

Holiness

by Dean Taylor

This sermon emphasizes the concept of holiness, highlighting the awe-inspiring nature of God's holiness and the need for repentance and purification in response to His holiness. The speaker delves into the idea that God is completely other, transcendent, and set apart from us, emphasizing the importance of understanding and revering His holiness. Through passages like Isaiah 6, the message conveys the overwhelming presence of God's holiness and the transformative power of His purification in our lives through Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Isaiah 6:3, Acts 17:30, Romans 10:17, 1 Peter 1:15, Psalms 39:5

Topics: "God's Holiness", "Repentance and Purification"

Description

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Transcript

But the concept, the piety of holiness, I'm afraid we have lost. And I do believe that my generation killed the word holy. The next generation buried it.

And I believe that the generation, the younger generation today, has turned and desecrated the grave. Holy, holy, holy. I love the meditations that Brother Jeremy gives.

I usually end up thinking about them for a long time afterwards. As a matter of fact, my message today, if you recall, Brother Jeremy, that a few nights or a few Sundays ago, we were talking about the essence, the ultra essence of things and how God is outside of our entire understanding. To be able to create us, he must be outside of that.

And that conversation sort of inspired this message. So I'll be thinking also on your meditation there. It's a blessing.

Well, it's a little bit cold and I'm going to be talking on holiness. And so it's a topic that I usually don't, you kind of think of more in hushed tones. And so here we are outside and I feel a little funny shouting to the outside here, but it is what it is.

So maybe it's providential, though, because God desires us to be holy within the stuff of earth and his holiness to be glorified amongst us. And so it forces me, I think, to do that. Also, I broke my glasses this week.

And so I'm going to have to be using readers, which is a little tough for me. The text that I have today that we're going to be looking at that's going to be basing on this message is found in 1 Peter 1, 15 through 16. And I decided that as I began to prepare this message, as you're turning to that, as I was preparing this message on the word holy, I began to look at it and there was so much of it.

And I was feeling like I was cramming so much into this and getting from the holiness of God and then to the holiness that God requires of us and then to the holiness of worship. I really decided to divide it into three different sermons. So today I would like to particularly look at this holiness of God and this word holy.

In this three-part series, if you would, I would just like it to be looking at the word holy. So a guiding passage that I think goes through each of these is found in 1 Peter 1, 15 and 16. But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct because it is written, be holy for I am holy.

Can we start with prayer? Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we come to you pondering this word holy that you've given us. And oh God, as we're here on this earth and I think of my life and I come before you, oh God, there's no way I can do justice to this word.

But God, I pray by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit and by your word that you gave to us that reveals who you are, I pray that you would be glorified and that we would get just a glimpse of who you are as you've shown us and you've given to us in your word that you are holy. So God, I pray help my words today, my weak and feeble words to do some justice by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit that we all can see a better glimpse of that you are holy. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Holy. Do we understand this word today, holy? When I think of this word holy, I started to ponder what are some of the images that come to your mind? And the image that came to my mind, I remember years ago I was traveling with a revival conference with Sermon Index, Greg Gordon, and we were in Scotland doing the revival conference in Scotland. And after the conference, I had a chance to go on a visit.

Christian, I think Stephen was with me. And we went through England and we went up to Wales and saw many of the places where the Welsh Revival were and where John Wesley was. And one of the most impressive parts of that was visiting the home of John Wesley.

And as we were visiting their home, and there's so much part of that that's interesting, just being there across, when you walk into the house, across the street is a cemetery that John Bunyan is buried, and who wrote The Pilgrim's Progress, and Susanna Wesley, his mother. And you go into this house and you see all these little things, these interesting things about his life. You know, you see he's like 5'6", 120 pounds, and how he lived so simply.

He lived to be 88 years old and died very simply. He said if he would die with more than, I think he said six pounds or something, then everyone should call him a cheat and a robber, paraphrasing it. Because everything he did, I mean millions of pounds came through his hand, but he just poured it into the kingdom.

