

Series: *Christmas Messages*

Title: "Jesus, Holy One of Israel" (Luke 1:26-35, Hebrews 7:26)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Weeks of 12/21/2014 and 12/28/2014

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This is a complete transcript of the message
"Jesus, Holy One of Israel" originally broadcast in two
parts on December 21 and 28, 2014.

The passage of Scripture that I want to call to our attention today is found in the first chapter of Luke beginning at verse 26. Luke chapter 1, beginning at verse 26. This is the very familiar account of the announcement of the imminent birth of the Lord Jesus Christ to the virgin Mary. Luke chapter 1, beginning at verse 26.

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the

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Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:26-35)

In this message, I want to focus our attention in particular on the last words that we just read together, "Therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."

An Essential Doctrine

There is no more foundational doctrine in all of Scripture than the holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ. The sinless perfection of Jesus. We might say that the holiness of God, and the holiness of the God-man Jesus Christ, is the spiritual equivalent of the law of gravity.

The holiness of Jesus Christ anchors all of our doctrine. It holds everything together. As the Apostle Paul tells us in the book of Colossians, chapter 1 verse 17, "by Him all things consist" – literally, by Him, by Jesus Christ, all things hang together. And it is because of the holiness of Jesus Christ that this is true. If Jesus Christ were not the perfect sinless Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity,

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this could not be said of Him.

A Doctrine Under Attack

And this is why the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ, and in particular the doctrine of His holiness, of His sinless perfection, is the doctrine for which Satan exhibits the greatest hatred. The Bible gives us abundant evidence of that fact. Satan, the angel Lucifer, attempted to exalt himself above the throne of God in eternity past. He attempted to exalt himself above the pre-incarnate Christ, and he was cast out of Heaven.

He made repeated attempts to cause Jesus to sin during His temptation in the wilderness. And throughout the history of the church, the Devil has attacked this doctrine more than any other. Heresy after heresy has involved a denial of the sinless perfection of Jesus Christ. And it is the same today.

On television today you will hear any number of charismatic or word of faith preachers who will tell you that when Jesus went to the Cross, as they put it, he "died spiritually." Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, Joyce Myer, and so many others – this is their blasphemous doctrine.

They will go on to explain that what they mean is that in their twisted view, Jesus took on the nature of Satan. Jesus became a sinner Himself, and Jesus was punished under the dominion of Satan in Hell until, as they put it, the Holy Spirit rescued Jesus, and Jesus Himself was "born again." If you understand what the

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prosperity preachers actually teach, you will understand that they teach that Jesus Himself became a sinner who needed to be born again. Absolute blasphemy.

And it is not only the prosperity preachers who are teaching this kind of falsehood today. The doctrine of Christ's holiness is under attack as never before. And much of that attack today comes from what should be the least expected source – many places that call themselves "evangelical" churches. In their efforts to attract and to appease the unbelieving world, much of the postmodern church sets forth a defective and deficient caricature of the holy Christ of Scripture.

The unvarnished truth is that many of today's churches present a "Jesus" who is a counterfeit made in man's sinful image. A flawed but noble character who is not unlike the rest of us. In fact, you will often hear postmodern preachers say, "Jesus was a human being just like you and me." But Jesus is not a human being just like you and me. He is also the holy Almighty God of the universe. Two natures in one body, unmixed. That is the doctrine that Scripture unmistakably proclaims to us.

But people far and wide are buying into a false doctrine about Christ. A number of years ago I visited a church which is a congregation of a reputedly conservative Presbyterian denomination. And I heard the preacher actually say, from the pulpit, that "Jesus Christ committed sin." I heard him actually say that Jesus "took on man's sin nature." I heard him actually say that Jesus disobeyed God the Father, and thus opened Himself up personally to the wrath of God for His own sin as well as the sins of others.

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Dear friends, that is blasphemy. It is damnable heresy. But the amazing thing to me was not only that the man said it, but that his congregation accepted it. When he said that "Jesus Christ committed sin" I was literally waiting for the roof to fall in. But no one said a word. No one made any protest against such blasphemy in that church. Not even the elders of the church. And I must honestly report to you that people who contact the ministry of which I am a part are telling us that this is the situation in growing numbers of reputedly conservative churches today. The utter denigration of the holiness of Jesus Christ.

