

# Holiness Unto the Lord (2 Peter 1: 21)

by Seth Rees

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*Seth Rees emphasizes the importance of holiness in the lives of believers, drawing on biblical examples of prophets and the transformative power of living a holy life.*

**Scripture:** Joshua 24:15, 1 Samuel 3:19, Job 1:1, Proverbs 22:6, Isaiah 6:8, Jeremiah 1:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 12:14, James 5:16, 2 Peter 1:21

**Topics:** "Holy Living", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

Seth Rees preaches about the importance of being holy men and women of God, drawing inspiration from the prophets of the Old Testament who communicated with God and wrote Scriptures as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. He emphasizes the noble character of the prophets who stood up against sin and corruption, like Moses breaking the throne of Pharaoh and Elijah rebuking idolatry. Rees encourages living a holy life, being examples to children and neighbors, and trusting in God's provision for holiness. He urges parents to pray for and dedicate their children to God, believing in the power of a holy life to bring about transformation and restoration.

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## Transcript

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1: 21.

We may trace Divine inspiration all the way back to Eden. God used to manifest His will to Adam and Eve in the garden and all through the antediluvian period we see that when a man wanted to have His will He was always glad to give it. All through the kingly period He had a few men who were called "holy men of God," who communicated with Him, received and understood the will of Heaven. These "holy men were called prophets, and here in the epistle of Peter they are referred to as "holy men of God" -- as prophets -- and it is said that they wrote the Scriptures "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The prophets were, as a rule, the most noble men who have ever lived. As a class, the prophets were the most devout and illustrious characters of all the past. With but few exceptions the kings were wicked and lived in idolatry. The priesthood was almost as corrupt as the throne, but even in these apostate times when kings, priests and people were backslidden from God, He had some prophets who would stand up and rebuke sin, and work for the establishment of the Divinity and authority of God. As a rule, kings were not only corrupt themselves but they corrupted the kingdom. The prophets were holy men, the Bible says so. Thank God, that there has been some holy men. Some people tell us it is impossible to be holy, but if

there had been no holy men during the Old Testament age you would find no reference to them in the New Testament. If Jesus had not known them to be holy He certainly would not have spoken of them as such.

Moses was called to break the throne of Pharaoh and overthrow the greatest empire of the past. He was called to lead His people out of bondage, but this commission was not given him until after he was a "holy man of God." Before he was permitted to enter upon the most eventful period of his history he had to receive his Pentecost. Moses announced to the people that God would raise up one from among them "like unto me, Him shall ye hear." So Moses confessed that he was a prophet of God, was the great antitype of Him who was to come, for he says, "He shall be like unto me." God stands Moses out as a sample of what He could do in the way of holy men. Let us take courage and expect God to make us holy.

The great and good prophet Samuel was called out in the hour of his country's greatest need. He was anointed prophet and was the most brilliant light of that century. He was the Martin Luther of that age. When Israel was in bondage, and idolatry had come among her people and the preachers had drifted far from God, Elijah stepped out from behind the curtain of God's presence and dared to face the multitude and tell them that the God of the universe was the only one whom they should worship. He went forward fearing nothing but succeeding at every move he made. Thank God for the baptism with fire that takes the fear out of a man and puts strength, courage and energy all through his being. It will make a man dare to tell ecclesiastical bodies the whole truth of God.

And there was Isaiah who stood true to God under the darkest and most aggravating circumstances. Isaiah announced the truth and stood by it until they sawed him asunder like a beef. He had received a message from God and dared to deliver it.

There was Jeremiah; when Jerusalem was fallen and there was little hope of her restoration he was true to announce God's message and denounce all forms of sin, and then weep over the lost until he was styled, "The weeping prophet." If God had such men in the past He certainly has need of them today. If a holy man was needed to overthrow the throne of Pharaoh, there is a greater need for a few who may be used to refute the number of false teachers and preachers of this time. God has need of some holy men and women as well, who fear not to declare the whole truth.

