

**Subject: Our Holy God**  
**Scripture: Psalm 99:1-9**

Of all the things the Bible teaches about God, none is more basic or important than His holiness. Psalm 99 refers to God's holiness three times. Look at Isaiah's vision recorded in *Isaiah 6:1-7* <sup>1</sup> *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.* <sup>2</sup> *Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.* <sup>3</sup> *And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.* <sup>4</sup> *And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.* <sup>5</sup> *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.* <sup>6</sup> *Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:* <sup>7</sup> *And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.* Isaiah was suddenly aware of God's holiness and his own sinfulness. May the Lord reveal His holiness so that may realize who He is and humble ourselves before Him.

### **THE ADORING PRAISE OF GOD'S HOLINESS**

God is to be praised because He is a holy God. We are dealing with the matter of reverence. As we come into God's presence we need to remember who He is and give Him the praise He so richly deserves. We need to thank Him for what He does, and we need to praise Him for who He is. The book of Psalms calls for God's people to praise Him and thank Him for His holiness. *Psalms 30:4 Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.* *Psalms 99:5 Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.* *Psalms 97:12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.* *Psalms 96:9 O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.*

Unless we understand something of God's holiness, true worship is not possible. If we truly worship God we don't just rush into His presence unprepared and unaware of His holiness. There is much so-called worship going on today that does not really honor God as holy. A lot of nice songs are being sung, nice feelings are being felt, nice thoughts are being thought, and nice emotions are being expressed, without any awareness of the holiness of God. People may disagree about different styles of worship, especially kinds of music. Worship is not about us. It's about God. Whatever the style of music or worship may be, it should make us aware of God and reflect the truth of His character. Maybe we need to be reminded of how God is being worshiped in heaven. *Revelation 4:8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

### **THE ABSOLUTE PERFECTION OF GOD'S HOLINESS**

The holiness of God is what makes Him unique. God's holiness is first mentioned in the Song of Moses after crossing the Red Sea. *Exodus 15:11 Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?* *1 Samuel 2:2 There is none holy as the LORD.* God's holiness means a couple of things:

- God is separate from all created beings – The highest archangel is actually closer to a worm than it is to God because an archangel is a created being and God is the only uncreated Being.
- God is separate from all sin

The Apostle John describes it this way: *1 John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* In the Bible light and darkness are often set in contrast. Doctrinally, light refers to truth and darkness refers to error. Morally, light refers to purity and darkness refers to sin. Because God is holy He cannot tolerate or condone sin. *Psalms 5:4 For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.* On the other hand, man can and does find pleasure in sin, but God can never find pleasure in it.

Some people choose to focus on God's love and forget about His holiness. Everything about God is holy, even His love. He doesn't sacrifice His holiness to love us. He loves us with a holy love. We can't fully appreciate God's love until we know His holiness. A person may say, "I think God is too good to punish sin." Actually He is too good not to punish sin.

### **THE ABUNDANT PROOF OF GOD'S HOLINESS**

God's creation of man reveals His holiness – *Ecclesiastes 7:29 Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.* When God made man He made Him in His own image, to reflect His holiness. When Adam and Eve sinned they rebelled against that purpose, and the image in man was marred, ruined. We still see the marks of God's holiness on all men. All people have an innate sense of right and wrong, even though it is imperfect.

God's name reveals His holiness – He is called "the Holy One of Israel" 30 times in the Book of Isaiah. *Isaiah 40:25 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.* *Psalms 103:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.* We begin the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed (holy) be thy name."

God's covenant reveals His holiness – *Psalms 89:34-35* <sup>34</sup> *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.* <sup>35</sup> *Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.* God pledged to keep His word by His own holiness because it is unchangeable.

God's law reveals His holiness – *Romans 7:12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.* One of the main reasons God gave Moses the Ten Commandments was to reveal His own character, especially His holiness, and lay down an absolute standard of holiness for His people.

God's worship reveals His holiness – God gave us two great object lessons in the places where He was worshiped for generations. At first was the tabernacle, a tent or moveable place of worship, and then later the temple, a permanent place of worship. Both of them the same basic layout. There was an outer court, a holy place, and then the most holy place (the holy of holies), where the ark was placed. God said this was where He would live on earth. God taught His people to respect Him, and that they had to approach Him in a prescribed way. A Jewish person would never think about going into the holy of holies. That would bring instant death. Only the High Priest, God's chosen man went in, and he was allowed to go in only once a year on the Day of Atonement. The entire sacrificial system reminded people of His holiness. When animals were killed and their blood was sprinkled upon the altar, the people were reminded of the awfulness of their sins and the holiness of their God.

God's judgment reveals His holiness – Whenever God judges sin, He reveals His holy hatred of sin. When He judged the world with the flood, when He judged Sodom and Gomorrah, when He judged Nadab and Abihu for offering strange (unauthorized) fire, God revealed His

holiness. When Jesus comes to judge the world, the Bible says He will do so in righteousness and holiness. God must punish sin because He is holy.

God's ultimate sacrifice reveals His holiness – The supreme demonstration of His holiness was at Calvary. The cross is more than a proof of God's love. It is a proof of His holiness. God is so holy that He turned from His own Son while He took the burden of our sin on Himself. ***Psalms 22:1-3** My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.* God paid the price for sin even though it cost Him the life of His own dear Son. ***Isaiah 53:6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. **Isaiah 53:10** Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*

R. A. Torrey wrote: "It would be no wonder if an unholy God could love unholy men; but that the God whose name is Holy, the infinitely holy God, could love beings so utterly sinful as we are, that is the wonder of the eternities. There are many deep mysteries in the Bible, but no other so profound as this." Skeptics and unbelievers love to ask the question: "How could a loving God send people to Hell?" But here is the question they seem to overlook: "How could a holy God allow sinners into Heaven?"

### **THE ALARMING PROBLEM OF GOD'S HOLINESS**

The problem is not with God, but with us. How can we ever have a relationship with a God who is so holy? On the one hand, the holiness of God draws us to Him. But on the other hand, we feel very uncomfortable and overwhelmed by His infinite holiness. The holiness of God overwhelmed Isaiah. When he heard the angelic seraphim call out "Holy, Holy, Holy," all he could say was: "Woe is me." He knew He was not fit to be in the presence of a holy God.

Years before when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, the holiness of God bothered him. Moses hid his face and was afraid to look upon God. He knew He was not fit to be standing on holy ground (Ex. 3:5-6). When Jesus performed a miracle on the fishing boat. Peter realized he was in the presence of the holy Son of God. ***Luke 5:8** When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*

A. W. Tozer said, "We have learned to live with unholiness." The reason why self-righteous people feel good about themselves is because they have never seen God in His holiness. Whenever we compare ourselves to other people we usually feel pretty good, but when we see ourselves in comparison to a holy God that's a different story. Imagine a flock of sheep with their white wool coats standing in a field of green grass. Now imagine that same flock of sheep standing on a hillside in a few inches of snow. Next to the grass they looked pretty and white, but next to the snow they look dirty and nasty.

When we see God's holiness, we see our own sinfulness. What must we do? When we see what Isaiah saw, we must do what he did. He humbled himself and confessed His sin. What did God do? He sent one of the seraphim with a coal from the altar to take away his sin. The altar was the place of sacrifice and shedding of blood. God wanted Isaiah to know the only way to be clean and to be right with God. He took the sin away and purged it. Only God can forgive sin and remove the guilt.