Soul-Damning Results

And what is happening as a result of this? According to reliable surveys, nearly half of self-described evangelicals today do not believe that Jesus Christ is sinless. And well over half of people in evangelical churches today believe that they must add their own works to the Cross-work of Christ in order to have eternal life.

These things are happening because so much of the church is sinfully debasing Christ today. They are putting forward a false Christ, a Christ who comes far short of the Christ of the Bible.

Dear friends, this brings us to a critical question: How can the worshipers of such a non-sinless "Christ" possibly understand the great transaction of justification by faith alone? How can they possibly understand that justification by faith involves double imputation?

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God declares repentant sinners not guilty before His judgment bar by not only imputing their sins to Christ, placing their sins on Christ, but also by imputing Christ's perfect righteousness to them. How can anyone who does not believe in the sinless perfection, the holiness, of the Lord Jesus Christ – how can anybody who does not grasp that momentous fact, possibly understand the doctrine of justification by faith alone? You cannot.

The fact is that we have many people in the church today who do not understand that doctrine. We have many preachers in the church today who are not teaching the doctrine of double imputation. And so we have a great many preachers preaching, and we have a great many people believing, that they must somehow earn their way to Heaven by some cooperative effort with this imperfect and insufficient "Jesus". What Hell-bound folly that is.

What Does Scripture Say?

Dear friends, there is one sure antidote to all of these things, and that is the careful study of the Scriptures from cover to cover by God's people, so that we may know the truth, and rest in the truth, and exercise spiritual discernment when we hear the lies of the Devil spoken about the person and work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What does Scripture say? From Genesis all the way to Revelation, the Word of God uses the name that Gabriel used when he announced the imminent birth of the

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Lord Jesus Christ to Mary – the words we find here in Luke 1:35. "Therefore also that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."

Hebrew and Greek Names

One of Christ's most prominent names, from the Pentateuch all the way to Revelation, is "the Holy One."

Two Hebrews names for the Holy One are given to us in the Old Testament. One is the Hebrew word *qadosh*, which signifies one who is sacred, one who is holy, one who is set apart for a holy purpose. The other Hebrew word that is used in the Old Testament is *hasid*, which signifies one who is faithful as well as holy, one who is faithful because he is holy. There is a sect of the Jews even today called the Hasidic Jews – the *hasidim* – the "holy ones". I'm sorry, they have no claim or right to that title. Only Jesus does.

The writers of the Old Testament, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, constantly ascribed these two Hebrew names to the One who would come to save His people from their sins. They constantly made the point that the One who would come would be free from sin, He would be set apart to do the will of God, and He would be uniquely faithful in fulfilling the whole law of God.

The title "the Holy One" is the crucial identifier of Jesus Christ as the sinless Redeemer. And it is carried over into the New Testament in the use of the word *hagios*, which is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *qadosh*, and also the

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Greek word *hosios*, which is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *hasid*.

The Seed of the Woman

God's earliest revelation of His plan of redemption appears immediately after the fall of man, in Genesis chapter 3. God explained at the very outset of human sinfulness that in His predetermined councils, before the foundation of the world, he had made provision for a Holy One to be born, who would redeem a people for Himself.

In Genesis 3:15 God said that the promised Savior would come through the seed of the woman. And the main purpose of the genealogies that we find throughout the Old Testament is to trace the seed of the woman, from that first promise in Genesis all the way through many centuries to the birth of Christ.

And in this connection, Isaiah prophesied many centuries later that "a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and you shall call His name Immanuel" meaning "God with us".

And seven centuries after Isaiah's prophecy, the angel Gabriel appears to tell the virgin Mary that she will be the earthly mother of the Holy One of Israel. When Mary asked how this could be, since she was still a virgin, the angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."

Christ's sinless birth as the seed of the woman is in direct contrast with the state of all of us who are born through the seed of Adam. As David says in Psalm 51:5,

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"I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." But this is not true of Jesus Christ.

