

God's (un)Secret Identity: Our God is Holy

Part 2 Our God is holy, so let us dedicate ourselves to Him Isaiah 6

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We are approaching an attribute of God that is immense, filled with beyond-ness
 We cannot look at any attribute of God without running into this one
 God is holy, and all of what He does is holy, inseparable from His love, grace, power, wisdom
 God is holy, and we are to be in awe of that, and as unthinkable as it may seem, imitate it
 Our aim today is to know better what it means that God is holy, and understand the implications
 of this attribute to God's people, who are called to be holy

1-To be holy is to understand that God is in a status by Himself

Judah's beloved king Uzziah has died, after 52 years of bringing the people of God peace
 Assyria is knocking on the door of northern Israel, ready to attack
 Their world is in upheaval, and God comes to a young man named Isaiah, and gives him a vision
***"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up;
 and the train of his robe filled the temple."*** 6:1

What do we need when God shakes the world...we need to see God on His sovereign throne
 The Apostle John tells us in **John 12:41** that the One on that throne was Jesus
 Jesus is the **'Lord...high and lifted up'**

He is the **'Lord'**, the name Adonai, the sovereign God, absolute in power
 The point is clear: there is upheaval in Israel, but God is on His throne, ruling over all!
 One person said, *'When the outlook is bleak, try the uplook'* and this is indeed what God does
 for Isaiah

God is sovereign, He is *always in control of all things, bringing about His purpose and will*
 I cannot understand how anyone, Christian or otherwise, can be anchored in this life with no
 view or a low view of God's sovereignty

"The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all."
Psalm 103:19

The train of His robe filled the temple-the symbol of a king's glory and rule and majesty-and that
 glory filled the whole earth, **verse 3**

Christian, are you struggling with fear and anxiety in our time of upheaval, of being shaken?
 Meditate on this heavenly scene and those emotions will burn up like mist in the rising sun
 Jesus Christ is on his throne, He is in control, He has this, and His glory will be magnified!
 Isaiah needed this vision, his world was collapsing

The vision goes on: ***"Above [Jesus] stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he
 covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew."*** 6:2

Here in Isaiah Jesus Christ is ruling on His throne in heaven over everything and angelic beings
 called Seraphim are attending Him

They each have 6 wings, with two of them covering their eyes
 As majestic as these creatures are, even they cannot look on the pure, holy brilliance of Jesus
 They are like Moses who covered his face when He approached the burning bush
 With two more wings they covered their feet
 In the ancient world, bare feet were associated with filth or immodesty

Even these sinless angelic beings could not compare with the unbridled purity of Jesus Christ,
 Who is infinitely above all of His creation, even these majestic, pure beings
 With their final two wings they flew, echoing back and forth their praise to God, ***‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!’*** 6:3

The ***‘LORD of hosts’*** is Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of all might, the Commander of all armies,
 in both heaven and earth

It was this name that motivated Luther to write his great hymn, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*
 Yet even before calling out this great name, the Seraphim exalt Him as ***‘Holy, holy, holy...’***

If you have the ESV version in front of you right now, you’ll see an exclamation mark at the
 end of verse 3 behind the word ***‘glory’***

That was put there by the editors to for emphasis only, it’s not part of the original
 Neither NT Greek or OT Hebrew had grammatical devices like underline, bold, or italics
 Hebrew scribes emphasized using superlatives and repetition, repeating something 3 times was
 the strongest form of emphasis possible in the bible

Parents, we know this as we often say in frustration or fear to our kids, ‘No, no, no!’

God is ***‘Holy, holy, holy’***, and His holiness is immeasurable

But what does the word ***‘Holy’*** even mean

‘Holy’ at its root means apartness, to be separate

The holiness of God means He is set apart from all created beings in majesty and perfect moral
 purity, unable to be reduced to what is common

In the temple, tongs for the altar were holy because they were used only for that purpose

Holy Scriptures means the Bible is separate from, apart and beyond any other book

Holy matrimony means a man and woman are separated from all other relationships, previous
 romantic ones, parents even, and joined together for the rest of their lives

Holy cow means we should all burgers and steaks more than any other foods...okay, not really!

God is holy, ever above, separate from all creation, unstained with absolutely no sin or evil
 thought that He has ever had from eternity past to eternity future

If you could somehow put God under the some spiritual electron microscope, you’d find no trace
 of impurity, not a scintilla of moral evil, not one evidence of wrongdoing

He is holy, holy, holy, in a category by Himself, sharing company with no other

This is why Christian, we should not utter, *“Oh my God, what a great movie that was”*

This is the point of the 3rd of 10 Commandments God gave: ***“You shall not take the name of the***

LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain” Exodus 20:7

We must not bring God’s name down to something that is common, rolling off our tongues
 without thought or reflection

2-To be holy is to be horrified by sin, personal and national

“In the year that King Uzziah died...” 6:1

King Uzziah of Judah was a great king...until the end, when his success went to his head
“But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the LORD his God and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.” 2 Chronicles 26:16

‘unfaithful’ means he violated his duty, failing to give God the worship He deserves
 He grew proud, and what a sneaky thing pride is...we should never, ever declare ourselves
 humble for pride disorients us, it blinds us to ourselves
 One form of that blindness is to admit we are prideful *without* being repentant of it
 I have a friend who often tells me he struggles with pride, yet he isn’t crushed by that, broken,
 undone, therefore he isn’t truly repentant and his struggle is not really a struggle
 I have another friend with diabetes whose feet went numb, couldn’t feel them anymore, and
 started tripping and falling all the time
 Pride does this same thing...numbs our conscience, causes us to trip and fall over ourselves
 Pride goes before the fall, right?

