

"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY"

Revelation 4:8

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Usage of the word "holy" in the scriptures:
 - 1. It is found 657 times in the Bible.
 - 2. It was not used in the first 2,500 years of recorded history.
- B. The first usage of the word "holy" was at the burning bush, **Exodus 3:5**.
Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." (NKJ).
- C. Though the word *holy* is not found in Genesis, it is found *70 times* in Exodus:
 - 1. Instruction given about the keeping of the Passover involved a *holy gathering*, Exodus 12:16.
 - 2. There was the *holy Sabbath* to the LORD, Exodus 16:23.
 - 3. God considered the Hebrews a *holy nation*, Exodus 19:6.
 - 4. "Remember the *Sabbath* day, to keep it holy." Exodus 20:8.
 - 5. The priests had to wear *holy garments*, Exodus 28:2.
- D. "Holy" is found more than 220 times in the writings of Moses.
- E. It is also found 45 times in Psalms and 120 times in the books of prophecy.

I. THE BASIS OF HOLINESS:

- A. Holiness is determined, not by intrinsic worth, but by its association with heaven.
 - 1. God took *ordinary* animals and made them *extraordinary* when sacrificed to Him.
 - 2. Anything associated with heaven becomes "holy."
- B. 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!" **Revelation 4:8**.
- C. **GOD IS THE BASIS OF HOLINESS.** Found in both NT and OT:
 - 1. "For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. *You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.*" **Leviticus 11:45**. Peter quotes this verse in the NT: "Because it is written, *Be holy, for I am holy.*" **1 Peter 1:16**.
 - 2. His command was addressed at first to the Israelites, but it is with equal propriety addressed to Christians, as the professed people of God. The foundation of the command is, that they professed to be his people, and that as his people they ought to be like their God. Compare Micah 4:5. *It is a great truth, that people everywhere will imitate the God whom they worship.* They will form their character in accordance with his. They will regard what he does as right. *They will attempt to rise no higher in virtue than the God whom they adore, and they will practice freely what he is supposed to do or approve.* (Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database).
 - 3. This is the basis of true holiness. God is holy and we must partake of His nature.

II. THE OPPOSITE OF HOLINESS:

- A. We may think the opposite of holiness is unholiness, but the Bible consistently uses another word: *profane*.
 - 1. Our limited definition of the word profanity has to do with vulgar language.
 - 2. However, this is not God's definition of profanity.
- B. EXAMPLE: When Nadab and Abihu sought to offer strange fire, it was rejected. The NKJ calls it "profane fire." **Leviticus 10:1-2.**
- C. EXAMPLE: In describing reasons for the Babylonian captivity, God said: "Her priests have violated My law and *profaned* My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am *profaned* among them. **Ezekiel 22:26.**
- D. The opposite of holiness is far more than unholiness. *It is profanity!*

III. THAT IS THE WAY IT WAS IN THE OT. HOW DOES THAT IMPACT US?

- A. "Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in *holy conduct* and *godliness*," **2 Peter 3:11.**
 - 1. The Greek term translated "what manner of persons" is, literally, "of what country," thus emphasizing Paul's reminder that Christians are citizens of the colony of heaven (Phil. 3:20), and they ought therefore to remember always that they are merely strangers and sojourners here (Heb. 11:13-16). (GA Commentaries).
 - 2. The verb in the phrase "ought you to be" denotes *continuous being*, and might properly be translated, "ought you to be found," i.e., found constantly engaging in all holy living and godliness. (GA Commentaries).
 - 3. Holy conduct: *conversation* (KJV), *lives* (ASV); *behavior* (Strong's Dictionary).
 - 4. Godliness: *piety*; being *devout*; being like God.
 - 5. A motivation to holiness: "*since all these things will be dissolved.*"
- B. The Greek word translated holy – *hagios* -- is also the root word for *saints*.
 - 1. Translated "holy" or "holiness" 181 times in the NT.
 - 2. Translated "saints" 62 times in the NT.
- C. God has taken *ordinary people* and made them *extraordinary*.
- D. The basis for OUR holiness then is our relationship to God.
 - 1. We are *holy*, we are *saints*, because of our relationship to God.
 - 2. As with days, places, and things, God takes *ordinary people* and makes them *special*.
- E. The characteristic which makes a Christian holy is the separation from things that are unholy or profane, **2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.**
 - 1. Notice the differences between things holy and profane:
 - a. Do not be unequally yoked *together with unbelievers*: remain separate.
 - b. *Light with darkness*: they are always opposites.
 - c. *Christ with Belial*: Many scholars believe that Belial is another name for Satan.

- d. *Temple of God with idols*: Flee from idolatry, (1 Corinthians 10:14).
2. Come out from among them and be separate: there is no union between holy and profane.
3. Do not touch what is *unclean*: stay away from things that are impure or profane.
4. Perfecting *holiness* in the fear of God: holiness is a huge part of the Christian life.

F. It is NOT our goodness or value that makes us holy. GOD is the basis for Holiness.

CONCLUSION:

- A. The lives of those who are sanctified cannot be like those without God.
- B. Do not ever forget that without holiness, no man can see God! "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, *without which no one will see the Lord.*" **Hebrews 12:14.**

Ricky Phillips
Martin, TN
Martin Church of Christ

rphillips@martinchurchofchrist.org

A. Consider holiness and Christian worship:

1. The Lord's Supper on the first day of the week is holy -- all else is profane.
2. Unleavened bread and fruit of the vine is holy -- all else is profane.
3. Congregational singing is holy, -- all else is profane.
4. Vocal music is holy -- all else is profane.
5. Preaching the Word is holy -- all else is profane.

3. God's name is holy:

- a. In the Ten Commandments: "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*.
- b. "He has sent redemption to His people; he has commanded His covenant forever: holy and awesome (reverend) is His name." *Psalms 111:9*.
- c. In the model prayer: "In this manner, therefore, pray: our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name." *Matthew 6:9*.
- d