

Jehovah Kadosh – The Holy One - (Part 10)

In the last study, we looked at God's Holiness, and how this quality of God was central to who He was, and essential for mankind to understand if we are going to have a right view of Him, ourselves and of sin. The study this week will focus on how this fundamental character of God influences all that He does.

This character of Holiness has many benefits for the believer. God's people are able to worship a God who is reliable, just and on whom one's trust can be placed. Unlike other gods, our God doesn't require our perfection, service or offerings in return for His protection or love. He is not capricious (that is to say, his mood or decision is not based on how He feels at any given moment), and He doesn't require appeasement. He is God, Jesus, the same yesterday, today and forever! His actions and reactions are reliable, if not always understood.

Jehovah Kadosh – The Holy One, is most often referred to by this name in Isaiah, where He is known more specifically as the Holy One of Israel. This is interesting when we take a closer look at Isaiah's writings. For the most part, Isaiah is prophesying of the coming destruction of Israel, the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians and the eventual fall of Judah to the Babylonians. These 'calamities' are foretold to Isaiah by "The Holy One". God, the Pure, Holy, Righteous One of Israel is telling of His people's impending destruction by pagan (or unholy) nation(s).

So, how can a Holy God allow such a thing, one might ask? This is not an uncommon thought. Sometimes we hear people say things like "if God is so Holy and pure, why do bad things happen, or why am I suffering?" Of course, the exact answer to that question might not be so easy to understand, but one thing we can be sure of is that it is not happening because God enjoys our suffering, or because He is having a bad day! The bible tells us that 'in Him there is NO darkness at all.' (**1John 1:5**). Then why do these things happen? *BECAUSE* God is Holy!

As I have said a number of times, everything God does emanates from (shines from) His Holiness. Creation itself was formed in Holiness, by Holiness, for Holiness. The laws both physical and Spiritual were placed within creation in all Holiness. This included man who was not only given rule over creation, but was given free-will over it. You see, God allowed man to make choices. On what he would name everything, how he would spend his time and ultimately whether or not man would choose to live for the God that gave him life, or to live for himself. Once created, God declared it was very good! Why? Because everything was as it should be.

God could have done all of this, then forced man to live the way He wanted him to, but that would be to go against His own Holiness. It wouldn't be right. Man

would not be a reflection of God in creation, he would not love or feel love and his relationship with God would be more akin to that of a machine than a friend. For God to reveal His glory and Holiness, He had to do what was right, and what was right was to give mankind free-will. This, of course, was disastrous but it was the right thing to do. Does this decision in any way implicate God in the fall? Certainly not, but it shows how a Holy God will do what is right, even when the consequences of His righteous actions might bring about disaster for mankind.

Likewise, even now, God's Holiness allows us to continue to choose His ways, or our own. And, like the fall, the consequences of those actions are still there, not caused by God, but rather the result of our sinful selves. We often hear people say, how a Holy God can allow illness in the world. Firstly, there was no sickness until man chose to reject God's ways. Since then, all of creation has been groaning for its redemption (**Rom 8:22**), it has all become sick due to man's rebelliousness.

Secondly, much of the sickness we see has been caused by man, either directly, or indirectly. Man chooses to smoke, he risks lung cancer. Choose to drink too much alcohol, you will damage your liver and possibly lose brain cells. Drive fast, you are more likely to have an accident that will kill, or worse, severely maim you. Eat too much and you will get obesity and the range of health difficulties associated with it. As the developed nations have raped and pillaged the planet, polluting its food, air and water supplies, we wonder why we have droughts, assorted illness' and famines. He has always called to us (and still calls to us) to choose His way, or ours, 'life or death, blessings or curses' (**Deut 30:19**). The choice has never been too difficult or beyond man's reach (**see verse 11**), but in His Holiness He has always allowed the choice to be man's.

