

God Revealed — Holy

God's nature and character is eternally distinctive and ethically and morally unique. There is no one like Him for He possesses inherent holiness. In every situation and action, God shows Himself to be true to His holy, pure, righteous, and just nature. Usually when God's holiness is revealed, His glory is made manifest. Due to the glory and holiness of God, people were in awe and unable to approach Him. The sound of His voice and the glory of God's presence revealed His holy nature. The tabernacle and the temple were physical places where God's holy presence was manifest in glory. Holiness is God conforming to His own nature, for He is high and lofty, holy and pure.

Isaiah 57:15 NIV For this is what the high and lofty One says— He who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Notice the two places God dwells.

In heaven, God is surrounded by holy angels who are occupied with the worship and declaration of God's holiness. Holiness is the single greatest quality of God and represents the vast difference between God and sinful man. God says He lives with those who are contrite and lowly in spirit.

In every Biblical example, when people met God, they were always overwhelmed by their own flaws and God's goodness. Without divine intervention, approach to God is impossible because God is totally pure, righteous, and separate from His creation. The holiness of God is so central to biblical teaching that it is said, “*Holy is His name,*” (Luke 1:49). When the Lord instructed His disciples how to pray, He said, “Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name...” Jesus was saying when you pray, God's name should be regarded as holy or “hallowed.”

In heaven, God's presence is surrounded by the declaration, “*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty.*” God is both Creator of the entire universe and all that is within it, and Lord over all. His holy nature is inescapable for God is omniscient. In every exposure we may have to God in worship, praise, prayer or spiritual life, God is majestic in holiness. When Moses stepped aside to behold the burning bush, he was confronted with the holiness of God.

Exodus 3:5-6 NKJV Then God said, “*Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.*”

Moreover He said, *“I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”* And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

When God came down in a physical manifestation, the common desert was turned into holy ground. Mount Horeb or Mount Sinai became known as the mountain of God due to the dramatic ways God came down on that place. During his encounters with God, Moses was instructed on how to approach the holy God. Yet, when God declared Himself to Moses, he hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God. When Moses asked *“What is Your name?”*, God said, *“I AM WHO I AM.”* You shall tell the children of Israel, *“I AM has sent me to you.”* Throughout Moses’ tenure, whenever he was granted special access into God’s holy presence, he was eyewitness of astounding miracles and heard the voice of God. He tasted heaven’s bread and stood beside the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud. Despite witnessing divine power and being near the holy God; Moses wanted to behold God’s face and glory. His request was denied, but God allowed him to come close to His presence.

Exodus 33:19 NKJV Then God said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

Exodus 33:20-21 NKJV But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” And the Lord said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock.

Exodus 33:22-23 NKJV So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”

Due to his proximity to God’s glory and holy presence, when Moses came down from the mountain his face was shining. Moses put a veil over his face to approach the people, who were afraid to look at him after his encounter with God’s glory.

Old Testament believers were taught to seek God’s face to find mercy and grace to help.

The benediction and hope of every Jew is to behold God’s face.

Numbers 6:24-26 NKJV “The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His

countenance upon you, And give you peace.” ’

The prophet Isaiah Ben Amoz had an amazing encounter with the Lord.

Isaiah 6:1 NKJV In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

Isaiah had been greatly influenced by King Uzziah. At the age of sixteen, Uzziah became king in Jerusalem and reigned for fifty-two years. He began his reign in godliness and was blessed by God. His life ended in disgrace when he entered the temple in pride and claimed the rights of a priest. When the priests attempted to stop him, Uzziah became enraged and while he was screaming, leprosy broke out on his forehead. He lived out the remainder of his life in isolation in his house, cut off from the house and presence of the LORD, (2 Chronicles 26:21).

In the year that Uzziah died, Isaiah saw the true King, the LORD of glory.

When he saw the LORD, the train of His robe filled the temple, which conveys the overwhelming presence and majesty of God invading the sanctuary. God’s dominion, glory and holiness leaves no place untouched.

Isaiah 6:2-3 NKJV Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!”

Seraphim, who have not been stained with sin and are in direct contact with God’s holiness, cover their faces from the face of God. Their song declares the holiness of God. “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” God is three times holy. When something is mentioned three times in succession it elevates the message to the highest level of importance. The elevation of this attribute of God is mentioned two times. Once here in Isaiah 6 and in Revelation 4:8.

Revelation 4:8 NKJV The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!”

The four cherubim surrounding the throne proclaim, “Holy, Holy, Holy,” to the Lord God Almighty. They are referring to the One “Who was and is and is to come!” When they declare the Lord is holy, the redeemed

around the throne fall down and worship Him who lives forever and ever. **Revelation 4:11 NKJV** They cast their golden crowns before the throne, saying: “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.”

Not only do the cherubim magnify God’s holiness, the seraphim declare the holiness of God.

Isaiah 6:3 NKJV The seraphim were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!”

Isaiah 6:4-5 NIV84 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. “Woe to me!” I cried. “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.”

Isaiah was undone or ruined when he saw with his own eyes the holiness of God. He cried out, “*Woe is me!*” He was coming apart in the presence of God’s holiness and could find nothing good within himself. Although he was a man of integrity and was called of God, yet in God’s holy presence all of his personal goodness was shattered and he was coming apart. In God’s holy presence he cried out, “I am a man of unclean lips.”

Isaiah 6:6-7 NKJV Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.”

The Holy God is also full of grace and mercy.

The seraphim quickly moved to provide the cleansing that was necessary for Isaiah.

What does the word “holy” mean?

No dictionary can adequately define the word holy. We often think of holiness as moral purity, being totally perfect in every detail. That is not the primary meaning of ‘holy’ in reference to God. Holy means ‘distinctive in sphere, character and requirements, separate, totally good and without evil.’ In modern language, it means ‘a cut above the rest.’ God’s holiness is more than separateness. He is transcendent and exists apart from and not subject to the limitations of the universe. He is higher and greater than any and all of His creation.

The disciples recognized this when the Lord rebuked the wind and waves and said, “Peace, be still.” His words caused the disciples to

realize that Jesus exceeded the usual limits. They asked, “*What manner of man is this?*” He defied their understanding of natural limits.

When Jesus told them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat, their nets began to break with the abundance of fish. When Peter saw this, he fell on his knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man,” (Luke 5:8). Instead of falling to his knees in worship, Peter cried, “*Please leave. I cannot stand it.*” He was in the presence of the holy Lord, who is so far above and beyond that He is “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

When the word holy is applied to God, it addresses every aspect of His being, nature and character.

Every attribute of God is holy.

- His love, mercy and justice is holy.
- His knowledge is holy.
- His Spirit is Holy Spirit.

One of our greatest questions is: “Why would a high and holy God be mindful of us?”

Psalm 8:3-4 NKJV When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?

When we allow God’s holiness to touch our lives, several things happen.

First, there is a sense of terror, fear and exposure in God’s holy presence.

For that reason, we may feel uncomfortable in the presence of the holy God. The Bible asks, “Who can stand in the presence of the holy God?”

Second, in His holy presence there is fullness of joy.

The joy comes when God in tender holy mercy, grace and love cleanses us from our sins and lifts us up to stand before Himself without condemnation. God has made provision for our condition through the holy and precious blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Romans 8:1 NKJV There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.