And as I was there in his house, and you're seeing all the different things, a part of his life, and then you're going to the bedroom where he was there and where he died, and the last words were on his mouth, where he was speaking of his time, that he's going to be praising God in heaven. But the most impressive of all that is that right off of his bedroom was this prayer closet. And it's really powerful.

I mean, John Wesley's prayer closet. And as I looked at it, if I could imagine the room being here, and it's a little, I don't know, about that big coming off the room, window at the end, there was a brick wall. I don't know if there was in the 1700s, but there's a brick wall.

And then a little desk here with a kneeling bench, and a King James Bible opened up in this little room. Wood floors, polished, very simple. And I walked into this room and I just thought, wow, I mean, John Wesley prayed.

He said at four o'clock in the morning, he was raised in the morning, and pray over the souls that he was leading to Christ, and pray over his life, and pray that. And as I pondered that in the little tour guide that we were at, and I just said, do you mind if I just take a minute in here? And she said, yeah, yeah, go ahead. Take as long as you want.

And I was just like, wow, I just got to pray in here. You know, it's, I mean, this place is holy. I prayed for my family, I remember.

I remember praying for my church, praying for the future of my family and my church, and God's grace, and I don't remember all else I was praying on. But what made that holy? Holy. You know, I think it was his life.

I mean, there's things we disagree with his theology, but there was something about John Wesley's life that was just so intentional about living for God, that was so on purpose until he was 88 years old. They had his preaching schedule posted on the wall of 88 years old. He was going all over town and all over England preaching still to this day.

He had a consecrated life. It was his theology that everything he did, he was glorifying God and just being marveled. And when you read his sermons, how he was caught up in who God was.

It was in his worship. And it was all those things, I think, that made that moment holy. And those are the three things that I would like to break these three messages in, just the appreciation of a truly understanding that God is holy.

A consecrated life of holiness will be the second message. And then our worship will be the third message. A worship that is holy.

A worship that is holy. So God, today I'm going to focus on the holiness of God. And when you read through these guys, you read through these people, and I just love the generations before, reading from the Waldensians or the early Anabaptists or the early Reformers even when they're talking about God.

And it's a kind of piety that is foreign to us today. A kind of piety where you just see these men and women get with God and know God and they just ponder Him and His holiness. The text, again, as Peter gave to us in 1 Peter 1, 15 through 16, but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct because it is written, be holy because I am holy.

We don't like the word holy. It's too religious. It's, in that word itself, religious is a bad word today.

It seems too Catholic. We don't need holiness. We don't need special things or special glasses or special buildings.

We're all holy, we tell ourselves. And this is true in many ways. But the concept, the piety of holiness, I'm afraid we have lost.

And I do believe that my generation killed the word holy. The next generation buried it. And I believe that the generation, the younger generation today, has turned and desecrated the grave of holy.

My generation killed it. The next generation buried it. And now they are desecrating the grave of holy.

But, you know, I think the loss of holy is so much worse than we could possibly realize. It's much more insidious in all different parts of our life, much more destructive than we could possibly ever realize. Both theologically destructive, socially destructive, mentally destructive, physically destructive.

The loss of holy. For me, I see it's fleeting from me. It's like I try to grab hold of it.

I want it back. I want it deeper, but it's fleeting. It's running from me.

I want more of it. I want more of holy. Sometimes today it seems we almost openly mock it.

I don't want to mock it. I want more of it. But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct because it is written, be holy for I am holy.

So let me ask you just a quick question. We have a lot of students here. What, in its simplicity, what does the word holy mean? I'll ask you.

What does it mean? Thank you very much. Thank you, Asher. In its very practical word, it means to be set apart.

The Hebrew word is kodesh, if I'm saying that right. Apartness, set apartness, separateness. To be something special and something other.

It's transcendent. And that word transcendent means it's not of this. It's beyond.