It was said of Samuel, "The Lord was with him and none of his words fell to the ground." If the Lord is with you it is enough. Brother, if you can conduct yourself so that the Lord is with you and will go with you, He is quite sufficient. Where He does not go let us not go. God help us not to attempt a battle where the Lord is not at the front. So there were holy men, and they lived holy lives, and they all had awful and tremendous things to encounter. The prophets had to face kings and denounce their corruption. How few there are today who would dare to look a king in the face and tell him he was on the road to hell! The prophets, the holy men of God did. George Fox, the founder of the Quaker Church did this. They faced king's houses, conferences, synods, and the greatest centers of false religion. If they were moved by the Spirit thus to warn and rebuke, we wonder why nobody is called to this service today.

When a holy man came to Damascus the Jews were lying in wait to kill him. When he came to Antioch there was a coffin awaiting him there. When he performed a few miracles at Lystra the people were ready to worship Him; they said "he is a god," but he preached the truth to them and they took up stones to stone him. When he visits Jerusalem he is beaten and barely escapes with his life, and at Rome he loses his head and one of his last utterances was, "Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph." O I

love to read such passages. If other men have done so and come out victorious we may conquer too, but they were holy men -- holy in heart, holy in life; and do you know that holy men can never die? A holy man lives after he is dead. They are sometimes better dead than alive.

One of these old prophets had so much power that after he had been dead for years and all the flesh had dropped off of his bones, when a corpse was thrown into his sepulcher the moment it touched his bones it revived and stood upon its feet. So you see that the dry bones of Elisha had more life than American Protestantism has today.

If the Lord tarries, Brother Knapp's name will gradually drop out of this movement and after a few years more his name may be seldom mentioned. Some other names may be more prominent in the minds of the people, but there will still be power in the holy life he lived, and hundreds of people will eventually think of him as a holy man and appreciate his loyalty to God more than they did when he lived. "Holy men of God" -- I am truly glad there are such. They live to relieve the suffering, lift up the fallen, and bless everybody who will be blessed.

A walk through Custom House Place or Canal Street, in Chicago causes me to feel very strange as I think how little is ever done to relieve the suffering or better the condition of the poor unfortunates found there. I see what was once a man leaning against a barrel house. He is simply a sample of what the devil can do. He is an exhibition of the products of hell. I have said, "What if I had to associate with such souls forever!" There is something in my soul since God saved and sanctified me which fairly revolts from such society except for the purpose of helping and lifting them to their feet. Holy men are always glad to aid the fallen and restore the lost. It is hard work now but let us be encouraged. There is a time coming when there will be no more fasting, no more weeping and prevailing prayer to get souls to turn to God. There will be one universal reign of peace and triumph.

Beloved, we are called to be "holy men." If there is a shrinkage in your soul this morning from being called a holy man you must seek and obtain your Pentecost. We are commissioned not only to preach it but to have it, to live it, to walk it, and talk it. We must live such holy, humble lives that our children will not need to fear to follow in our footsteps. You have no right to engage in conversation that you would shrink from having your lovely boy or charming daughter hear. It is common to excuse sin in the home, such as anger and unkindness, hasty words uttered under provocation, but, Beloved, you and I are expected to live so that our children will dare to put their feet in our tracks. If in conversation you use slang or any improper language, the children will use it too, and if you are unkind they will be the same. If you get angry they will excuse themselves forgetting angry.

Beloved, we are not only called to a holy life but there is provision made for it. He would not call us to anything without first making provision for it. If we do not live holy it is because we do not have the experience. If holiness is not just as practical in the kitchen and dining room as in the parlor; if it is not just as practical on the farm, in the home, or on the railroad car as on the platform preaching, then it is worthless. I thank God that He has called us to holy living. The example of a holy man and his influence upon the community in which he lives is always a benediction. The effect of his character upon his children will be lasting. We had better leave our children an example of godliness than to leave them farms or bank stocks which it may take a lifetime to accumulate and which may damn their souls in hell forever. The influence of a godly example will never die. The boys may sometimes drift out of the path, or the girls may seem indifferent for a season, but I hold to the Old Book that says if we, "train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it." A godly mother -- a praying, weeping, sensible, loving

mother, who lives holy before God and her children -- her tears will never be wasted. The hours she spends in the closet will not be spent in vain.