Prophecy

We find the Holy One of Israel spoken of frequently in Old Testament prophecy. The book of Isaiah is a major source of prophetic facts concerning the Messiah. The book of Isaiah contains more than half of the uses of the title "Holy One of Israel" that we find in Scripture. And the uses of this title in Isaiah fall into two main categories. First of all the Holy One of Israel through the prophet Isaiah speaks against the iniquity of Israel and Judah. And secondly, the Holy One of Israel promises a Redeemer from their sins. Isaiah 43:3 – "I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."

And then we have David's great prophecy of the person and work of the Holy One that is found in Psalm 16. It is a prophecy of the resurrection and the exaltation of Christ after His death on the Cross. In Psalm 16 beginning at verse 9 we read this:

Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also will rest in hope.
For You will not leave my soul in Sheol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

This Psalm is a prophecy of Jesus and His sinlessness. "You will not leave my

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soul in Sheol, nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption." And as we come to the New Testament, we find both Peter and Paul, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, quoting this passage as proof of Christ's sinless perfection after His death and resurrection.

The Testimony of the Holy One in the Gospels

We also find ample testimony of the sinless perfection of the Holy One, in the records of the four Gospels.

We find a declaration of Jesus' holiness in the Gospels during His public ministry which comes from a very unexpected source – it comes from an unclean demon. In Luke chapter 4 we read that in the synagogue at Capernaum, Jesus was confronted by a man who was possessed, and the demon within him cried out, "Let us alone! What have we to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!" As James tells us, there is a sense in which "even the demons believe – and tremble!" (James 2:19)

We also have a most striking declaration of Jesus' sinlessness in the words of Peter in John chapter 6. Beginning at verse 66 of John chapter 6 we read that many of Jesus' disciples, who were offended by His sayings,

went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come

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to believe and know that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

What Peter was actually saying is this: "We have trusted and have known that you are the one of whom Moses, and David, and Isaiah, and the rest of the prophets spoke – You are the promised Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."

And furthermore, in the Gospels Jesus declared Himself to be the Holy One. In John chapter 8 beginning at verse 44, Jesus said this to the unbelieving Jewish religious leaders. He said,

You are of your father the Devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. [And then, notice this –] Which of you convicts Me of sin?

Jesus took these religious leaders of the Jews right back to Genesis 3:15 – right back to the enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, between the one who is the deceiver, the father of lies, and a murderer from the beginning – over against the one who is the Holy One who was promised.

Double Imputation Secured

And this is the One who secured that double imputation for us. We see the holiness of Christ further demonstrated and amplified throughout the Gospel

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accounts. And then each of the Gospel accounts comes to its conclusion: The Holy One, having lived the perfect life that no mere man could live, went to the Cross and died the perfect death that only He could die.

Peter describes this great transaction in his first epistle: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God " (1 Peter 3:18).

And all of this is in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 53 concerning the Holy One of Israel when God said, "My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities."

The Holy One of Israel proved His perfect deity. By His perfect keeping of the law He demonstrated a complete righteousness that could be imputed to vile, guilty sinners. And then He offered up His own body and blood as the full and final atonement for their sins, to which no unholy man can add the slightest thing.

Indeed, as Peter asked Jesus, "To whom shall we go?" To Christ alone guilty sinners may go to have their sins blotted out and remembered against them no more, and receive a perfect righteousness that is not their own.

Self-righteousness is filthy rags in God's sight, Isaiah 64:6 tells us. But by the way of the Cross men can have, as Paul declared in Philippians 3:9, "not my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God" [that is, the righteousness that has the Holy One

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as its source] – "the righteousness which is from God by faith."

Holy, Harmless, undefiled, Separate From Sinners

Dear friends, we could say a great deal more about these things. But let me move us along to the book of Hebrews. In the book of Hebrews we find the writer setting forth Jesus Christ, the Holy One, as the sure foundation upon which both Jew and Gentile can stand.

And in Hebrews chapter 7 verse 26 the writer piles one adjective upon another to emphasize not merely the fact that Jesus did not sin while He was on this earth but also to emphasize His impeccability – His inability to sin. The fact that His holiness is an absolute holiness. An undoubted holiness. The writer says first of all the Jesus is "holy" – and there he uses the Greek word *hosios*, which means that Jesus is religiously right and holy, as opposed to that which is unrighteous or polluted.

