

# The Holiness of God

## Lesson for Sunday, May 18, 2025

### INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ Imagine for a moment standing at the edge of something so powerful, so pure, and so utterly unique that it both draws you in and makes you want to step back in awe. That's a glimpse of what it is like to encounter the holiness of God.
- ⇒ God is not just a little bit holy - He is, as Isaiah heard the angels declare, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty". God's holiness is the central reality of who He is.
- ⇒ But why does this matter to us? Because God's holiness is not just a distant, abstract concept. It is both attractive and dangerous – something that comforts and challenges us at the same time.
- ⇒ As we continue our study on the attributes of God, consider this: God's holiness is the reason the cross was necessary, but it's also what makes the cross beautiful. It exposes our need, but it also offers us hope.
- ⇒ The holiness of God is not just a theological idea – it's an invitation. An invitation to see God as He truly is, to be honest about who we are, and to experience the transformation that only His holy presence can bring.

### BIBLE STUDY:

1. Defining the Holiness of God
  - a. As we mentioned in last week's lesson, there are only three times in the Bible when it is written, "God is..." They are God is love, God is holy, and God is spirit.
  - b. Brainstorm: Have the class work together on developing a definition.
    - i. Let the class do the work...
    - ii. Use some of these verses for references: Isaiah 57:15; 1 Peter 1:15, 16; John 17:11
  - c. Consider this definition: *Holiness is the absolute separateness from and exaltation above all His creatures, His creation, moral evil and sin. It is the perfection of God in all He is.*
    - i. To be holy means to be set apart, completely pure and morally perfect.
    - ii. God's holiness is His absolute moral purity and His complete "otherness" from the rest of His creation.
  - d. Why is understanding the holiness of God important for Christians?
    - i. First, the holiness of God is not just one attribute among many; it is the sum of all God's attributes. God's love is holy; God's justice is holy, etc.
    - ii. Second, the holiness of God is central to understanding who God is and how we are to live as His people. If we don't grasp God's holiness, we can't grasp Who God is and how we are to live in light of His holiness.
2. The Bible on God's Holiness
  - a. A key verse that helps us understand this is Isaiah 6:3.
    - i. The Lord gave Isaiah an extraordinary vision of Himself. Isaiah actually saw the Lord sitting on His heavenly throne, high and exalted.
    - ii. The Lord was exalted as the sovereign God over all the universe: above, before, and over all that exists. Transcending everything, He was exalted above all rulers and governments throughout the universe. He held dominion, ruled and reigned, over all powers and principalities, both in this world and the spiritual world.
    - iii. The threefold repetition of *holy* emphasizes that holiness is the most essential characteristic of the Lord.
  - b. Group Bible study: Look up these verses as a class to further strengthen what we know about what God's Word teaches us on this topic:
    - i. Exodus 15:11; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 96:9; Ezekiel 38:23
3. Applying God's Holiness

- a. There are two primary applications that each individual must take seriously.
- b. First, if God is holy, there is a chasm between God and the rest of creation – including humanity.
  - i. This seems like common sense but just in case: God is holy, and we are not.
  - ii. We are sinners, and our sin separates us from the Holy God (Hebrews 12:14; Isaiah 59:2 and Habakkuk 1:13).
  - iii. A stark reality is the fact that no sinner can ever approach God in their sin. This is why the Gospel is Good News!
  - iv. Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves (Hebrews 10:19-20).
- c. Second, God calls His children to holiness.
  - i. See Leviticus 11:45, Matthew 5:48 and 1 Peter 1:15-16.
  - ii. In 1 Peter 1, the Christian is called to holy living in “all manner of conversation.” This means every aspect of our lives: our speech, our thought-life, our entertainment choices, etc.
  - iii. Just like God is set apart from the rest of creation, the Christian is called to be separated from the sin-stained world.
  - iv. God’s holiness is the foundation of all moral values and the standard for our lives.
- d. In these two applications we see two realities:
  - i. A positional reality: we are made holy in Christ.
  - ii. A practical reality: we are to grow in holiness through obedience.
- e. The holiness of God and the holiness of our lives are inseparable. Tozer wrote: *Until we have seen ourselves as God sees us, we are not likely to be much disturbed over conditions around us as long as they do not get so far out of hand as to threaten our comfortable way of life. We have learned to live with unholiness.*
  - i. When Isaiah was confronted with the holiness of God, he was undone! “Woe is me!”

#### DISCUSSION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ Practical Implications for Daily Living
  - Worship: Approach God with reverence and awe, recognizing His absolute purity (Psalm 96:9, Hebrews 12:28–29).
  - Obedience: Holiness is lived out by saying “no” to sin and “yes” to God’s will (1 Peter 1:14–16, 2 Corinthians 7:1).
  - Witness: Our distinct, holy lives point others to the reality and greatness of God (Matthew 5:16, 1 Peter 2:9).
- ⇒ The Hope and Assurance of Holiness
  - God’s holiness is the pledge that He will complete His work in us—He will not rest until we are fully conformed to His image.
  - Holiness is both a present pursuit and a future promise (Hebrews 10:14 & Philippians 1:6).
- ⇒ Discussion/Application Questions
  - In what areas of your life is God calling you to greater holiness?
  - How can you cultivate a deeper reverence for God in your daily worship and decisions?
  - What practical steps can you take this week to “be holy in all your conduct”?