

Jehovah Kadosh – The Holy One - (Part 9)

God, The Holy One! God's Holiness is central to His character and is therefore the defining character of our God. Our God is perfect and true and every other aspect of His character derives itself from this one overriding quality. For this reason it would be wrong to think that God's Holiness was a *part* of who He is. It simply *is* who He is!

So what is Holiness? Imagine not only having never done anything wrong, but never having had an impure thought, a wrong attitude or made a wrong choice or decision. This is how God has always existed, and how Jesus lived his 33 years on earth. Holiness is total purity. God does not choose to be Holy; He is simply incapable of anything but being Holy. A.W. Tozer wrote in his Christian Classic, "The Knowledge of the Holy",

"Because He is Holy, all His attributes are Holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as Holy."

As a music team, it is important that this concept of God's Holiness is forefront in our minds as we lead His people in worship. A low view of God, a wrong belief of who He is, will lead us, and potentially others, into worship of idols, rather than the God of Heaven. If we are not worshipping Him as He is (in all holiness) then we are worshipping something else. An errant idea, a personal motive or a god so removed from who He really is, that it will resemble a golden calf, not a Holy, Living God.

I recently heard Louis Giglio preach on Jesus as 'my homeboy', a reference to a T-Shirt he had seen which depicted Christ as 'one of the gang'. Louis illustrated that God is many things, Creator, Saviour, Holy, Father, Friend, but He is never as low as to be 'our homeboy'. He cannot be 'one of us' in that sense. Yes, Jesus took on the 'Likeness' of mankind (**Phil 2:7, & Rom 8:3**), but He was never exactly like us, for He was Holy! Without sin, hating sin, shunning evil, and He remained on earth in perfect purity.

Tozer also writes, that "What comes to our mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us." We cannot allow Jesus to be reduced in our minds, to 'one of the gang'. We cannot think for a moment that God thinks like we think. Though it is good to come to God naked, or transparent, (that is, with all our failings on view – not hidden under self-made fig leaves), we can never assume that it is acceptable for us to remain in His presence in that condition. God *HATES* Sin! Sin is contrary to His very nature, and all His creation is suffering because of it.

Of course, the Christian is given full access to God, through faith in Jesus and in an eternal sense, is accepted by a Holy God as holy (and we will pursue this theme in later studies). However, a wrong understanding of God's Holiness will inevitably lead to a wrong attitude to the sinful nature. What I mean by that is if we do not have a high view of God's Holiness, then we will have a wrong view of our own sin and His acceptance of it. We will think it acceptable to be adulteress, drunkards, drug takers, thieves and slanderers, whilst calling ourselves 'His' and continuing in our service, brazenly standing before God unrepentant of our sin. Throughout Scripture (both Old & New Testament), God calls His people to "*be holy as I am Holy*". That is, God's people should come to Him 'set apart' for His service, repentant and humble. This is particularly the case for those leading worship if that worship is to be acceptable in His sight.

However, it would be ridiculous to think for a moment that when God tells His people to be holy as He is Holy, that we might attain such lofty heights on our own. We can never be holy in the way He is Holy, our sinful nature will not allow it. But this should never cause us to live lives that are wantonly sinful, depraved or lacking discipline. God's Holiness is the universal benchmark, and just because we will never attain that level of purity does not mean we should pursue a life of depravity and sin. No, it should be every Christian's heart's cry to be more like Jesus everyday, to set themselves apart for a journey *into* holiness, as he is Holy!

No great man or woman of God has ever achieved great things for His Kingdom without having God's ultimate Holiness central to their idea of whom they were serving. Certainly it would have been impossible for them to walk closely with Him, without acknowledging this aspect. Each of them had a revelation of this pivotal nature of God before they achieved what God had called them to do. Moses, when called to the burning bush, was instructed to take off his sandals, as the ground he was standing on was Holy. (**Ex 3:5**) Similarly, Joshua was told the same when the Lord appeared to him at Jericho. (**Jos 5:15**) David's psalms are full of declarations of the Holiness of God and Solomon wrote;

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."*

(Prov. 9:10)

The disciples were faced with Christ's holiness at the Mount of Transfiguration (**Luke 9:28-33**), as well as at the resurrection. Paul, blinded by Christ's glory, was transformed in his thinking, (understanding) before he could be used by Him. In the most graphic of circumstances, Isaiah saw God's Holiness in the temple, fell to his knees and cried;

"Woe to me...I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips"

(Isaiah 6:5)

Study 9 – questions

Isaiah, already a minister and prophet at the temple, already ‘set apart’ for service, when confronted with the true holiness of God, sees himself as ruined. He knew he was desperately short of the standard that he was created for. Such is God’s Holiness many times the angels are recorded as being struck with the immensity of it. The angels in Isaiah’s vision were calling to each other “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord Almighty.” Revelation describes a similar scene, with the four living creatures that never cease crying Holy. (**Rev 4:8b**)

Thankfully in the vision, Isaiah’s lips are cleansed by one of God’s angels, and his speech made holy. So too, Christ’s sacrifice and our acceptance of it, cleanses us from all unrighteousness (**1John 1:9**) to serve and to be proclaimed holy so that we might serve the name above all names, Jesus. However, let us never allow this new eternal state treat God, His purpose, or the gift of eternal life with such disrespect that we lower God to our level, and take Him for granted. He is a Holy God – perfect and pure. He is not our ‘home boy’, nor is He a play thing. He is not waiting for us to tell Him what we want Him to do because He is confused. He is the Holy, Lord God Almighty. John, when confronted with Jesus in all His glory & holiness, said the following, (keeping in mind; these two were very close for three years on earth).

*“His head & hair were...white as snow and His eyes were like blazing fire.
His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace...voice like the sound of rushing
waters...out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword...His face was
like the sun shining...When I saw Him I fell down as though dead.*

(Rev. 1:12-17)

Such is the magnificence and glory of our God. Such is His Holiness that man cannot stand in His presence. God’s Holiness is who He is. It is who we worship. It is why He acts the way He does, and why Christ did what He did. It is why death could not hold Him down, and why we have eternal life. Because He is Holy, we have been made holy.

Finally, I am convinced that it is God’s purity (or Holiness) that will be the overriding characteristic that will strike the heart of every man and woman when finally face to face with our God. From this holiness will flow every other emotion feeling and experience. For those of us who are believers in Christ, this Holiness will manifest itself as forgiveness, grace, mercy and love. But this same Holiness will manifest itself as judgement, wrath, condemnation and disappointment to those that have rejected the salvation offered in Christ. This is why the Good News of His Kingdom is so important. It is this truth that must be proclaimed, for the saving of many lives!

1. God *is* Holy! How do you think this truth affects everything God does?

2. What difference do you see in coming to a Holy God ‘naked’ (without trying to hide your sin) and coming before Him with blatant, unrepented sin in your heart?

3. Find an example of when God calls His people to be Holy, as He is Holy. What was going on during these times?

4. **Read 1Samuel 6:19&20.** Compare the Philistines words to that of John’s response in **Rev 12:17**. How can man stand?

5. Try to imagine God in all His Glory and Holiness. In all His purity! Imagine being face to face with Him. How do you think you might react?

6. Why do you think it is common for man / woman to try to make God more like us, rather than viewing Him as He really is?

7. What has God revealed to you through this study?