It's not here. It's not me. It's completely other, brother, as we talked about the other night.

It's just not part of, it's something other. It's something special. God is totally above his creation, his creatures, including me.

In the New Testament, the word, what's the Greek word for holy in Greek? My Greek students here. Thank you, it's hagios. And this means, again, to be set apart, to be reverend, to be sacred.

And you know, this idea again of how it's so lost today. Because it's true that God can sanctify anything. We don't need special, Jesus made it very clear.

We don't have to go to a special mountain, or we don't have to go to a special temple. That the spirit can bring holy places all over the place. But we have to be very careful with this.

And I'm going to get into this with the last sermon on worship. Because here's the thing. Yes, everything, almost, many things can be holy.

I will grant you that. But just because almost anything can be holy, it doesn't mean that everything is holy. You see, if everything is holy, then by definition, nothing is holy.

If everything is holy, then by its very definition that you just gave to me, then nothing is holy. So we must understand that while God gives us this freedom, and gives us this ability to not have to go to Jerusalem, and not have to have a Vatican, or not have to have these things. The process though, of holy, the sanctifying work of holy is still intentional.

It is still something that we set apart for a special purpose, for something that's divinely other. And God is so much that. But as he who called you is holy.

Think of what we just said there. You also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, Be holy, for I am holy. Holy, the other, the completely other.

As I was praying and looking through the Scriptures for a verse that really capsulated this idea of God being the holy other, the passage that comes to mind is Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2, verse 2. It's a very powerful concept of who God is coming from Hannah. And she says this, she says, No one is holy like the Lord. And this is awesome, listen.

1 Samuel 2, verse 2. No one is holy like the Lord, for there is none beside you. Did you hear this? There's none. Nor is there any rock like our God.

Amen. No one is holy like the Lord, for there is none beside you. Nor is there any rock like our God.

There is no one like him. He is completely separate, completely different. And this is a fundamental point.

And I'm going to unpack this on many different levels, this concept. Because if you get this, if we get this understanding and clean ourselves from sort of just the modern paganism that we sort of just breathe into ourselves from the way we view God and the way we view spiritual things, it will help us. Now God wants to reveal himself to us in many ways.

And he does this. In Romans chapter 1, he tells us that he gives us the marveling of his grace and his power and his Godhead, even by the stars and the trees. And he says this in Romans chapter 1, for since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even the eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

But Paul tells us that when people gaze into, that there's something that he is, by his design, he has created things to give glory to him and make us ponder God. And it should do this. And so no one was out, no one is without excuse to turn to God.

But Paul is also very clear to make us understand that although he's given us these things, he's not in them. The tree is not God. The stars are not God.

And he goes on to say, although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile. What does the word futile mean? Yeah, waste their time. They became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Professing to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. God wants us to see nature and to see things and to glorify him. But he doesn't want us to think that he is the tree.

He is the rock. He is inside of that. And it's subtle.

I'm going to show you some nuances of that subtlety that can get into us and just sort of modern pagan thinking. And then in all that, he's revealed himself. In Romans chapter 3, he went on, verse 21.

But now the righteousness of God, apart from the law, is revealed, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. In the word of God, he has revealed himself. Witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

When we have the word of God, and we try to put a lot of emphasis on the word of God. At our school, we try to let you learn the Greek and the Hebrew and to study the scriptures and to know it because God has revealed himself to us by his word. The word of God.

It's such a precious gift that he's given to us. It's so amazing. And here's the difference.

Here's where we get ourselves into trouble in sort of our pagan, cultural, philosophical thinking. God cannot be reached by just coming up to some sort of philosophical ladder. That it's Christ that came down to earth that gives us salvation.

You know, many people say, well, there's different ways to God. It's funny, even when I was ministering to the refugees and some of them would be very strong Muslims, they'll say, well, there's different ways to God. And many of them would give this analogy.