Parents let me encourage you to walk uprightly, live your religion, live a life unspotted and without blame and some of these days your sons and daughters will come home though they may be a thousand miles away and deep down in sin. Pray on, weep on, believe on; your prayers will come home some night and bring your boys and girls with them.

One of the greatest prophets in the past approached a mother in distress and asked her what she had in the house. She replied, "Thine handmaid hath nothing in the house but a pot of oil," but there was a man of God there, and he prayed and his prayer reached the Throne. She gave the pot of oil to the Lord, and He returned her two boys. She asked the prophet what she should do with the oil and he said, "Sell it," and when she had prayed over it and sold it she found that she had enough to pay all her debts and a permanent support beside.

I want to ask you parents this morning, "What have you in the house?" It may be a daughter who loves dress and the world and does not care much for holiness, but you can give her to the Lord and ask Him to save, sanctify and call her to soul winning. He will answer. She will go to India, Africa or Japan and some day will come back home, not with literary honors, but with sheaves of golden grain, and she will put a crown of glory on your head that will last forever. She will bless you in your old age because you gave up the pot of oil for God. Or it may be a son. If so give him over to God; give the whole household over to the Lord. Write it over the door, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." There may be objections at first, but where goes the head there goes the whole household. God has called us to live holy lives, to not only love our children but our neighbors' children, and He wants to extend our influence and give us greater victory than we have ever known. Some of us have struggles and sorrows inexpressible, but someday the lost ones will come home.

If you could read the letters we receive from heartbroken parents, or if we could give you an idea of the joy in homes over this country where we have returned a wayward daughter to a heartbroken mother and sorrow stricken household you would better appreciate the power of a holy life. Imagine the joy around the fireside of that stricken home when the daughter who has been absent more than two years comes back saved and sanctified. The mother says, "For more than two years I have been weeping, praying and watching for her return. I have prayed every hour in the day and have watched and waited until late at night." And then, listen to the blessings which she pours upon those who have pushed their way down into the slums and rescued her wayward child. Some mothers send word for us to pray and search for their only girl. We pray and God directs. The girl is found, saved, and returned to her heartbroken mother. If you could witness the scene as they embrace each other and go down to family prayers, it would break your heart. Parents, God will reward you for your heartaches, for your sleepless hours or your protracted waiting upon Him.

My text says there were holy men. Thank God there are holy men today. Brother, as long as you live, do not ever dare to lift your voice against holiness. God has sent me to warn you. If you do, it may be that it not only means the wrecking of your own life but that of others. I might tell you of the awful results of parents talking against holiness. I just want to warn you this morning that God has a few holy men and women, and that you must "touch not the Lord's anointed." Do not criticize, do not find fault, do not even insinuate in the presence of your children. If you do not receive this experience and practice it in your every day walk some of your loved ones will meet you at the Judgment, and they may burn forever

because you failed. Let us practice what we preach, and let us awaken sleeping souls to a sense of their real danger.

I am talking to more than three hundred people in this audience who are not saved at all. God help you. The destiny of your own children may be hanging upon your words and life. A holy testimony with a holy life back of it is something that all the armies of hell can not break down. God said to Job that he was a "perfect" man and under all his afflictions he had "sinned not."

Brother, Sister, whatever of this message you may forget, I want you to remember the text. Forget me as soon as possible but remember the text forever. You can be a holy man or woman and God can give you the Holy Ghost and keep you in His Divine order. Some day you will thank God that a holiness preacher ever came your way. It is so in my case. I know now, what I did not know then, that he came to our town because he was needed more than because he was wanted, for the Churches thought then as Churches do now, and many of them rejected the truth, but he endured hardness and pressed through opposition and carried the message to my soul. When I meet him on the hills of Heaven I shall thank him for his faithfulness in preaching a faithful Gospel. Now, beloved, if you want this blessing come to the altar and get it. I will see that there are not two or three workers buzzing in your ears, and confounding you until you cannot pray. You shall have a good chance to get to God. Won't you come this morning? He is waiting to save, sanctify, and cause you to live a holy life. Praise the Lord!

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/seth-rees/holiness-unto-the-lord-2-peter-i-21/>

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