

God is Holy

- I. **Intro** – In a few weeks after getting back from Mexico, Bret will be starting a series on the Holy Spirit, related to our focal points for this year. In preparation for that, today we will look at what it means to say God is Holy. **Text – Isaiah 6:1-8. [slides 1-2]**

- II. Before we discuss the text – look at definition of holy – not a common word in our daily vocabulary, yet we use it quite a bit in our praise and worship and in how we describe God. What does holy mean?
 - A. Two words in the Hebrew and Greek.
 1. קִדְּשׁ – Hebrew - kadash.
 2. ἅγιος – Greek – hagios.
 - B. What are the English meanings for the root word for holy?
 1. Adjectives – holy, morally pure, upright, sacred, apartness, separate from human infirmity, impurity, evil, and sin.
 2. Verbs - consecrate, set apart to God, sanctify, and keep apart from unclean things/defilement.
 3. Noun form – sanctuary, Holy of Holies.
 - C. Adjectives.
 1. A day - **Genesis 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. [slide 4]**
 - a. What is this day known as? The Sabbath!
 2. Places - **Exodus 3:5** Moses is approaching the burning bush - **"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." [slide 6]**
 - a. Holy ground or places that are holy are described throughout the Old and New Testaments – like Mt. Sinai.
 - b. The New Jerusalem - **Revelation 21:10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. [slide 8]**
 - c. We will see over and over through scripture that God desires to be with his people, and that he will make a holy place to be with them. **Exodus 15:13 In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling. [slide 10]**
 - d. God makes a place separate from evil and sin.
 3. People - **Exodus 19:6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation... [slide 12]** - Israel.

- a. God calls the nation to be holy.
 - b. Throughout scripture we will read – “Be holy, for I am holy.” Example: **Leviticus 11:44-45** I am the LORD your God; **consecrate yourselves and be holy**, because I am **holy**. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. ⁴⁵I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be **holy**, because I am **holy**. **[slide 12]**
- (1). God calls individuals to be holy.

D. Verbs:

- 1. Consecrate – **Scripture Reading** – see the references to things holy or terms of holiness: **Exodus 29:42-46** For the generations to come this **burnt offering** is to be made regularly at the entrance to the **Tent of Meeting** before the LORD. There I will meet you and speak to you; ⁴³there also I will meet with the Israelites, and the place will be **consecrated** by my glory. ⁴⁴So I will **consecrate** the **Tent of Meeting** and the **altar** and will **consecrate Aaron and his sons** to serve me as **priests**. ⁴⁵Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. ⁴⁶They will know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God." **[slide 14]**
- a. Everything about the temple is to be holy, utensils, the sacrifices, the clothes they wore, what the priests ate, the place where the priest could eat – why? It is the place where the priests are to minister to a holy God and a holy God will meet with the priests.
- 2. Set apart - **Jeremiah 1:5** "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I **set you apart**; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." **[slide 16]**
- a. God had consecrated/set him apart for himself before Jeremiah was born.

E. Nouns.

- 1. Sanctuary - **Exodus 25:8** - Then have them make a **sanctuary** for me, and I will dwell among them. **[slide 18]**
- a. This is to be a holy place for God to dwell among Israel.
- b. **Leviticus 26:2** - Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my **sanctuary**, I am the LORD. **[slide 18]** Helps understand why some churches treat the sanctuary different than other parts of the church
- c. **Psalm 102:19** The LORD looked down from his **sanctuary** on high, from heaven he viewed the earth... **[slide 18]**

- (1). We see God's heavenly sanctuary.
 2. Holy of holies or the Most Holy Place - **Exodus 26:33** Hang the curtain from the clasps and place the ark of the Testimony behind the curtain. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. **[slide 20]**
 - a. The Most Holy Place was where the high priest went once a year to offer a sin offering and burnt offering.
 - b. Hebrews 9 discusses the differences between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. We will come back to some of those references later.
- F. Seriousness of Holiness in the Old Testament.
1. Sabbath Day.
 - a. How holy is that day? **Exodus 35:2** For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it must be put to death. **[slide 22]** Does that happen? Yes!
 - b. **Numbers 15:32-36** – a man gathering wood on the Sabbath is put to death. He was stoned. Co-worker!
 2. Entering the Holy Place.
 - a. **Exodus 28:42-43** Make linen undergarments as a covering for the body, reaching from the waist to the thigh. ⁴³Aaron and his sons must wear them whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting or approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they will not incur guilt and die. This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants. **[slide 24]**
 - (1). God was very specific on what they wore in the Holy Place and Tent of Meeting.
 - (2). Gold bells on the hem of their robe, to be heard when they went into the Holy of Holies – so they would not die.
 - (3). Plate of pure gold – seal – HOLY TO THE LORD must wear when enter tent of meeting or approach the altar in the Holy Place, so they did not incur guilt and die.
 3. Offering incense before God.
 - a. **Leviticus 10:1-3** Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. ²So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. ³Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke of when he said: "Among those who

