

If you want to be a great guitar player, where would you start? If possible you would probably study the masters and have the masters teach you. Right? Where do you go if you want to pursue holiness? You go to the Holy One.

Last time we introduced the subject of sanctification in general. We looked at the fact that sanctification and holiness are different English words with the same Greek root. From there we showed how prevalent is the subject of holiness in the scripture and how fundamental is sanctification to what God is doing in our daily lives. Tonight we are going to go where any study of holiness ought to go first. If we would have an accurate idea of the reality and nature of holiness, we must start with God. There can be no accurate idea of holiness nor the way we ought to pursue it without first looking to the one who is truly holy.

## **1. Holy, Holy, Holy**

**Isaiah 6:1-5**

**Revelation 4:6b-11**

**God** is holy to the third degree.

Holy, holy, holy is what the seraphim declare before the LORD without ceasing day or night. In response, Isaiah falls down in worship. In response the 24 elders surrounding the throne do the same. The holiness of God is his preeminent attribute.

## **2. What is meant by the holiness of God?**

The definition of holy is "set apart." God is set apart in the fullest sense of the word.

He is set-apart. He is unique. He is transcendent.

He eclipses, outstrips, and exceeds.

There is no other like the LORD. He alone is God. He alone is holy, holy, holy.

## **3. The Preeminence of the holiness of God.**

In scripture holiness is primarily a divine attribute and is referenced in the OT more than all other attributes combined.

## **4. Some aspects of the holiness of God.**

a. The Lord is separated from his creation and exalted above it.

◦He is separated by place. Isaiah 6 points out that creation does not manifest its own glory. The whole earth is full of God's glory. The Lord transcends his creation. He dwells in a separate place. He is portrayed as being in a temple. He is sitting on a throne and he is high and lifted up. He is holy in his exalted position. Though his glory is manifest in what he has made, he is above it. He is exalted over it. He dwells in a high and holy place.

Isaiah 57:15 declares – For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: **"I dwell in the high and holy place,"**

◦He is separated by his relationship to time. He transcends time. He "inhabits eternity."

b. The Lord is separated/distinct/above in relation to his creatures including man himself. No one may be compared with the Lord. He is not a man.

Numbers 23:19

1 Samuel 15:29

Job 38-39

c. The Lord is distinct from false gods.

Exodus 15:11 – Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

Isaiah 46:9-11

Each of these areas pertain to the being of God. In his very being, he is holy. In his omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, God is holy. In his eternity, God is holy. In his relationship to creation as its creator and "displayer" of glory, his being transcends creation. He certainly transcends the false gods human beings have created in their minds. He transcends the angels. They are the ones who speak of his holiness.

Yet God's holiness also manifests itself in his works.

d. The morality of the Lord is holy.

Isaiah 5:16 – "But the Lord of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness."

Habakkuk 1:13 – "You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong. . ."

1 John 1:5 – God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

God is morally perfect and righteous in himself. He cannot compromise his holy standard of righteousness in any way. Think of how the law of God was delivered. It came at Mt. Sinai. The people were forbidden even to touch the edge of the mountain. He spoke with fire and cloud and thunder and quaking of the ground in the same way as the threshold of the temple quaked in Isaiah 6.

It is clear from the whole of the scripture that God's standard of conduct itself is holy. It is that standard the violation of which is sin. So God's hatred of sin is born out of his holiness.

It was exposure to God's holiness that made Isaiah conscious not merely of his creatureliness but of his uncleanness.

Theologian Louis Berkhof has defined the ethical holiness of God as "that perfection of God in virtue of which He eternally wills and maintains his own moral excellence, abhors sin, and demands purity in his moral creatures." (*Systematic Theology*, 74)

### **5. The Holiness of God has ethical implications for those who would seek him.**

Psalm 24:3-4 – Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?

And who shall stand in his holy place?

He who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
 who does not lift up his soul to what is false  
 and does not swear deceitfully.

Holiness is required in thought, word, and deed.

Leviticus 19:2

1 Peter 1:15-16

### **6. The Holiness of God requires a proper regard.**

Isaiah fell down. The elders in Revelation fall down.

In contrast we look at Nadab and Abihu who offered strange fire before the Lord.

Leviticus 10:3 – This is what the Lord has said: Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

Uzzah put out his hand to steady the ark of the covenant. It was not to be touched by human hands. Dirt would have been more honoring to God. But the Lord struck him dead.

The proper regard for holy God is fear.

Isaiah 8:13 – But the Lord of hosts, him shall you honor as holy. Let him be your fear and let him be your dread.

Revelation 15:4 – Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?

For you alone are holy.

### **Conclusion**

God created man in his own image. Part of the image is holiness. Through disobedience that image is greatly marred. Yet through the work of Christ, God is restoring that image. At the cross, he restores his people to holiness positionally. In the future he will restore them fully. In the present he is restoring his people actively.

Ephesians 4:24 – “put on the new self created in the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Colossians 3:10 – “put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”

### **Practical Implications**

A proper sense of the holiness of God is requisite for sanctification. It puts us in the right frame of mind (reverential fear and a mind that he is fully worthy). Worship is what he is due. And our spiritual service of worship is the offering up of ourselves as living sacrifices to God holy and blameless (Romans 12:1).

Rightly understanding the holiness of God gives us a sense of the value of holy righteousness.

We want to emulate that in awe of which we stand. It stirs us to go after him in pursuit of fellowship with him and serving him, desiring to emulate him in the living of our lives, the meditations of our hearts, and the speaking of our tongues.