

God is Holy

The Character of God-- part 4

July 22, 2018

Our culture doesn't miss anything as badly as it misses who God is. God is "dumbed down" to what people want him (or her?) to be, like "grandpa," rocking on his porch. God is "dumbed down" to an "it": a force, or an idea. Even a cursory reading of the bible would not only dispel such notions as silly, but would also show that man's errors about God are nothing new.

DAY 1: What is God's holiness?

1. God is separate from and above His creation.

Hosea 11:9 "I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor devastate Ephraim again. For I am God, and not man—the Holy One among you. I will not come in wrath."

Though man is made in the image of God that does not mean we are identical to God. Our similarities include personality, rationality, purposefulness, able to make moral choices, and ability to enjoy relationship. The differences between man and God are striking! God is Creator, we are creatures. God is omnipotent, our power is puny. God is omniscient (He knows everything), our knowledge is limited. God is omnipresent (He is fully everywhere); I try to remember where I am!

2. God is wholly pure.

There isn't a week that goes by that I don't hear someone sit in judgment of God. Sometimes its obvious. "Why would God let a hurricane come ashore? Why does God let people get diseases like Muscular Dystrophy? Why doesn't God stop human evil more often?"

Isaiah 5:24 "Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you for your righteous acts have been revealed."

It's not we who sit and give God a grade. It is God who will hand out "grades." We act like a proud college freshman who walks into class with his critique sheet of how the professor did.

3. God abhors and rightly punishes sin.

Habakkuk 1:13 "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong."

One reason God is so hard on sin is because sin is so hard on people.

Exodus 34:6, 7 "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished."

4. What strikes you about God's holiness?

DAY 2: A stunning picture of God's holiness

1. Our passage deals with Isaiah the prophet who got a glimpse of God's holiness. Try to imagine what he saw of God, and of himself.

Isaiah 6:1 "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple."

Isaiah 6:2 "Above 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."

Isaiah 6:3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Isaiah 6:4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

2. The passage is filled with imagery, meant to give us pictures of God. Below, jot down what each of these images may mean:

a. A high and exalted throne.

b. The train of His robe fills the temple

c. "Seraphs" = literally, "burning ones." Angelic beings: faces, feet, wings, hovering around throne;

d. Why did they cover their faces?

e. What were the seraphs calling to one another?

f. the temple was shaken, and filled with smoke.

3. What strikes you about God, from Isaiah 6:1-4?

DAY 3: God's holiness reveals man's sinfulness.

1. We continue with our Isaiah 6 passage.

Isaiah 6:5 "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."

2. Let's look at the effects of seeing God in this vision. Jot down what strikes you about each of his responses:

a. "Woe to me! I am ruined!"

b. "For I am a man of unclean lips ..."

c. "...and I live among a people of unclean lips..."

d. "...and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

3. What strikes **you** personally about seeing God in this vision?

4. There are times in our lives where we see the ugliness of sin in our lives, in our hearts, and from our words. Isaiah is broken.

5. The prophet Zechariah realized that the punishment God gave His people "fit the crime."

Zechariah 1:6... Then they repented and said, "The Lord Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do."

1 Peter 1:15-16 Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.... "Be holy, because I am holy."

6. What struck you from today's verses?

DAY 4: God forgives sin when we confess sin.

1. Let's continue our story in Isaiah 6.

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

2. The seraph flies to Isaiah with a live coal in his hand. Why?

3. What did the seraph tell Isaiah?

4. How was Isaiah forgiven for his sin? How was guilt expunged? How did atonement happen?

5. What ***prompted*** the seraph to fly to Isaiah with the live coal in his hand?

6. What did Isaiah "do" in order to be forgiven?

7. What had God done to grant forgiveness?

8. Let's personalize this.

a. When you sin, what should you do in the pursuit of forgiveness? (look back at Isaiah 6:5)

b. What is God's part in forgiving sin?

c. What things have you "tried" in trying to "earn" forgiveness?

d. Did Isaiah have to do any of the things in your previous answer? Why not?

DAY 5: God wants to use you to take His message to others

1. Let's finish the story in Isaiah 6.
2. For a story full of surprises, the ending may be the most surprising.
3. Think about a time when you have been **deeply** aware of your sin, and like Isaiah, broken over it. Which of the following were you tempted to do?

- Wallow in failure.
- Sulk in discouragement.
- Give up on being "a Christian"
- Punish yourself with contempt
- Continuously ask yourself, "How could I have don't that? I should have known better! How could I have been so stupid?"
- Feel ashamed of yourself.
- Hide your sin from everybody.
- Feel embarrassed to go to church.
- Don't go to church because you feel "like a hypocrite."

4. Here's what's surprising. Isaiah may have felt a lot of those things, but notice what God's NEXT WORDS are to Isaiah!

Isaiah 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? ... "

5. The question is directed at Isaiah! What do you think Isaiah thought when he realized God wanted to use his life for God's purposes?

6. What would have been your response to God's questions?

7. Here is Isaiah's answer.

Isaiah 6:8b And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

8. The question, "How could God EVER use me, after what I did?" doesn't seem to register with God! What strikes you from today's devotional?