approach me I will show myself **holy**; in the sight of all the people I will be honored." Aaron remained silent. [slide 26]

- (1). Does God take his holiness seriously?
- (2). The last three scriptures showed just some of the requirements of the priests. Would you like to be a Levite?

III. Verse 1-4 – Back to the Text.

A. **Verse 1 - In the year that King Uzziah died**, little bit of a setting.

1. There is some holiness issues during King Uzziah's reign.
 - a. **II Chronicles 26** speaks of his reign in Judah, he became strong and powerful, until he became unfaithful to the LORD his God – how?
 - b. He went into the temple, the sanctuary to burn incense.
 - c. Who was responsible to burn incense? The priests, the descendants of Aaron, were consecrated for the sanctuary duties.
 - d. Remember Nadab and Abihu earlier offering the wrong incense. King Uzziah was stricken with leprosy.
 - e. In that same time period Judah is burning incense and offering sacrifices in the high places. How does that treat God's holiness?

B. **Verses 1-4 - I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." ⁴At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.**

1. We see a picture of God in a holy place - he's seated on a throne, in the temple – a holy place.
2. He is being worshiped. God's holy presence requires worship.
 - a. The seraphs are calling – Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.
 - b. See another example of God's presence and worship. **Exodus 34:5-8** Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. ⁶And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷maintaining

love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." ⁸Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped. [slide 28]

(1). Discuss Moses' desire to see God.

- c. Similar passage to our Isaiah text is found in **Revelations 4:8-11** speaks of the four living creatures saying Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come, and twenty-four elders fall down and worship him. [This continues with question at Verse 5.]

IV. Verse 5.

A. What happens when one sees God in his holiness? One can worship like the seraphs and twenty-four elders. We do this

1. Song from this passage:

I see the LORD, seated on the Throne, exalted.
And the train of his robe fills the temple with glory.
And the whole earth is filled (3X) with his glory.
Holy, holy, holy, holy, holy is the Lord.

2. Hymn – **Holy, Holy, Holy**. [start low]
Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who wert, and art, and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! tho' the darkness hide Thee,
Tho' the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see;
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

- a. We see worship in this song, with seraphim from Isaiah 6.
- b. It says sinful man cannot see God's glory, which points to God in his holiness apart from man's sin.
- c. There is a hope in these songs to see God. But it takes God to bring unholy people to himself, so that they can worship him.

B. Second option when seeing God in his holiness is to respond like Isaiah – **"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."**

1. **Job 42:1-6** – where else do we see this response? Then Job replied to the LORD: ²"I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. ³You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. ⁴ "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' ⁵ My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. ⁶Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." [slide 30]

a. Job was a righteous man, in fact, you read the rest of the book; he would be a person who you'd think could stand somewhat in God's presence. But what does he do?

2. New Testament – Peter

a. **Luke 5:1** – Jesus is teaching by the Sea of Galilee, he sees two fishing boats, and got into Simon Peter's and asks him to go out a little so he can teach.

b. After he had finished teaching, he tells Simon to go out a little deeper and let out the nets.

c. Simon tells him that they had been working all night but hadn't caught anything. But because Jesus said so, he did it.

d. They caught so many fish that both boats were needed to bring in the fish, and the boats were so full, that they began to sink.

e. **Luke 5:8** When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

3. Seeing God's holiness causes us to see our wickedness.

a. Job was a righteous man. Yet he despised himself and repented in dust and ashes.

b. Peter was a sinful man and fell prostrate at Jesus' knees. I am sinful.

c. Isaiah says woe to me. I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips. Now I've seen the King, the LORD Almighty.

