

# Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!

## Scripture Allusions, Bible References, and Background for the Favorite Hymn, “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!”

### Scriptures:

“So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the *cherubim*<sup>a</sup> and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.” (Genesis 3:24, italics added). (Definitions for superscripted words are located at the end of this section.)

“In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. *Seraphim*<sup>b</sup> stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, “*Holy, Holy, Holy*<sup>c</sup>, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.” (Isaiah 6:1-3, italics added)

“Now the *cherubim*<sup>a</sup> were standing on the right side of the temple when the man entered, and the cloud filled the inner court. Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub to the threshold of the temple, and the temple was filled with the cloud and the court was filled with the brightness of the glory of the LORD. Moreover, the sound of the wings of the *cherubim*<sup>a</sup> was heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of *God Almighty* when He speaks.” (Ezekiel 10:3-5, italics added)

“After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.’ Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and *golden crowns*<sup>d</sup> on their heads.” (Revelation 4:1-4)

“Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; and before the throne there was something like a *sea of*

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*glass*<sup>c</sup>, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, ‘*Holy, Holy, Holy*<sup>f</sup> is the *Lord, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.*’ ” (Revelation 4:5-8, italics added)

And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will *fall down before Him* who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will *cast their crowns*<sup>d</sup> *before the throne*, saying, ‘Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.’ ”(Revelation 4:9-11, italics added)

<sup>a</sup>Cherubim – The Hebrew word is k<sup>c</sup>rûwb (*ker-oob*’) (Ref. 2, Hebrew #3742) = *a cherub* or imaginary figure: – cherub, [plural] cherubims. Ref. 3 describes Cherubim as “probably an order of angelic beings.”

<sup>b</sup>Seraphim – The Hebrew word is sârâph (*saw-rawf*’) (Refs. 2 and 3, Hebrew # 8314) = burning, i.e. (figuratively) poisonous (serpent); specifically, a seraph or symbolical creature from their copper color: – fiery (serpent), seraph. *Note* - The seraphim was capable of speaking (refer to Isaiah 6:6-7).

<sup>c</sup>Holy – The Hebrew word is qâdôsh (*kaw-doshe*’) (Refs. 2 and 3, Hebrew # 6918) = sacred (ceremonially or morally); (as a noun) God (by eminence), an angel, a saint, a sanctuary. Ref. 3

<sup>d</sup>Crowns – The Greek word is stēphanōs (*stef’-an-os*) (Ref. 2, Greek # 4735) = twine, wreath; a chaplet (as a badge of royalty, a prize in public games, a symbol of honor generally). Ref. 3 adds, “a mark of royal exalted rank.”

<sup>e</sup>Glass – The Greek word is hualinōs (*hoo-al’-ee-nos*) (Refs. 2 and 3, Greek # 5193) = glassy, i.e. transparent. *Note* - “Hualinos” is an adjective. Reginald Heber (the hymn text author) describes the scene in verse 2:

“Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,  
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea”

(continued next page)

<sup>f</sup>Holy – The Greek word is hagiōs (*hag'-ee-os*) (Refs. 2 and 3, Greek # 40) = sacred (physically, pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially, consecrated) – (most) holy (one, thing), saint

All scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible (Refs. 1 and 4).

### **Background:**

**Reginald Heber** (1783–1826) was an Anglican pastor and later the bishop of Calcutta, India (Refs. 5 and 6). As pastor, he was always trying to improve the music at his church in Hodnet, England which he served for sixteen years. After his death, his widow found his papers including the lyrics for 57 hymns in a trunk. Those papers included the lyrics for the great Trinitarian hymn, “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!” (Ref. 6)

**John Bacchus Dykes** (1823-1876) was an English clergyman and hymnist. In 1861, he composed the tune named “Nicaea” for “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!” (Refs. 5 and 7). The tune NICAEA is named after the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) at which church leaders began to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity (Ref. 8). John Bacchus Dykes also is known for other notable hymn tunes such as Melita (“Eternal Father Strong to Save”) (Refs. 7 and 9).