Many will point to the third world as evidence that God is not good, or else such living conditions would not exist. But again I ask, is there not enough in the world to feed everyone? If man, given rule over the earth, chose to do what was right, wouldn't there be enough food for all, access to reasonable health services for all, and drinking water for everyone? But apathy in the West and stubborn pride in some third world governments' lie at the heart of the problem, and therefore is not a slight on God's character. Indeed, I am sure such greed, hypocrisy and pain break God's heart, but His Holiness will, for now, allow man his way, until either he breaks and asks for God to intervene, or alternatively, man chooses to live differently.

However, it is true that some disaster *is* brought on by God. He Himself says; "I bring prosperity and create disaster. (**Isaiah 45:7**) Once again though, this should not in any way lead one to think that God is capable of pure evil. In fact, it is quite the opposite. You see, where God does bring about disaster, it is always with the best of intentions for the common good. That is to say, God may bring about that

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which we will see as bad, but has at its core, the long-term good. It becomes a matter of perspective! For example, God destroyed all of humanity in a flood, except for eight, so that He might start again with this remnant and return mankind to Himself. The Egyptians no doubt felt God was unfair, but their plagues were the result of their own stubbornness and God's need to release His chosen people under slavery. God brought the Assyrians and Babylonians down on Israel and Judah, carrying them off into slavery where many died in captivity, but the experience returned His people's hearts to Him. Finally, the cross of Christ would appear to be an extreme and awful thing for God to have His Son endure, but the result was salvation for all mankind who believe and freedom from the wages of sin, death (Separation from God.)

We cannot for a moment allow ourselves to believe anything God does is anything but good and pure. We may well be sick, we may well be persecuted, we may be suffering, but we can be sure that either God is not the source of our troubles, or if He is, it is for our own good or to bring about the fulfilment of His plan. He is incapable of evil, and does not delight in our sufferings. We can have confidence in Him, that in all He does, it is done in all purity, perfection and Holiness.

So what about hell? We hear many people ask, "How can a loving God send people to hell?" The simple answer is, as a loving, Holy God, He has no choice, (albeit that it is actually man who sends himself there). God never intended man for eternal damnation, only eternal life. Hell was created for the fallen angels (**see Rev 20:10**), not man. However, after the fall, sin entered God's perfect creation, and unholy man cannot be in the presence of a Holy God – His Holiness will destroy him. God's very purity will eliminate all impurity from His presence. The result? Hell (**see Rev 20:15**).

Make no mistake, God abhors sin and rebellion. It is contrary to everything He is and He will never tolerate it. Sin will always receive His wrath and condemnation, not because He chooses to act this way, but because His Holiness cannot allow it to be any other way. However, our loving and gracious God, also in His Holiness, has always offered a path for man to choose so that man might still have a relationship with Him and eternal life. Through Christ (**God's Holy One – see Luke 1:35, Jn 6:69, Acts 13:35**), God has made atonement (paid) for our sin, and He attributes Christ's Holiness to us, forgiving us and cleansing our ungodliness from His presence, so that we might stand before Him as if we had never sinned. This is the act of a loving Holy God!

But in His Holiness, He still allows man his free-will to choose. He still has no choice in His Holiness, to pass righteous judgement on un-paid for sin. He has done all He could do to pave the way for mankind to have eternal life. However, He will never force His will on man. The choice to follow will always be man's – *Because* God is Holy!

1. If God's Holiness means He will always do what is right, what benefit do you think that has for you personally? Are there any negatives?

God's Holiness means that sometimes He has no choice in the way He acts. How does this put a different perspective on things we blame God for?

3. Have you ever blamed God for bad things that have happened to you? Can you now see another purpose, or another reason?

4. How do you think your relationship with God would be different if He did not give you free-will to make choices?

5. What is the difference between forgiveness for sin and tolerating sin? How should this make us react to sin?

6. **Read Deut 30:11-19.** What was the choice Israel were given in those days? How is that different to the choice God gives us now?

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