4. What do we do? We are like Adam and Eve in the garden, the sanctuary of God and we have no place to hide and we are naked before God, before his holiness.

a. **Pause!!**

V. **Verses 6-7** - Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

A. We need God to provide the answer. We have no holiness in us to rely on. We also cannot meet the demands of the law for God's holiness.

1. Isaiah – one of the seraphs takes a live coal from the altar and touches his mouth, his unclean lips, and tells Isaiah that his guilt is taken away and his sin is atoned for. God has provided for Isaiah. What do we do?

2. We look to Jesus.

a. **Hebrews 9:24** For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. [slide 32] We see Jesus as the Holy High Priest.

b. **Hebrews 9:12** He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. [slide 32] We see Jesus as the Holy Sacrifice, once, not having to be repeated every year.

c. **Hebrews 10:10** And by that will (the will of God), we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. [slide 34]

d. Jesus touches our unclean bodies and makes us holy by the sacrifice of his blood. All of the laws that we read about in the Old Testament that required holiness were a shadow of things to come. But the shadows points to the reality in Christ.

e. We can enter the presence of God.

(1). **Mark 15:38** The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. [read] The entrance to the Most Holy Place was open.

(2). **Hebrews 10:19-22** says that we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, opened for us through the curtain (which was his body) and we can draw near to God.

VI. **Verse 8** - Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

A. Before trying to do anything for God, we need to know him. To know him means we have to deal with the issue of our sin and his holiness.

1. We see this again with our example of Simon in **Luke 5**. He saw that he was a sinful man. Jesus' response to him in **verse 10** - ...**then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men."** **[read]**
- B. But do you and I have difficulties living a holy life? Yes!! Jesus has given us something else as part of his sacrifice; he's given us his Holy Spirit to live the holy life.
 1. **Titus 3:5-6** he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the **Holy Spirit**,⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior ... **[slide 36]**
 2. **Ephesians 1:13** And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised **Holy Spirit**, **[slide 38]**
 3. We don't go back to the law, because the law will not keep us holy. But God has given us his Spirit to live holy lives.
 4. **Hebrews 12:14** Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be **holy**; without **holiness** no one will see the Lord. **[slide 38]**

VII. Application.

- A. Have you come to a Holy God? His holiness will require every knee to bow and every tongue to confess that Jesus is Lord.
- B. What if you do not know God and are not prepared to meet him?
 1. You will stand naked before God, without anything to hide that wickedness and that nakedness. You won't be able to say, "but you're a God of love". Love is one aspect of God, but holiness is another. Look at the end times:
 2. **Revelation 6:15-16** Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!" **[slide 40]**
 - a. Isaiah saw the thresholds shake when God was declared as holy. Peter declared that he was a sinful man. You are faced with a choice.
 - b. If you have heard this today, you will not be able to say you never knew. You won't be able to ask "what about people on the other side of the world who have not heard?!" Your life stands in the hand of the one who gave you breath and who can easily take it away.

When that breath is gone, you will not be able to change your mind. You need to choose today.

- C. What if you've already accepted Christ and his holiness?
1. How does holiness affect our everyday lives? What in our lives is not separate or devoted to God?
 - a. **1 Peter 1:15-16 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." [slide 42]**
 - b. The command that was in the OT applies to us also.
 - c. We sing songs about holiness, do we understand them? Are we serious about them?
 - (1). Lord prepare me, to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true. With thanksgiving, I'll be a living, sanctuary, Lord for you.
 - (2). Holiness, holiness is what I long for. Holiness is what I need. Holiness, holiness is what you want from me.
 - d. **2 Corinthians 7:1 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. [slide 44]**
 2. Do you see how the Holy Spirit is working in us to sanctify us, make us holy before God?
 - a. **1 Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; [slide 44]**
 - b. We are to be the holy place on this earth.
- VIII. Communion – let us come to share a meal with a Holy God, and a Holy Son of God, Jesus Christ, with a conscience free in the Holy Spirit.
- A. Reminders.
 1. Open Communion – do not need to be a member here, but need to know Christ. If you would be saying "Woe to me", without knowing Jesus as your sacrifice, please do not take communion.
 - B. Communion Passage: **1 Corinthians 11:23-26 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For every time you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

- C. As the bread and juice are being passed, ask God to reveal his holiness to you. Then without fear, ask him to show you his answer, his grace in Christ to make you holy.
 - D. Pray for the bread.
 - E. Pray for the cup.
- IX. Benediction - **1 Thessalonians 3:12-13** **May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.**