms, removing idols and restoring worship**.

#### ✓ Who influenced Josiah?

- **Hilkiah the High Priest** – Discovered the **Book of the Law**, leading to Josiah's reforms.
- **The Prophetess Huldah** – Confirmed that Judah would face judgment but praised Josiah's faithfulness.

### 2. Joash (Jehoash) (7 years old) – Controlled by a Priest ✓



- Became king at **7 years old** (*2 Kings 11:21*).
- **Jehoiada the High Priest** acted as **his mentor and guide**.
- Under Jehoiada's influence, Joash **repaired the Temple** and restored worship.
- However, after Jehoiada died, Joash **listened to corrupt advisors and fell into idolatry**.

**Lesson:** A young king's success **depended on who influenced him**.

### 3. Manasseh (12 years old) – Started Evil, Later Repented ❌➡️✅

- Became **King of Judah at 12 years old** (*2 Kings 21:1*).
- Introduced **idolatry, child sacrifice, and witchcraft**—one of Judah's worst kings.
- Later, he was **taken captive by the Assyrians and repented** (*2 Chronicles 33:12-13*).

**Lesson:** Young kings could be easily swayed by bad influences.

### Why Did Young Kings Rule?

- **Dynastic Succession** – If a king died suddenly (often through assassination), his **youngest heir** would inherit the throne.
- **Lack of an Older Heir** – If the king had no older sons, a child would take the throne.
- **Political Power Struggles** – A young king could be **used as a figurehead** while real power was held by advisors or regents.

### Final Takeaways

- **Young kings didn't rule alone**—they relied on **regents, priests, and officials**.
- Their **success depended on their advisors**—righteous kings had **godly mentors**, while wicked ones had **corrupt influencers**.
- Some **grew into great leaders** (**Josiah, Joash for a time**), while others **fell into sin** (**Manasseh, Jehoiakim**).

## Major vs. Minor Prophets: What's the Difference?

The terms "**Major Prophets**" and "**Minor Prophets**" do **not** refer to the **importance** of the prophets themselves but rather to the **length of their writings** in the Old Testament.

### 1. Major Prophets 📖✍️

#### ✅ **Definition:**

The **Major Prophets** are **longer books with broader themes**, covering prophecies of judgment, restoration, and the coming Messiah.

#### ✅ **Books Included (5):**

1. **Isaiah** – Messianic prophecies, judgment, and hope.
2. **Jeremiah** – The fall of Judah and the New Covenant.
3. **Lamentations** (by Jeremiah) – Mourning Jerusalem's destruction.
4. **Ezekiel** – Visions of restoration and the New Temple.
5. **Daniel** – Apocalyptic visions of future kingdoms.



### ✓ Key Characteristics:

- Lengthier books (Isaiah has 66 chapters!).
- Address **both Israel and the nations**.
- Include **historical narratives and detailed visions**.
- Cover **longer time spans** (e.g., Daniel spans from Babylon to Persia).

## 2. Minor Prophets 📖 ✍️

### ✓ Definition:

The **Minor Prophets** are **shorter books**, but they still contain **powerful messages** about judgment, repentance, and God's plan.

### ✓ Books Included (12):

1. **Hosea** – Israel's unfaithfulness compared to a marriage.
2. **Joel** – The Day of the Lord and the coming of the Spirit.
3. **Amos** – Social justice and judgment on corrupt leaders.
4. **Obadiah** – Judgment on Edom.
5. **Jonah** – God's mercy on Nineveh.
6. **Micah** – The prophecy of Bethlehem and justice.
7. **Nahum** – The fall of Nineveh.
8. **Habakkuk** – Questioning God's justice.
9. **Zephaniah** – The coming Day of the Lord.
10. **Haggai** – Encouraging the rebuilding of the Temple.
11. **Zechariah** – Messianic visions.
12. **Malachi** – Israel's corruption and the coming of Elijah.

### ✓ Key Characteristics:

- **Shorter books** (some only 1-3 chapters long).
- Often focused on **specific events** or **regional judgments**.
- More direct **calls for repentance**.
- Sometimes grouped as "The Twelve" in Hebrew tradition.

## Key Differences at a Glance

Feature	Major Prophets	Minor Prophets
Number of Books	5	12
Book Length	Long (Isaiah: 66 chapters)	Short (Obadiah: 1 chapter)
Themes	Broader themes (nations, Messianic prophecies, long history)	More focused themes (specific events, short-term prophecies)
Literary Style	Includes visions, narratives, poetry	Mostly direct prophecy and poetry
Historical Scope	Spans long periods (Babylonian exile, restoration)	Often addresses <b>one event or crisis</b>



## The Importance of the “Widow” Reference in the Bible

Widows hold a significant place in **biblical theology**, appearing throughout the **Old and New Testaments** as symbols of **vulnerability, justice, faith, and God's care for the marginalized**. The term **widow** is often used to highlight:

- **God's concern for the vulnerable**
- **Social justice and the responsibility of the faithful**
- **Examples of faith, persistence, and provision**

### The Widow as a Symbol of Vulnerability and God's Justice

In the ancient Near East, **widows were among the most vulnerable members of society** because:

- They had **no inheritance rights** (unless specified in marriage agreements).
- They depended on **male relatives** for protection and provision.
- Many widows became **destitute**, making them a prime concern in **God's justice system**.