### **Singalong Links:**

Take now the time to sing this glorious hymn using a hymnal, or the attached lyrics and score, or by listening and singing along with a recording or soundtrack such as the ones below:

Holy, Holy, Holy – Choir of St. Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral (Edinburgh, Scotland) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g26p62NCOJE>

“Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty” by the Lutheran Quartet (a capella) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oh6y0nI2Utw>

Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty – Performed by Clyde McLennan, includes singalong lyrics for projection over seascape video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMLpAv1Slro>

Holy Holy Holy HD (Singalong) hymns with lyrics (over scenic landscape video) (Choral Works) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Em4KoNTVyn8>

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**Pray:**

Lord God Almighty, we join all the saints who adore you, worship you, and praise your glorious name. All your works praise your name in earth, and sky, and sea. Though our eyes are hindered by sin, you are holy. You are perfect in power, love, and purity. We thank you for your mercy and for your forgiveness through your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to live our lives in holy ways that please you. Amen.

**Music:**

The Timeless Truths website provided the attached lyrics for “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!” (Ref. 10) The Center for Church Music website provided the PDF score (Ref. 11).

**References:**

1. Scripture quotations are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*<sup>®</sup>, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.
2. James Strong, “*The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*,” Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995.
3. <http://biblehub.com/>
4. <http://www.biblestudytools.com/>
5. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy,\\_Holy,\\_Holy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy,_Holy,_Holy)
6. Robert J. Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul Special Edition*, Thomas Nelson, 2010
7. [http://www3.cpd1.org/wiki/index.php/John\\_Bacchus\\_Dykes](http://www3.cpd1.org/wiki/index.php/John_Bacchus_Dykes)
8. [http://www.hymnary.org/text/holy\\_holy\\_holy\\_lord\\_god\\_almighty\\_early](http://www.hymnary.org/text/holy_holy_holy_lord_god_almighty_early)
9. <http://www.whitneytunes.com/>
10. [http://library.timelesstruths.org/music/Holy\\_Holy\\_Holy/](http://library.timelesstruths.org/music/Holy_Holy_Holy/)
11. <https://songsandhymns.org/hymns/sheetmusic/holy-holy-holy>

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Mr. Whitney V. Myers is a church music composer, arranger, and pianist; a devotion and Bible Study writer; and a retired program manager and satellite communications engineer. Mr. Myers has published over 30 choral arrangements, hymns, and songs on the [www.whitneytunes.com](http://www.whitneytunes.com) website. Mr. Myers is a graduate of Gettysburg College (B.A.), George Washington University (M.S.), and the University of Maryland (MBA, with honors).

## Lyrics for the Hymn, “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!”

Verse 1:

**Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;  
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!  
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!**

Verse 2:

**Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,  
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;  
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,  
Who was, and is, and evermore shall be.**

Verse 3:

**Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,  
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;  
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,  
Perfect in pow’r, in love, and purity.**

Verse 4:

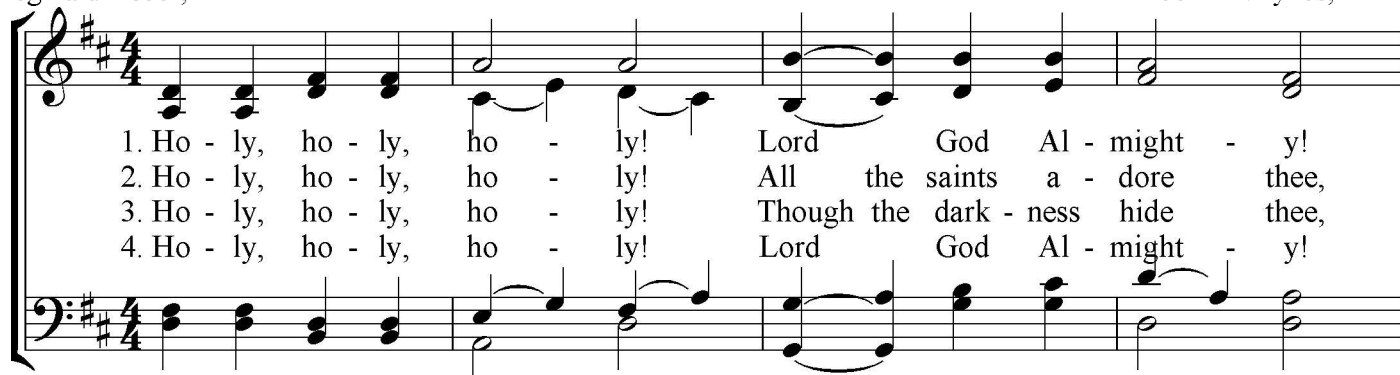
**Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All Thy works shall praise Thy Name, in earth, and sky, and sea;  
Holy, holy, holy; merciful and mighty!  
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!**