There's different ways to climb the mountain. You've heard that expression. There's different ways to get to the top of the mountain.

And you've come your way and I've come my way. But see, here's the problem. When you climb to the top of the mountain, you haven't got any closer to God.

Because here's the most remarkable, incredible thing about God. It's not about climbing up the mountain to ascend to God. It's about God coming down to us in Jesus Christ.

And so all the different ways up the mountain are vanity. All of them are vanity. It is God coming on to us.

So universalism, that is the idea. What is universalism? Yeah, everyone's safe. So the concept of universalism is not just wrong because God is unmerciful.

Or he has some unmerciful plan to save people. Universalism is wrong because it's nonsense. God came down to earth.

The word, the big theological word. I'll give you a big theological word. It's the word ontological.

It means the very essence of something. And so universalism, the idea that anybody can be saved, is not wrong because God is somehow unmerciful. It's ontological nonsense.

God makes himself known by Jesus Christ, by coming to us. Not by some different routes of ascending into some sort of philosophical thought that we come to God. He is other than that.

He is other than our philosophy. He's other than our best thinking. He's other than our thoughts.

He is God. He is holy. He is holy.

Isaiah 45, 5 puts it this way. The prophet Isaiah. I am the Lord.

I am the Lord and there is no other. Apart from me, there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me.

The tendency for us to create God in our image is so easy. And it's constantly we need to be bathing our souls and our minds in the word of God and see how he reveals himself to us so that we don't create God in our image. When you go to pray, what are the images that come to your mind? What do you, what are you praying to? Because you see, it's so easy for it just to be a religious experiment or religious thing.

Who is at the heart and the core, the ontological essence that you pray to when you come before God? Because you see in the Old Testament with Jeroboam. And what is Jeroboam famous for doing in the Old Testament? It creates like this really wicked system that goes against God, right? But what's interesting about Jeroboam's system is they had a lot of things that look like regular worship, right? I mean, you came and you had holidays, you had priests, you had, you had all these things. But at the essence, the ontological essence of what he worshiped was what? Cow.

It was, it was a false God. It was not God. And so to understand who God has revealed himself to be is so important because God is holy and he will not share this, this, this idea of who he is with anyone.

Isaiah 45, 5 again. I am the Lord and there is no other, God said. Apart from me, there is no God.

I will strengthen you though you have not acknowledged me. So here's two shades of nuance of pagan thinking. What is the definition of pantheism? Somebody tell me.

Pantheism. Thank you. God, everything is God.

So pantheism particularly is so, there's the tree God, there's the, you know, there's the shed God or whatever. And, and as we look at these things that this is kind of what a lot of tribal religions will have when you go to, you know, different places. If you're studying American Indian religions that are here.

If you go to, pantheism is common. But there's a subtle pantheistic thought that gets into us and gets into mysticism sometimes. And it's a definition, panentheism.

Can anybody define panentheism? Panentheism is different than pantheism. And it's this, panentheism is all things exist within God's being. The entire world of nature and history exists within God, but they do not exhaust God's being.

He is just beyond it. Now this sounds a lot closer. This sounds spiritual, but it's really dangerous.

And it's really wrong because God wants us to understand that he is completely not like us. He is completely different. He is whole.

Modern mystics will say this here. I found one just preparing this message. I just googled a few.

Here's one. I don't know who he is. A guy named Matthew Fox writes, as the ocean is in the fish and fish are in God, so God is in everything and everything is in God.

And this is, this is a big problem because it gives us this idea that you can just sort of philosophize and make your way up some sort of spiritual ladder and finally coming up to God. And it comes into a universalism and it comes to something that's very wrong. It's confusing.

The understanding of who God is in a true sense of holy. It's not that if you could travel the universe. I mean, sometimes I, you know, as we have this kind of mindset, if I could get in a spaceship and I could really just go to the edge of the universe, then finally I'd get to heaven.

Hey, heaven, I'm here. You know, and this kind of idea we have in our mind, maybe from cartoons or something that you'd finally get that God exists somehow at the very edge of heaven. And then if you could drive a spaceship far enough, you'd get there.

You see, this is wrong. God is not just somehow part of this. He is completely other.

He is ontologically completely other. Now, I have a lot of problems with this theologian Horton, but in his concept of this talking about God being in this other, he has a great quote here. And I will quote him.

Michael Horton says this. It is not simply that God possesses more being, knowledge, power, love, and justice, but that God transcends all comparisons with us. Even those that he reveals in scripture.

Humanity was created by God's free decision and word by the Father, in the Son, through the Spirit. This world is not an emanation of God's being, but the creation of his word. I think that's a good statement.

Again, Hannah had a good statement about him being completely other. He's not in the rocks. He's not in the moon.

He's not in the different things that we cry out to. No one, Hannah said, is holy like the Lord, for there is none besides you, nor is there any rock like our God. God's holiness, his divine otherness, is different.

So what this means is that although he pours his glory upon all the earth, his energy, and his majesty on the earth, there's not a speck of his essence in the tree. Do you get that? There's not a speck of the essence of God in the ground, or in a rock, or in the sky. God is completely holy and completely different than that.

Completely. Now here's the most incredible part. When you get that and understand that, now this does not mean that he is distant.

To be completely other and to be completely apart from our nature and our essence, it doesn't mean that he's distant and far away. It means that he's completely other. But when that finally focuses on you, or gets to you, and you can focus on the word holy, then here's the really awesome part.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ brings that other, that completely holy other, to man. Jesus Christ, God with us. And when you get a hold of that, I mean, the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and all that that means, and the power of what that is, and you ponder that baby Jesus born in the manger, and you ponder God with man, and what that meant to the entire universe and to all reality, that complete other took upon flesh and became man, and became and dwelt with us.

That's amazing. When we get that, we'll understand why universalism is not wrong because God is unmerciful, but because it's nonsense. Now God is knowable.

He wants us to know who he is. He wants us to have a relationship with him. He wants us to know him.

And he has done that by giving us his word, the word of God. And here's where I'm going to show you just a few historical mistakes. History, some historical mistakes.

Now, I like reading the mystics. I like them. There are reactions in the medieval times usually of people, when things get too scholastic.

And this happens today too. When there tends to be, when we get too academic, there's what David Rousseau calls the theological, what is it, pendulum. The theological pendulum swing goes to the other end.

We saw this maybe in more modern times with fundamentalism leaving to charismatic. So when things are just so fundamentalistic and paper and right and wrong, then you swing over here to the charismatic movement. It happens even in science and such.

When everything became so, the modern period of everything being so spelled out and rationalistic, you swung over to more like a new age or something. Well, during the medieval times, there was a thing called scholasticism, where people really defined everything down to the detail. Thomas Aquinas would have like details of different things.

And people reacted to that. They're like, this is crazy. This isn't Christianity.

I want something deeper. I want something that I can feel. I want something that touches my soul.

And the mystics cried out for this kind of a meaning. And I get it. I understand it.

And I have compassion with it. But in that desire, we have to be careful. And in our frustration, sometimes we have to be careful.

And as we ponder God, remember that He is holy and He reveals Himself through His Son by the Holy Spirit. So let me give you just a few examples of what I mean. There's some examples.

And you'll see these in modern times and in our time. So there's a guy named Meister Eckhart. He was a Dominican monk.

He lived from 1260 to 1328. And here's one, like here's, it gives an example of what he wrote in one of his sermons. To the inward turned man, notice not an outward, he's now focusing on this inner voice, inner light.

To the inward turned man, all things have an inward divinity. Nothing is so proper to the intellect, nor so present and near as God. And he went on to say it in a different place.

The eye with which God looks at me is the eye which I look at Him. My eye and His eye are identical. In justice, I am weighed in God and He in me.

If God did not exist, I would not exist. If I did not exist, He would not exist either. You see, this is a problem.

And from his concept of his wanting to have this unity with God and this idea of the spiritual unity with God, he lost the otherness of God and saw that somehow, if he didn't exist, God would not exist. Well, you know what? He's wrong. God is not of man.

He created us. Another one, Julian of Norwich, we had some beautiful things of her compassion. One of the first English writers of anything in English that we have.

And she had some, again, just you could see her crying out and different things she had in her life and the misery that she went through and the visions that she received. She got off in this. And mystics have tended to get off in this.

And we have to be careful. Julian of Norwich, who lived in 1342 to 1423, said this. We should highly rejoice that God dwells in our soul.

And still more highly should we rejoice that our souls dwell in God. Our soul is made to be God's dwelling place. And the dwelling place of our soul is God, who was never made.

And after the different place. And after this, I saw God in a point. That is to say, in my understanding, by which sight I saw that he is in all things.

And I saw no difference between God and our substance, but as it were, all God. So in modern times, some of you heard this story. Forgive me if you've heard it before.

But when I was first out of the army, I was working for David Rousseau. And I was running scroll publishing. Tonya and I were running scroll publishing.

And I was at a booksellers convention. And there was a writer there, Gene Edwards, who tends to be a modern mystic. He loves the mystic.

He's rewritten Madame Guion's writings and talks and sells. And especially in those days, was really republishing the mystics. And I was trying to figure out a lot of things.

I was maybe 22, 23 years old, 21, maybe 22. And I was trying to figure a lot of things out and things. And one of the things I forgot, I'll talk about it in the worship time, because there's a funny story that went into how I even got to talk to him.

But the thing that I started to ask him about was something that had to do with baptism. And about baptism. And he ended up disagreeing with me.

And another brother who I was with, Paul Baval, was there with me. And as we were studying there, he finally said, hey, let's just agree to disagree. And I said, yeah.

And I said, but I was this young man who really wanted to know truth. And I have a moment here with Gene Edwards. And I said, but here, I said, you know what? I'm sorry, but I'm just seeking truth.

And he looked at me and he said, what are you saying? I said, I'm just seeking truth. And he said, oh, that's the very worst thing that you should be doing. And I said, what? Seeking truth? He said, yeah, seeking truth.

And he said, Paul did not seek truth. Paul sought the revelation. And I thought, okay, you know, I'm thinking, all right, this is getting deep.

This is getting cool. So, the revelation. He said, yeah, the revelation.

I said, so, and here, the idea I had because of what Tony and I had went through of coming out of the army, it was the word of God. And God had revealed himself to us in his word. And so, I said, okay, well, if I have this revelation, will I agree with Paul? He said, no, Paul didn't.

Paul sought this revelation. He said, Paul sought this revelation. I said, okay, well, I agree with Paul, sorry.

And he said, Paul sought this revelation that went through time. And you just tap into it, to this ongoing revelation. And I said, okay, so if I get this revelation, will I at least agree with the Bible? I wanted to anchor what he was telling me in the Bible.

And he looked at me, and he looked at his friend that he was with, and he said, throw away your Bible and get the revelation. And my jaw hit the ground. He walked away, and I was just standing there stunned.

Now, to his defense, I would say that Gene Edwards probably loves to say something really radical to some young 22-year-old. But still, it just reveals that something completely wrong in his thinking, and a completely wrong understanding of the holiness of God. I can't philosophize or spin my way or whatever and make my way up the cloud of unknowing into the celestial spears to get to God.

He is beyond that. He is the holy other. He is not of us.

He is not of us. And this is wrong, a very wrong way of thinking about it. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing what? Faith comes by hearing Romans 10, 17, and hearing by the word of God.

We as humans receive the revelation of who God is by his word given to us through his Son, by his Son through the Holy Spirit. So what's our response? What's our response to that? In Acts 17, 30, it says this, when we think of all the different cultures and pagans and all the different things we've gone through in our life, in Acts 17, 30, it says, Truly these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because he has appointed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising him from the dead, by raising him from the dead.

You know, when you get this concept, it's so powerful. You know, in the fourth century, in the 300s, one of the first heresies that really hit the church very hard was the concept of Arianism, which believed that Jesus was not completely God. But you see, if you get this understanding of this God being completely other, you'll understand that it's not just that he was cheapening Jesus by saying that he was not completely divine.

He was saying that Jesus was of this creation, which made him not God. That he was divinely part of the creation. Even the divine Logos was created.

And what's so fascinating is that during that time, one of the biggest books that came against it, there was a biggest works that came against this, was written by a man by the name of Athanasius. And Athanasius didn't write a book called On the Trinity, but do you know how he countered Arianism the most? He wrote a book called what? Yeah, On the Incarnation, because he got at the essence of this, that God is something completely other. And when we fell through sin, God took his son and brought that son incarnate into this world, God with man.

And that is powerful. That's incredible. And it took a while, but it defeated this.

Going through the different scriptures, it's amazing how God is portrayed. And the psalmist will tell us things like, you know, in Psalm 39, 5 through 6, Indeed, you have made man. Indeed, you have made my days as hand breath and my age as nothing before you.

He talks about just gathering the universe. And Isaiah gives us this idea, like in Isaiah 40, verse 15. Behold, the nations are a drop in the bucket and are counted as a small dust on the scales.

Look, he lifts up the aises as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor it's be sufficient for a burn offering. All nations before him are nothing, and they are counted by him less than nothing.

And worthless. This idea, not worthless in the sense of God does not then try to redeem us. But it's just there's nothing compared to him.

And Ezekiel, what do you do with that? Ezekiel is just crazy. He tells us this amazing thing of God. And you start, you open the prophet Ezekiel.

He's just talking about God and all this fire and wheels and rainbows and lightnings. And it's like, what do you want us to know about who God is? What is it? And I think that as we ponder some of these passages, I really think what he wants us to see is just the, it's not that I think that he wants us to measure, okay, so the nations are like nothing is a bucket. So then we take a drop and we look at the figure, you know, we calculate the size of a drop and then we can calculate the size of God.

It's language to make us see that God is so much other than us. And what Ezekiel saw and what we see in Revelation, God is holy, absolutely holy. All right.

So I'm going to take it to the end of this now and just take it to my very favorite image of God in heaven. What's your favorite image of God in heaven? Isaiah chapter six. I'll turn there and I'm going to close with this section.

Isaiah six. There's so many beautiful revelations. I was thinking of doing the Ezekiel one.

It's just, what do you think of that Ezekiel passage? I mean, it's just amazing. The revelation passages and the passages in the Psalms and of God is, but in Revelation six, it goes with the title holy. We get something revealed to us that's so powerful that God is holy.

Isaiah six, verse one. In the year the King Uzziah died. Now, if you look in your recordances or something that's, they believe that's around 753 BC, which at the end of his life, he was incredible king and then got proud and he died 753 BC.

Interestingly enough, I don't know if there's some significance to this, but while we were told this very dating time, it's the same year that Rome is said to have been started by Romulus and that story that this is the same year, 753 BC or around this time. I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up and his train of his robe filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim and each one six wings.

With two, he covered his face. With two, he covered his feet. And with two, he flew.

And I just, there's so much you can say about these angels. And I just think it's amazing. This image where we're seeing a glimpse of heaven and we're seeing this idea of God and Isaiah sees it.

And I don't know, but there's something about the fact that these angels who get to be the ones that get to completely be around God, that even there, God is so holy that they've got six hands and two of them, they can't even look at God. They're just covering their eyes as they fly around God. And two, it's like, I don't know, maybe there's something about the ground, that the feet that they cover, the defilement of their feet.

And there's two that they're flying. And here's what they're saying. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.