Well, pride moved King Uzziah to take reach for what was not allowed for him to have
 Like Adam and Eve, he didn’t want limitations, he was king after all
 If he wanted to go into the temple and offer the sacrifice to God on the altar himself, he believed
 he should be able to do that
 He didn’t want to need a mediator, a priest, to make atonement for him, he wanted to offer it
 With gospel eyes and ears, that means Uzziah began to be filled with his self-righteousness
 This is the person whose pride grows confident in his own goodness, and how pleased the Lord
 must be, look how I serve Him
 This is where pride takes us, and it is absolutely deadly to our spiritual life, for God’s holiness
 and our sinfulness are incompatible

Researchers have now developed a hand-held scanner that shines a laser on skin spots and moles
 to detect the presence of skin cancer, and amazing leap in cancer treatment
 But what reveals the moral cancer called sin is the holiness of God, and it does so with brilliant,
 painful clarity in the life of Isaiah

“And I said: ‘Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’” Isaiah 6:5

Isaiah suddenly saw his own sin clearly as well as the sins of his people, and that knowledge
 ruined him... ***‘I am lost’*** means he was destroyed
 He pronounces a curse on himself: ***‘Woe is me’ ...I am a wretched, cursed sinner***
 He is suddenly aware of his deadly condition, and knows there is simply nothing he can do

3-To be holy is to be made pure

Last week, I had an annoying smudge on one of the lenses of my glasses
 I took my glasses off, and used what I thought was my clean finger to clear it off, but as you can
 guess, all I did was make it worse
 Friends, that is what our self effort, our self-righteousness does to our souls...they make matters
 worse

What is morally dirty cannot make anyone morally clean

Only perfect purity can do that, and there is not within us that quality, it must come from outside of us

King Uzziah was blinded by the pride of his accomplishments, and God struck him with leprosy, a near perfect, terrible symbol of the moral decay called sin

Isaiah saw that same condition in his own heart

Martin Luther said, *"Here the bottom falls out of all merit, all powers and abilities of reason or the free will men dream of, and it all counts nothing before God. Christ must do and must give everything."*

Christian, we are saved and made righteous only by the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf, not by our own effort or good works, and to depend on ourselves only makes our sin worse

And Isaiah 6 is about to show us God's power to make us clean, to consecrate us for Himself

"Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: 'Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.'" 6:6-7

A coal from the altar, the place of sacrifice, touched his lips and his guilt was taken because his sin was atoned for

From the place of sacrifice came the means to make him holy

Peter echoed this commanding us to ***'be holy, for God [is] holy'***, and then explaining how we can be holy: ***"God paid a ransom to save you...And the ransom He paid was not mere gold or silver. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God."***

1 Peter 1:18-19

A person is made holy by the precious blood of Jesus Christ the moment he or she comes broken to the cross, and cries out for salvation

We heard the cry of Isaiah, we saw how God made him holy, now look at the change in his life

4-To be holy is to want more than anything to serve God

Holy is as holy does, sounds like something a Christianized Forrest Gump might say but it is true Holiness is the cry of the heart that says to God, 'Use me'

It is not just a desire, but a desire that needs to be acted upon, lived out

"And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here I am! Send me.'" Isaiah 6:8

It would be a grave error imagining Jesus standing up on His throne, putting His hand over His eyes peering out over the earth, asking Himself, *'Hmmm...is there anyone down there I can task with this job?'*

Isaiah would later say, ***"The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name... And he said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.'" Isaiah 49:1, 3***

God set Isaiah apart for a special, unique purpose and Christian, He has done the same for you!

To be holy is to know that God has called you, purified you and set you apart for Him, and life is not worth living unless you are living out God's purposes

To be holy is to have a constant prayer uttered to God, *Your will not my own*

It is to awaken every day yielding all of yourself to God again...I am your servant, use me
 It is the certainty that because of faith in Jesus Christ, ***“you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”***

1 Peter 2:9

To whom have you proclaimed the excellencies of God in the past week, month, or year?
 This is why God chose us, called us, purified us, set us apart for Himself, made us holy
 Christian, your job has been given to you by God, so ***“in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”*** 1 Peter 3:15

You have been chosen for a higher life, to fulfill God's plan for you
“You shall be holy, for I am holy” is to be holy as God is holy is to be separated, purified by
 God, and devoted to His service

Amen

Pray