

## Lesson 8

### God Is Holy

Why is there such a flippant attitude by most men in our day towards God? God is spoken of in such a casual, frivolous or flippant manner, and there seems to be so little awe of God, so little true worship, and so little reverence for the Most High.

Why are we in this state of affairs? The answer is that we live in a land where there are millions of Bibles and appalling ignorance of the Scriptures. Most men simply do not know what the Bible teaches about God. The God of the Bible is virtually unknown, even to many who claim to be Christians. Men do not know or they have forgotten that God is holy. Without a proper concept that God is holy, men will never worship God aright, and they will always treat Him as a buddy rather than a King.

One of the names of God is **“Holy”** (Psa. 111:9). His official title is **“the Holy One”** (Job 6:10). God is called **“the Holy Father”** (John 17:11). He dwells in a holy place (Psa. 99:9) and sits upon a holy throne (Psa. 47:8). So holy is God that the angels cry out, **“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”** (Isa. 6:3). Did you know that the holiness of God is referred to in the Bible more than any other attribute of God? While one attribute of God is no more important than another, the biblical emphasis is upon the holiness of God. God wants us to worship Him for He is holy.

***“He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever—holy and awesome is his name.”*** (Psa. 111:9)

***“Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy . . .”*** (Rev. 15:4)

#### GOD’S HOLINESS DEFINED

The basic meaning of “holiness” in both the Hebrew and the Greek is “to separate”. God is totally separate from men because He is holy. There are two parts or aspects to God’s holiness. First, there is His majestic holiness which makes Him separate and distinct from all of His creatures. This aspect of God’s holiness speaks of His “wholly otherness”, His “absolute transcendence”, and His “awful majesty”.

***“There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.”*** (1 Sam. 2:2)

***“Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?”*** (Exo. 15:11)

It is God’s majestic holiness that awakens in man a sense of absolute nothingness, leading to absolute self-abasement. A confrontation with God’s majestic holiness is a soul-shaking experience, and it can never be completely explained intellectually but only sensed and felt in the depths of one’s being. Second, God’s holiness also speaks to us of ethical holiness. This means that God is absolutely pure, being separate from the slightest taint of sin. He is absolute perfection, and there is not one defect in His whole essence. God is faultless, spotless, impeccable and unblemished. God is the antithesis of sin.

***“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.”*** (1 John 1:5)

If it were possible to put a thousand suns together, they would not equal the light of God’s magnificent, infinite holiness.

God’s holiness, then, is His perfect love of righteousness and His perfect abhorrence of evil. Yet, no matter how much we define God’s holiness, there is no way the human mind can grasp it completely. The unsaved man is blind to God’s holiness. He may fear God’s power and admire His wisdom, but His holiness he cannot even imagine. While the true people of God do not begin to comprehend all of the holiness of God, they do know the God who is holy and they praise Him for His infinite beauty.

***“Sing to the LORD, you saints of his; praise his holy name.”*** (Psa. 30:4)

## GOD’S HOLINESS AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS

God’s holiness is manifested in His works, and holiness is at the base of all God’s actions.

***“The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.”*** (Psa. 145:17)

Only that which is excellent can come forth from Him. God’s creation of the world was perfect and He created man upright. But it was man who sinned against God, bringing sin into God’s creation.

God’s holiness is manifested in the law. The eternal moral law of God which is embodied in the Ten Commandments tells us that God is holy and required holiness from all His creatures.

***“So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.”*** (Rom. 7:12)

His holy law demands holiness and in so doing, it proves that all men are sinners, for no man can keep the law perfectly.

God's holiness was manifested at the Cross. God's holy abhorrence of sin against sinners was taken out on Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, God's Son, was "***the Holy and Righteous One***" (Acts 3:14) who did no sin and knew no sin. In order for God's holy demands against sin to be appeased, a payment for sin had to be made. Because God desired to save a people for His name, He sent His Son and poured out His holy wrath on Him that sinners who trust in Christ might be made holy. When Christ cried out on the Cross, "***My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?***" (Matt. 27:46), God's holy righteous demands against sin were being satisfied in Christ.

## GOD'S HOLINESS AND THE UNSAVED

Because God is holy, He hates all sin. God loves everything that is in conformity with His holy nature and hates everything that is contrary to it. A holy God must punish sin or He would not be God. God infinitely hates all sin.

***"The LORD detests the thoughts of the wicked . . ."*** (Prov. 15:26)

The non-Christian does not understand that sin involves thoughts as well as actions, for God knows all a man's thoughts. Man rationalizes evil and calls it "defects," "mistakes," "short-comings" and "infirmities," but God calls it sin and promises that He will judge it.