Now, God is described many times in a lot of attributes. He's love, He has wrath, but there's no attribute of God that is repeated three times. Holy, holy, holy.

It's like the most incredible superlative, the example of trying to say, God, if there's anything that God is, if there's the only thing in Scriptures that is repeated three times that this is who He is, He is holy, holy, holy. And when you think of this concept now, that He's completely other, He's completely separate. He's completely not like us.

He's completely set apart. He is holy. And this is what the angels are saying, continually flying around about Him.

And when this happens, verse four, look what it says there. So imagine these angels are singing, holy, holy, holy, the Lord God, the heaven and earth is full of His glory. And then it says, when they're doing this, the post of the door was shaken by the voice when He cried and the house was filled with smoke.

What's the loudest thing you've ever heard? Not just a gunshot, but what do you imagine right now? Someone tell me, what's the loudest thing you've ever been in in your life? Okay. Is that the stethoscope with it in your ear? Yeah, exactly. I've had that before.

That's crazy. I don't know. For me, the most scariest thought was I was in Mexico once and lightning struck the compound that I was at so much that sparks came out of the socket.

And I remember that boom was so loud that I was suddenly just fearful. And I literally felt like guilty. Like, who am I? You know, it was a holy moment in this fear.

I was like, I don't know. It was a stress. It wanted me to get on my knees and say, God, what are you showing about myself? Why do I fear? What sin is in my life that you want to clean up? You're giving me a warning, God.

Speak to me. But here this holiness is going on. Now, pillars in heaven have got to be big.

You know what I mean? They've got to be really big. They've got to be strong. But these pillars in heaven, I can't imagine that sound.

I can't imagine being... I've seen some pretty big pillars. I've been to the Vatican. I've been to places where there's been some pretty big pillars.

But imagine a sound so great that the pillars are shaking. I guess they're just constantly vibrating. This is going on and on.

Holy, holy, holy. And that's what Isaiah is seeing when he's coming before God. Holy.

So he said, and I understand this. And that one little glimpse that I had of that thunderbolt, woe is me for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in a midst of a people of unclean lips. He saw himself not unclean, but his own generations.

My people, my generation, my tribe, my family, my life. I'm a mess. Everything in me before you seems unclean.

This is the revelation when we become before a holy God. Because my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Now, I want you to imagine now again that bridge that Athanasius got.

That bridge that makes that complete otherness, that complete other with us. And this is the response. And this is where I'd like to bring the end of this message to.

It's how he bridged that gap was this next phase, this next vision. Verse six. Then one of the seraphim, imagine this angel now, I mean, wow, that's flying around screaming, holy, holy.

The temple is shaken. They're covering their face and they're covering their feet. And then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand the live coal, which he had taken with the tongues 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. Wow, that is incredible.

There's something in that. There's something powerful about this purification that comes through this coal. There's something that looks to Jesus Christ and how he wants to make us holy.

He wants to purify us. He wants to cleanse this of our life. And I encourage us all to as we stand before the real and holy God, that we understand that is only through Jesus Christ, this bridge of this gap between this holy and us can be cleared with Jesus Christ.

So what's the conclusion? Let me repeat the passage then for the holiness of God. But as he who called you is holy, and that is what holy is, you also be holy in all your conduct because it is written, be holy for I am holy. Let's pray and I'll give it to Christian.

Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, I thank you, Lord, that you have mercy on us in your holiness. And I pray, God, that you would reveal more and more of what this is like in this generation. Lord, let us not be a generation that turns and desecrates the grave of holiness, but let us be the generation that revives the concept of your holiness in our life, in our churches, in our worship, in our families, in our prayer time.

God, be real to us, Lord, we pray. So, God, I thank you that you are holy. And I thank you, God, that you did give us Jesus Christ to come to us and to purify us and to be incarnate and to bring you to us in this generation.

Lord, we ask you to be with us now in Jesus' name, amen.

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