# Holy, Holy, Holy!

NICAEA

Reginald Heber, 1783-1826

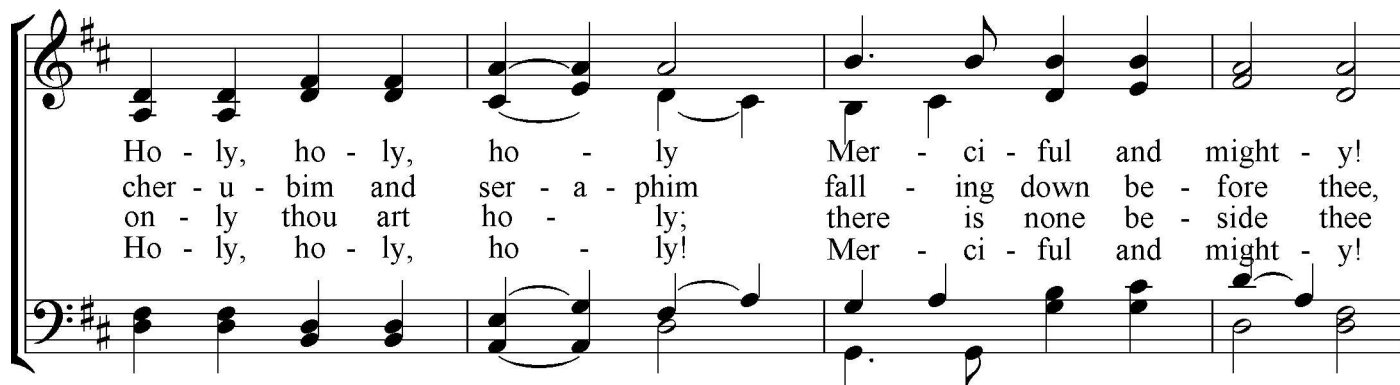
John B. Dykes, 1861



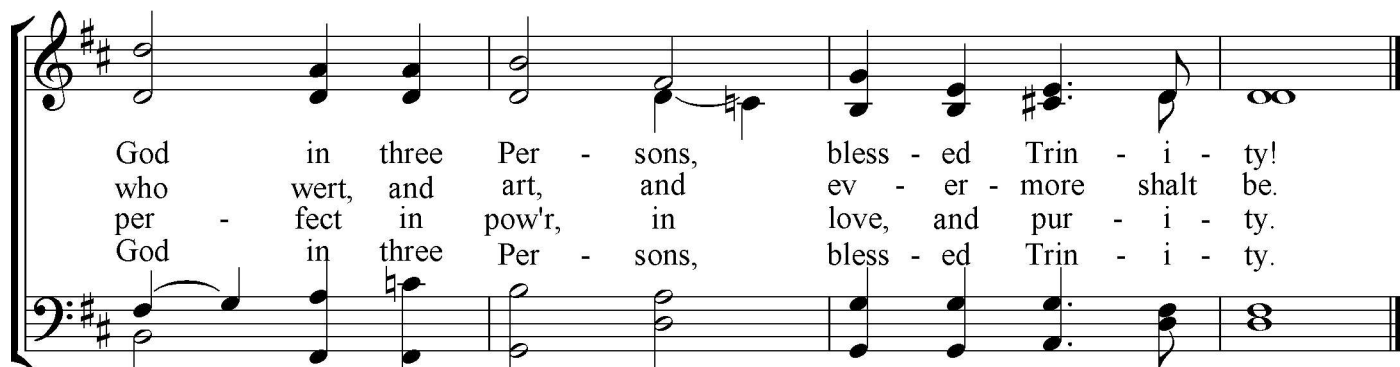
1. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!  
 2. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! All the saints a - dore thee,  
 3. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Though the dark - ness hide thee,  
 4. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!



Ear - ly in the morn - ing our song shall rise to thee.  
 cast - ing down their gold - en crowns a - round the glass - y sea;  
 though the eye of sin - ful man thy glo - ry may not see,  
 All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Mer - ci - ful and might - y!  
 cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim fall - ing down be - fore thee,  
 on - ly thou art ho - ly; there is none be - side thee  
 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Mer - ci - ful and might - y!



God in three Per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty!  
 who wert, and art, and ev - er - more shalt be.  
 per - fect in pow'r, in love, and pur - i - ty.  
 God in three Per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty.