

MSB259

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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THE HOLINESS OF GOD

by M.B. Hammond

In this age of television, the Internet and cell phones, people are so wrapped up in their daily life cycles that God seems to be missing from their lives. Not only is He missing, but knowing who He is and what are His personal characteristics is seldom if ever explained to our younger generations. One very basic characteristic of God is His holiness. Many people seem to have an inadequate understanding of what this entails. Isaiah says. **Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts** (Isa. 55.7-9). In that statement lies the essence of the holiness of God.

Our God, the living God, is a majestic Being, surpassing anything we could even imagine in grandeur, glory, grace, magnitude, righteousness and wisdom. God has chosen to remain silent for the last 2,000 years, but some day we will be allowed to see the marvelous works He has done in secret. We will stand in absolute awe and amazement wondering how we were so blind. The problem we have is that while God is known to us in the revelation He has given in the Bible, He is not like a man. Jesus Christ is God's expression, that aspect of God that relates the things of God to men so that we might know more of Him. God is not hiding from men, but He must be sought out to be known by men. Proverbs 25:2 informs us, **"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor (glory) of kings is to search out a matter."**

To understand God better, mankind must understand His holiness and His glory. In Isaiah 6:3, Isaiah sees the vision of the Seraphim before the throne

of God saying, "**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole world is full of His glory.**" God's glory is displayed in many different ways in Scripture, but in essence His glory is the esteem in which He is held. It involves the respect, admiration, exaltation and absolute awe produced in men at His greatness, righteousness, truth and love for His creation. God has revealed the amazing plans for blessing and teaching mankind of His ways in the words of prophecy in the Scripture. The prophet Joel asks, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" And thus we have the responsibility to know our God, what is important to Him, and what is required of us. In Micah 6:8 we are admonished, **He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.** To walk humbly with Him means we must learn that His glory is of greatest concern to Him.

Psalm 19:1 says, "**The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork.**" And Isaiah 42:8 states **I am the Lord: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.** So it is that while we may be most concerned with our own salvation and glory in believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is our prime duty to know, love and give glory to our God in Christ, over and above everything else.

In actual fact God's glory concerns His imminence to the world. This aspect reflects the indwelling of God in the world. God is invisible and inaudible to us; He is not part of this system He has created and thus is not impacted by time and space as we are. However, He is very interested in preserving His work and is the defender of it. He is everywhere in it at anytime and anywhere in it at every time, just as He is everywhere in it at every time and anywhere in it at anytime. We are too limited today to see the vast and far-reaching works of God, but in the future He will show us much more. We must understand His holiness because we, too, must be holy if we are going to represent the God of every grace in the Kingdom.

The holiness of God expresses His transcendence over the whole universe. That is to say, He is prior to and exalted above all creation and yet quite apart from it. Thus, a basic element of holiness is separation or separateness. Many Scriptural passages reflect this transcendence. Examples include God showing Himself as a pillar of cloud or fire with Israel in the wilderness (Exod. 13:21), the glory of the Lord settling on Mt. Sinai (Exod. 24:17), the radiant glory of Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew

17:1-8), and the conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6). Mark speaks of the glory of the risen Christ as a manifestation of the glory of the Father (Mark 8:38). Thus, men must recognize and worship God in His holiness and in His glory. This was the thought embodied in Jesus' statement in John 4:23-24 to the woman of Samaria, **But the hour cometh, and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.**

He even gave His followers a prayer and asked that they pray after this manner which starts with, **Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven . . .** (Matthew 6:9-13). **This prayer on the lips of men confirms what God says in Isaiah 57:15, For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, . . .** Thus, when we say the words "hallowed be Thy name," we are confirming that His name is Holy and to be given greatest reverence. This is worshipping Him in spirit and in truth, because it is first concerned with the reverence for His name (character) and second, it requests His Kingdom be brought to this earth, to supply mankind's pressing needs. Clearly, when this happens it will be the greatest act of grace God could give to men, even to fulfill the promises that God gave to Abraham and all the prophets of Israel. God is separate from all the sin, death and idolatry of mankind (Ezek. 39:25). That prayer reflects the fact that God's intrinsic holiness be established and recognized within all creation. God is the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 1:4), the Holy One incomparable (Isa. 40:25), and His majestic holiness is without equal and completely perfect (Exod. 15:11).

The Hebrew **qadosh** and the Greek **hagion** are identical in meaning, denoting "sacred, pure, holy, consecrated, separate, hallowed, sainted" (this is true of the nouns derived from the same roots). Thus, men must recognize God as the omni-present and all-powerful Being responsible for this creation and worship Him with the honor and glory that belongs to Him, while reverently respecting the holiness that IS Him. In honoring this holiness men will have to act in ways that separate them from the rest of mankind. Those who are part of His out-called ones (not a church) are consecrated to Him alone, and that is the meaning of the term "saint" when properly used. God's active claim upon a creature separates or consecrates that one to Himself. Each believer in Jesus Christ should see himself/herself in this way. Look how God addresses Israel (paraphrased): "consecrate yourselves and be holy

for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44-45), "you shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2), and "I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine" (Lev. 20:7, 26). Israel was God's chosen people, which means they were a holy nation, God's own possession (Exod. 19:5-6), the Lord established them as a holy people to Himself (Deut. 28:9), and, Israel was holy to the Lord, the first of His harvest (Jer. 2:3).

It is clear that in the work of the Apostle Paul, God's favor has been extended to the believers of the nations, as he said in Romans 15:16, "**that my offering of the Gentiles (nations) might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.**" Jesus Christ is identified by that special name, as Mary was told her offspring would be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35), Peter confessed that Christ was "**the Holy One of God**" (John 6:68-69), and Mark 1:24 states that even the unclean spirits confessed, "You are the Holy One of God." As for the believers, Paul calls the out-called ones to holiness, so that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the parousia of Christ" (1 Thess. 3:13). Paul says that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. 1:4). In fact the letter to the Ephesians on closer inspection is addressed to the saints, the ones being in, and believing in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:1, O.Q. Sellers' version). Paul's address in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians was to the saints, while 1 & 2 Corinthians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and Galatians he addressed to the **ekklesia** (out-called ones). The word for "saint" in Greek is hagios which is from the exact same root as the words "holy" and "holiness." This means we, as believers in Christ, must live our lives in separation from the things of men that most displease our God. The best advice is given by Paul in Ephesians 5. He starts by saying, **Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us as an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.**

So you are a "saint," not by the definition of some church, but by God's Word and your faith in Jesus Christ. And remember, God's holiness is quite real and as His saints we are separated for service to Him. Let your realization of His greatness and holiness grow. Our short span of life on this earth is but a shadow of what the future will bring regarding our knowledge of the Lord and we can rejoice in sharing His holiness.

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ISSUE NO. MSB259
Published Jan. 1,2002

