

## The Holiness of God – Lesson 1

### Bible Study

1. The apostle John had a vision of God's holiness almost identical to Isaiah's. John is recorded in Revelation 4:1–11. Study this passage and answer the following questions.

a. List the similarities in the two visions.

Isaiah 6:1–4

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Revelation 4:1–11

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b. What are the differences in the two passages?

c. When Isaiah received his commission as a prophet, he had a vision of the holiness of God. When the Lord Jesus Christ was about to reveal to John the things which were to come, John saw a similar vision of God's holiness. What does this say about the importance of the holiness of God?

d. What does Revelation 4:8–11 teach us about worship?

e. Compare the worship described in Revelation 4 with:

■ Your private worship.

■ The corporate worship of your church.

2. The holiness of God is a prominent theme throughout the book of Isaiah. More than thirty times God is referred to as holy or called the Holy One or the Holy One of Israel. It is no wonder that God impressed on Isaiah so deeply a consuming view of His holiness at the time of his call to the prophetic office. In this Bible study we will look at a number of passages in Isaiah in which God is referred to as holy or as the Holy One.

a. Several passages refer to the attitude of the people of Israel toward the Holy One.

■ Alongside each of the following references write the attitude of the people.

Isaiah 1:4 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 5:18–19 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 5:24 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 30:8–11 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 31:1 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 45:9–12 \_\_\_\_\_

■ Of these attitudes, which do you think Christians today may be guilty? Give examples.

■ How appropriate would a lesson using these six passages be in your church or Bible study?

■ Is there any one of these attitudes which you see in your own life?

b. The following passages give examples of how God wanted the people of Israel to respond to his holiness.

■ Alongside each passage write the primary response the people should have demonstrated.

Isaiah 8:13 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 12:1–6 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 17:7–8 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 29:22–24 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 30:15 \_\_\_\_\_

■ Which two of these appropriate attitudes do you think Christians are most needful of today?

■ In which of these positive attitudes do you sense the most need for growth?

c. Isaiah also had much to say about the gracious attitude of the Holy One toward His people.

■ Alongside each of the following passages write God's attitude.

Isaiah 40:14 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 43:1–7 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 48:17–19 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 57:15 \_\_\_\_\_

■ What do these passages teach us about the character of a holy God?

■ What is necessary in order to experience these expressions of His character?

■ Which of these expressions of God's attitude is most meaningful to you at this time? Why?

■ Do you need to do anything, such as change one of your own attitudes, to experience that expression of God's graciousness?

**Think About It**

1. Read Exodus 3:13–15, where God first reveals His name Yahweh. The text indicates that this means "I AM WHO I AM." Read John 8:56–58, where Jesus uses this name for Himself. What do you think this name indicates about the nature of God?

Complete the following statement. God's name, I AM WHO I AM, implies:

2. Isaiah said that the train of God's robe filled the temple. By this statement he was portraying the majesty of God.

a. What is an appropriate heart response to this image of the supreme majesty of God?

b. What effect would this have on the way we approach God?

c. Many observers of the church today feel that Christians as a whole are far too casual in the way we come into the presence of God. If this is true, how can we develop a greater reverence for God as we come into His presence?

d. In Hebrews 10:19, believers are invited to come with confidence into the Holy Place. How can we come confidently into the presence of God without falling into the sin of irreverence?

3. Isaiah heard the seraphim calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory."

a. What did Dr. Sproul say in his lecture about the significance of the Bible's repeating something to the third degree?

b. What does this say to us about the importance which God places upon His holiness?

4. The seraphim said that the whole earth is full of God's glory. Does this correspond to your perspective of our world? When you look at the earth, are you inclined to sing the same song?

5. Look briefly at the following verses and describe the conditions of society in Isaiah's day: Isaiah 5:8–10; 11; 18–19; 20; 21; and 22–23.

Compare the conditions of society in Isaiah's time with today. Does the condition of society affect the glory of God?

6. Each of us faces the certainty of entering into the presence of God at death. As you contemplate this prospect, do you do so with a sense of fear or anticipation? Why?

7. How does your concept of heaven compare with what has been taught in Isaiah 6:1–4?

8. R.C. writes:

When Isaiah came to the temple, there was a crisis of sovereignty in the land. Uzziah was dead. The eyes of Isaiah were opened to see the real King of the nation. He saw God seated on the throne, the Sovereign One (p. 34).

What tragic moments in history do you personally remember experiencing? Did they cause you to think more deeply about God's sovereignty? Why?

9. Distinguish between the two words *Lord* and *LORD* as they appear in the text of Isaiah 6. To what does each refer?

10. With both angels and men, our feet are symbolic of our creatureliness. What else contributes to our sense of creatureliness?

11. Analyze the words of the hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy." What is it about this hymn that has so captivated people throughout the church universal?

12. R.C. stated that the inanimate objects of the temple itself had the “good sense to be moved” in the presence of God. How is it that intelligent people, endowed with the capacity of knowing God’s existence, flaunt their sin before Him, unmoved by His holiness? How can we, made in His image, be indifferent or apathetic to His majesty?

#### **A p p l i c a t i o n**

1. In his book, *The Holiness of God*, R.C. develops each believer’s hope of beholding the face of God.

Right now it is impossible for us to see God in His pure essence. Before that can ever happen we must be purified. When Jesus taught the Beatitudes, He promised only a distinct group the vision of God: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” None of us in this world is pure in heart. It is our impurity that prevents us from seeing God. The problem is not with our eyes, it is with our hearts. Only after we are purified and totally sanctified in heaven will we have the capacity to gaze upon Him face to face (p. 36).

While seraphs must shield their eyes, and Moses was permitted only a backward glimpse of God’s glory, we shall behold His face in heaven. Discuss the future anticipation of the Beatific Vision as found in Numbers 6:24–26 and 1 John 3:2. What will permit us to behold Him there in His pure, divine essence?

Is there anything you can do now to prepare for this experience? Is it presently your heart’s desire to gaze upon Him face to face? Write out what you hope this study will do to fuel the desire of your heart to see God as He really is.

2. A recent survey of ex-church members revealed that the main reason why they stopped attending church was because they found worship boring. Perhaps your experience leads you to agree with their conclusions. Whose responsibility is it to enliven the worship service? What is the interplay between the Spirit, the worship leaders, the congregation and you as an individual? Discuss with your pastor and others what they understand worship to be and the interplay of all those involved in it.

3. Complete the following statement.

*The particular truth in this lesson that has had the greatest impact on me is...*

*It has caused me to...*

*(describe how it has convicted, blessed, or motivated you).*

**F o r F u r t h e r S t u d y**

The corresponding sections of R.C.'s book, *The Holiness of God*, include pages 11–41.

The corresponding sections of Jerry Bridges' book, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, include pages 25–35.