And then he says that Jesus is "harmless" – and here he uses a Greek word which means that Jesus is an individual who is absolutely devoid of evil. And then he says that Jesus is "undefiled" – a Greek word which means that He is absolutely free from contamination. And then the writer says that Jesus is "separate from sinners" – and here he uses a phrase in the Greek that literally means that Jesus is divided absolutely asunder from all those who miss the mark.

To the person and work of such a Holy One we need not – and indeed we

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cannot – add the smallest thing. The great cosmic reason for the person and work of the Holy One of Israel, the writer to the Hebrews declares, is not that we should pursue the impossible task of earning a righteousness of our own, but, he says, chapter 12 verse 10, "that we may be partakers of His holiness" (Hebrews 12:10).

The Holy One Triumphant in Revelation

But let me bring you quickly to the end of the story. As we come to the book of Revelation, we find the Lord Jesus in the early chapters of the book dictating letters to the seven churches of Asia through the Apostle John. And as Jesus begins to dictate those letters, in Revelation 3:7 Jesus says this: "These things says He who is holy, He who is true."

The phrase that is translated "He who is true" means the one who not only has the title of the Holy One, but the one who also has the true and demonstrated nature that corresponds to that title. It signifies the One who has been demonstrated in every respect to correspond exactly and completely to the idea signified by the name "Holy One of Israel."

In other words, the genuine Holy One and not an antichrist. By His person and work Jesus has shown Himself to be the only *bona fide* claimant of that title in all of time and eternity.

And as we come to the 15th chapter of Revelation, we find the saints singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, saying,

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Great and marvelous are Your works,
Lord God Almighty!
Just and true are Your ways,
O King of the saints!
Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
For You alone are holy.
For all nations shall come and worship before You,
For Your judgments have been manifested.

Here our redemption reaches its pinnacle. And where is its focus? It is on the unique holiness of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For You alone are holy." Dear friends, there is only one Person in the entire universe who has a perfect righteousness of His own – and that is Jesus Christ, the Holy One of Israel.

Who Shall Bring a Charge Against God's Elect?

Jesus tells us in Matthew 25 that one day He will sit in judgment over this world. He will tell the unrepentant and unbelieving on His left hand to depart from Him into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.

But Jesus will welcome the righteous, those on His right hand, those who bear His righteousness, He will welcome them into the kingdom that has been prepared for them from before the foundation of the world.

On that day, Jesus will in effect say to unbelievers and to the entire watching

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universe, "Which of you convicts these who are on My right hand of sin? They are My redeemed people, because I am their Holy One. They are in Me and I am in them. Which of you convicts Me – or those who are in Me – of sin?"

Indeed, as Paul writes to the Roman and Colossian believers,

Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?... (Romans 8:33-35)

And as Paul tells the Colossian believers in chapter two of that epistle,

For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power. (Colossians 2:9-10)

Are These Things True of You?

Dear friend, let me ask you a question: Can you say these things? Are they true of you? Are you trusting in the holiness of Christ alone for eternal life? Have you given up all notions that you can, or need to, earn a righteousness of your own to present to God? Do you understand that many will attempt to do that on the Day of Judgment, but Jesus tells us He will say to them, according to Matthew 7:23, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness"? Do you understand that to seek a righteousness outside of the perfect righteousness of the

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Holy One of Israel is in fact to practice lawlessness – to rebel against the law of God and to be condemned?

If you are not trusting in the person and the holiness of Jesus Christ alone for deliverance from God's wrath, and for eternal life in the world to come, it would be my privilege to explain to you that there is no other way. Jesus said, "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved" (John 10:9). You can only enter by His perfect holiness.

And if you are trusting in Christ, if you are trusting in the Holy One of Israel who was announced by Gabriel to Mary – especially at this Christmas season, I encourage you to rejoice in glory, wonder, and praise, in the holiness of your great God and Savior, the Holy One of Israel. Truly He is, the perfect and complete Savior, able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him.

About the Broadcast

The Scripture-Driven Church airs each week across the United States and around the world. Our goal is to obey Christ's Great Commission: preaching the Gospel to all, and equipping believers in Christ to live every area of life by the sole authority of Scripture, to the glory of our Lord and Savior.

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