#### Key Old Testament Laws About Widows

💡 **God commands Israel to protect widows:**

- **Exodus 22:22-24** – "Do not mistreat or oppress a widow or an orphan... If you do, and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry."
- **Deuteronomy 10:18** – "He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow..."
- **Deuteronomy 24:19-21** – Israelite farmers were **required** to leave food in their fields for widows, orphans, and foreigners (**the practice of gleaning**).

#### 📖 **Prophets Condemn Israel for Oppressing Widows**

- **Isaiah 1:17** – "Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."
- **Jeremiah 22:3** – "Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless, or the widow."
- **Malachi 3:5** – "I will come to put you on trial... against those who oppress the widows and the fatherless."

### The Widow as a Model of Faith and Provision

While widows were often **helpless**, some widows in Scripture show **extraordinary faith** and **God's miraculous provision**.

#### Key Examples in the Old Testament

##### The Widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-16)

- A poor widow was about to **starve** due to a famine.
- **Elijah asked her for food**, even though she had only enough flour and oil for **one last meal**.
- **By faith, she obeyed, and God miraculously provided**—her flour and oil never ran out.



### The Widow Who Lost Her Husband (2 Kings 4:1-7)

- Her **husband died**, leaving her in **debt**.
- She sought **Elisha**, and he told her to **gather jars** for a **miraculous oil multiplication**.
- She **paid off her debts and survived** through divine provision.

### The Widow as a Model of Generosity and Trust

Some **widows gave everything they had** in acts of **pure faith**, making them symbols of generosity.

#### Key New Testament Examples

##### The Widow's Mite (Mark 12:41-44, Luke 21:1-4)

- **Jesus observed a poor widow** giving **two small copper coins** into the Temple treasury.
- While others gave **large sums from their wealth**, she gave **all she had**.
- **Jesus praised her faith**, saying:  
"She out of her poverty put in everything—all she had to live on."

##### The Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8)

- Jesus told a **parable about a widow** who repeatedly **pleaded for justice** before an **unjust judge**.
- The **judge finally gave in** to her demands due to her persistence.
- **Jesus used this to teach about persistent prayer**:  
"Will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night?"

### The Widow as a Symbol of the Church and God's Protection

In some biblical interpretations, **widows represent the people of God**, emphasizing God's role as **protector**.

- **Psalms 68:5** – "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy dwelling."
- **Isaiah 54:5** – "For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is His name."

#### Final Takeaways

Widow Theme	Lesson
Symbol of Vulnerability	God commands His people to defend and support the vulnerable.
Model of Faith & Provision	Trust in God brings miraculous sustenance.
Example of Generosity	True giving is measured by sacrifice, not wealth.
Symbol of Persistence	Continuous prayer leads to divine justice.
Representation of the Church	God is the ultimate provider and defender.



## What are a Seraphs (Seraphim)?

Seraphs are a type of angelic being mentioned in **Isaiah 6:2-7**. The word *seraphim* is the plural of *seraph*, which means “burning one” or “fiery one.” They are unique among biblical angels in that they are specifically described as having **six wings** and serving in the heavenly throne room of God.

### Biblical Description of Seraphim

The **only direct biblical reference** to seraphim is found in Isaiah’s vision of God in 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.’”*  
(Isaiah 6:2-3, NIV)

**From this passage, we learn that:**

- **Seraphim have six wings:**
  - **Two cover their faces**, symbolizing humility before God.
  - **Two cover their feet**, possibly symbolizing reverence or modesty in God’s presence.
  - **Two are used for flying**, indicating readiness to serve.
- They **worship God continually**, proclaiming His holiness.
- One **purifies Isaiah’s lips** with a burning coal from the altar, symbolizing atonement and preparation for prophetic service.

### Possible Meanings and Symbolism

Since the word *seraph* is related to the Hebrew verb, meaning "to burn," seraphim may be associated with **purification and fiery judgment**. Their description suggests:

1. **Divine Purity:** Their presence near God and their role in Isaiah’s purification signify holiness.
2. **Fiery Passion for God’s Glory:** Their name ("burning ones") might symbolize their intense zeal in worship.
3. **Heavenly Messengers and Servants:** Their flight and song demonstrate both **service and praise**.

### Seraphim in Non-Biblical and Extrabiblical Sources

- **Ancient Near Eastern Parallels:** Some scholars connect seraphim with fiery, winged creatures in **Egyptian and Mesopotamian** mythology.
- **Second Temple Jewish Writings:** Later Jewish texts like the **Book of Enoch** and the **Dead Sea Scrolls** expand on angelic hierarchies, sometimes linking seraphim with other high-ranking angels like cherubim.
- **Christian Tradition:** Christian theology (especially in medieval angelology) ranks seraphim as the highest order of angels, closest to God, emphasizing their **role in divine worship**.



## Seraphim vs. Cherubim

People often confuse seraphim with **cherubim**, another type of angelic being.

- **Cherubim** are described in Ezekiel 1 and Revelation 4 as having multiple faces (human, lion, ox, eagle) and four wings.
- **Seraphim** have six wings and are only found in Isaiah 6.

## Are Seraphim the Same as Fallen Serpentine Beings?

There is some speculation that the term *seraph* might also be linked to **serpents** (Numbers 21:6 uses *seraphim* to describe the fiery serpents in the wilderness). This has led to debates on whether seraphim originally had **serpentine** or **dragon-like** associations in ancient Israelite thought.

## Modern Theological Reflection

While the exact nature of seraphim remains mysterious, they serve as a powerful symbol of:

- **Unceasing worship** (reflecting our call to glorify God).
- **Holiness and purification** (foreshadowing Christ's atonement).
- **Divine majesty and mystery** (reminding us of God's transcendence).