Since God hates sin and all men are sinners, then God also hates the sinner and the Bible says this is true.

***"The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong."*** (Psa. 5:5)

The unregenerate man may think that God will punish his sin but will not punish him personally. Not so, for God hates sin and He hates the sinner and holds him totally responsible for his sin. God is not going to cast the unsaved man's sin into a place called hell, but He is going to cast the sinner into eternal perdition. You cannot separate the sinner from his sin. Some may think that this is hard preaching, and I realize that I will never win a popularity contest preaching that God's holy wrath burns against sinners. However, I must preach it or I would not be faithful to my Lord or my calling as a Christian minister. Because I long to see every person saved, I dare to tell you that God hates sinners.

However, the Bible also tells us that God is love and He loves the sinner in Christ. That which God's holiness demands and the sinner cannot attain, God in grace has provided in Christ Jesus, the Lord. Every poor sinner who flees to Christ for salvation finds that he is accepted in the Beloved Son.

***“To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.”*** (Eph. 1:6)

When one is accepted in the Beloved, then God’s love comes flowing to the sinner like a mighty river. If you are without Christ, God will change his hateful wrath towards you to mighty love the moment you receive Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. For those who are born from above and who have trusted in Christ, they are positionally made holy or set apart to God through Christ.

***“It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.”*** (1 Cor. 1:30)

#### GOD’S HOLINESS AND THE SAVED

While God is absolutely holy, He does impart or share His holiness in a relative sense with His creatures. He does not share His holiness with all His creatures but with those creatures who are in Christ, those who have been touched by the grace of God, those who have trusted Christ as Lord and Savior. God’s people alone may become recipients of His holiness and this is why God commands the Christian to partake of His holiness.

***“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’”*** (1 Pet. 1:15-16)

Notice carefully that God did not say, “Be ye as holy as I am,” for that would demand absolute holiness and absolute holiness belongs to God alone. He is not talking about sinless perfection but progressive growth in holy living. The Christian is to be holy by partaking of the holiness of God in his experience. Christians must learn to revel in God’s holiness. When they do, they will have an experience much like Moses when he entered into the presence of a holy God.

***“Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”*** (Exo. 3:5)

Perhaps you are saying, “How can I be holy? I feel so sinful. I fall so short of what God requires.” Beloved, you can only be holy by the grace of God. As you yield to the commands of God, you shall grow in holiness. Expect holiness, for God has prepared you for it. Do you know that you were chosen by God to salvation for the purpose that you might be holy?

***“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”*** (Eph. 1:4)

Do you know that God called you to holiness?

***“For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.”*** (1 Thess. 4:7)

Do you realize that you are to be perfecting ethical holiness in your lives daily?

***“Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”*** (2 Cor. 7:1)

You say, “I am still not sure I can produce holiness.” Yes, you can if you are a true believer in Jesus Christ. Christ died for you that you might have a holy life.

***“Who (Christ) gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”*** (Titus 2:14)

You have been given the Holy Spirit that He might produce holiness in you.

***“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”*** (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

You also have the promise of God that He is working salvation in you.

***“... work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”*** (Phil. 2:12-13)

By the grace of God you can be holy. Oh, Christian, cast yourself upon His sovereign grace to make you more Christ-like!

Thank God for the slightest degree of holiness you have from God, for without holiness you would not even be saved.

***“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”*** (Heb. 12:14)

It is holiness in your life, beloved, that distinguishes you from the reprobate part of the world.

***“Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.” (2 Tim 2:19)***

The starting point for holy living is to get intimately acquainted with the holy God. If you once get a glimpse of God’s holiness, you will see your own wretchedness and hunger to be more like the God who redeemed you. Your attitude will not be, “What sins can I keep in my life?” but “what sins must go in my life to be more like my God?” When you see God by the eye of faith, you will say, “Take this sin from me and that sin and this sin. Oh, God, in light of your holiness and the grace and love you have shown me in Christ, I cannot stand my sin. Make me holy!”

## CONCLUSION

For you without Christ, I plead with you to try to understand that a holy God will not be merciful to you in eternity if you do not have Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. A holy God must judge sin and sinners, but the way of escape is through Christ who died for sinners. Flee to Christ before it is too late.

You say, “I can’t believe in Christ.” Then cast yourself wholly on God’s mercy and ask God to grant you the grace to believe in Christ. Oh, sinner, your only hope is in Jesus Christ. Apart from Christ, you will face the eternal wrath of a holy God. With Christ, you shall experience God’s love and all the spiritual privileges of one who is accepted in the Beloved.