



## The Holiness of God

Key to understanding God and our relationship to Him is the knowledge that God is holy, pure, loving and just. Otherwise, it is difficult if not impossible to see any need for change in our lives in order to have fellowship with God. When He had taken the nation of Israel out of Egypt and was giving them His Law at the hand of Moses, he made this point: "I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy...I am the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy." (Leviticus 11:44, 45)

The Psalmist expounds on God's holiness when he says, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne: Lovingkindness and truth go before thy face." (Psalm 89:14) "Clouds and darkness are round about him: Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne." (Psalm 97:2) In the middle of all the awesome events described in the book of Revelations, we find this exclamation in heaven, "Who will not fear you, O LORD, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed." (Revelation 15:4)

### When Men Meet a Holy God

On the few occasions in Scripture where God manifests Himself and His glory, it invariably causes a profound reaction. The classic example is found in Isaiah 6:1-8. In this instance, Isaiah sees the LORD seated on a throne, and the angelic hosts crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." Made conscious of his own unworthiness by the purity of God in His presence, Isaiah cries out, "Woe is me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." When God provides cleansing at the hands of the angels, and

asks, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?," Isaiah exclaims, "Here I am, send me!" All this is incited by the revelation of His holiness.

When we talk about the holiness of God, we are talking about the absolute purity of God's love and the righteousness of His dealings. The Apostle Paul defines love for us in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails." It is the love of God which overwhelms us, persuades us and draws us, when once we get a vision of how loving He is.

Consider the qualities of God reflected in the following verses: Psalm 33:5, "The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love." Psalm 34:8, "Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him." Jeremiah 31:3, "The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.'"

Those were references in what is called the Old Testament, the holy writings that preceded the coming of Jesus. In the New Testament, written after the earthly life of Jesus, we find even more revelation of the holiness of God, shown in His love. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." 1 John 4:9, "This is how God showed His love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him."

James writes an interesting observation on the nature of God in James 1:13-15, saying, "When



tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

### What God Wants from You

You see, God's intention is to bless you, to save you from your sins and His wrath, and to conform you to the nature or character of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Take a look at Jeremiah 29:11, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" That was a promise spoken to Israel and He speaks it to you. How can I know that? Well look at 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

Some object, "Well what about all those places where God condemns people and orders their death." His attitude is shown in Ezekiel 33:11, "'Say to them, 'As surely as I live' declares the Sovereign LORD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why should you die, O house of Israel?'"

Some misunderstand God's holiness by thinking that He simply acts according to His whims, and does as He pleases. The Bible does say he does all things according to His pleasure, but what that means is that He is pleased by doing solely good things, for the benefit of His creation, and in harmony with the principles of righteousness. God does not sit in the heavens and one day say,

"I think I will blow up a few planets, and wipe out a few million lives, just for the fun of it." He is himself fully committed to the laws of love which He has established. In fact, since He is the only one thus fully committed to those laws of love, He is the only one whom he will allow to rule the universe.

The Apostle John wrote in John 1:18, "No one has ever seen God, but God the only son, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known." Jesus stated this in another way when He said, "Anyone who has seen me, has seen the Father." (John 14:9) Jesus was the full demonstration, in a human form, of the holiness of God. He showed that holiness, not by isolating Himself from humanity, but by immersing Himself in human society and redeeming it. He displayed the holiness of God by going about "doing good." (Acts 10:38)

His holiness, His love, His benevolence is established in Scripture and in the Heavens above. That is why the angels and the redeemed are seen in Heaven, "And they were calling to one another, 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.'" (Isaiah 6:3) "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." (Revelation 4:8) When we finally see the true character and person of God, we are overwhelmed by His holiness and we declare with those myriads in heaven, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." (Revelation 5:13)

We invite your comments on this and other articles in our website. Please send your comments or support to:

Jerry J. Mercer  
P.O. Box 7238  
Auburn, CA 95604

Or, email us at [one@witnessforjesus.com](mailto:one@witnessforjesus.com)