

Questions

Study Procedure: Read the Scripture references before answering questions. Unless otherwise instructed, use the Bible only in answering questions. Some questions may be more difficult than others but try to answer as many as you can. Pray for God's wisdom and understanding as you study and don't be discouraged if some answers are not obvious at first. Do not read the study notes for this lesson until AFTER you have completed your questions.

Day One: Lesson 3 Review

1. What did you learn from last week's lesson about hearing from God that you have already used yourself or told someone else about? _____

2. What example from the Bible or from your own experience could you add to last week's lesson for...
 - (a) keeping from being deceived by Satan? _____

 - (b) recognizing God's voice? _____

Note: We have considered the amazing abilities of God as Creator and His loving actions as Communicator, One who bridged the great gulf between Creator and creature by walking in Eden and talking with Adam and Eve, permitting them to know Him. Now we will look at a tragic change in this relationship caused by human sin. The attribute for this week's study might well be the most significant of all: **God's holiness**. It relates in some way to every other attribute and activity of God. This week we will see how His holiness required Him to confront and judge sin.

3. Review Genesis 3. God gave Adam and then Eve the opportunity to confess their sin against Him, but they only passed the blame. The serpent was not given a chance to explain because God had already dealt with him at some point prior to this.
 - (a) Read Revelation 12:7-9 and identify the serpent. _____

(b) Ezekiel 28:11-17 and Isaiah 14:12-17 traditionally have been accepted as the prophetic portraits of the rise and fall of Satan. Read them and summarize what happened.

Ezekiel _____

Isaiah _____

4. Satan believed wrongly that he could be like God. Find the verses in Genesis 3 in which Eve was tempted to believe the same thing and gave into the temptation.

Day Two: No One Can Be Like God



1. God is different from all others. His "otherness" is distinctive. As Creator, He is outside time, space, and all other limitations, but His holiness also makes Him unique.

(a) If you have access to a regular dictionary or a Bible dictionary, give the origin as well as the definition of *holy*. _____

(b) What are some synonyms for the word *holy*? _____

2. Matching: God is described as *holy* in the Bible more often than in any other way. Match what each verse teaches about holiness with the best summary of its message.

- _____ (a) Exodus 15:11 *"Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?"*

- _____ (b) Psalm 29:2 *Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name;
Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*

- _____ (c) 1 Thessalonians 4:7 *For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.*

- _____ (d) Hebrews 12:14 *Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one
will see the Lord.*

- _____ (e) Revelation 15:4 *“Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
For You alone are holy.
For all nations shall come and worship before You,
For Your judgments have been manifested.”*

1. Holiness has an opposite.
2. His holiness makes God different from all others; it is glorious!
3. God alone is holy.
4. God’s holiness is beautiful and should move us to worship Him.
5. An unholy person cannot see God.

Day Three: Human Experiences with the Holiness of God

Read the following encounters these men had with God. They all sensed His holiness, His “otherness.”

(a) How did each respond? (b) How did God respond to their response?

1. (a) Job’s response (Job 42:1-6) _____

 (b) God’s response (Job 42:7-17) _____

2. (a) Isaiah’s response (Isaiah 6:1-5) _____

 (b) God’s response (Isaiah 6:6-9) _____

3. (a) Saul/Paul's response (Acts 9:1-9) _____

- (b) God's response (Acts 9:10-20) _____

Day Four: Too Holy To Overlook Sin

1. How was the response of Adam and Eve, when confronted by the Lord in Genesis 3, similar and/or different from Job's, Isaiah's, and Saul's responses? _____

2. Read this statement by the prophet Habakkuk made at a time when Judah was being attacked by her enemies:
*You are of purer eyes than to behold evil,
 And cannot look on wickedness.
 Why do You look on those who deal treacherously,
 And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours
 A person more righteous than he?* (Habakkuk 1:13)
- (a) The first part states an important truth about God. What is it? _____

- (b) The second statement expresses frustration at God's apparent delay in reacting. Put Habakkuk's complaint in your own words. _____

3. God's holiness requires Him to take action to stop sin, but, like Habakkuk, we do not always understand God's timing. Sometimes He responds immediately; sometimes He delays His reaction for reasons unknown to us, but He will ultimately keep His word. Read Genesis 3:14-21. God had said that death would follow the eating of the forbidden fruit.
- (a) Find the reference to a future physical death for man. _____

(b) Find the reference that alludes to an immediate death, the death of a substitute.

4. God’s holiness would be ultimately satisfied when Satan’s power or head was fatally bruised by a future champion, the Seed of woman. Locate the verse where this is prophesied in Genesis 3:14-21 and explain, if you can, why this is called the *protoevangelium*, Latin for “the first gospel.”



Day Five: Holiness Brought Home

1. Proverbs 9:10 states, “*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*” In our present culture, we have lost the healthy fear of the awesome holiness of our God. We don’t shudder in horror at our sin. We are used to sin, our own and every-one else’s. In spite of our lack of reverence, God remains separate from sin, absolutely pure, beautiful, and glorious in His holiness, and we cannot hold on to sin and have fellowship with Him. What is His command to us in these verses?

(a) Leviticus 11:45 _____

(b) 1 Peter 1:15,16 _____

2. What was His warning to the church at Laodicea in Revelation 3:14-22 and why?

3. After we repent and accept the blood sacrifice of Christ to pay the death sentence we deserve, we are able to choose to change, empowered for the first time to pursue holiness. We recognize that this is not an instant transformation but a process. We call it sanctification, and it involves becoming separate from the world and separated to God. There are great benefits. Summarize the one you find in Matthew 6:33. _____

4. We are not on our own in seeking to become holy. Read 2 Chronicles 16:9a and paraphrase God's promise to the wholehearted. _____

5. What can you do to restore a sense of the holiness of God and a healthy, reverential fear of Him in your own spiritual life? _____

6. Now take a few minutes to read the notes for this lesson.

Notes

GOD IS HOLY

Holiness Unique to God

The lovely fellowship of the Creator with the man and woman made in His image presented in Genesis 1 and 2 was God's true intent for His world, and one that He will wholly reinstate at the end of the ages. As a hopeful, prophetic promise, He had the apostle John describe it in the beginning of the next to the last chapter of Revelation:

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:1-4)

That is the Christian's future, but now, on this side of Eden, we live with the consequences of our first parents' sin. The good news is that through the provision of Christ, the "Seed" of woman, who bore the death penalty in our place, we can be reunited in a holy harmony with our Maker.

The key word is *holy*. It is used as an adjective hundreds of times in Scripture, beginning with Exodus and Leviticus, the first instructional books for holiness. It is the only term repeated three times in succession when describing God, first in Isaiah 6:3 and then in Revelation 4:8: "*Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!*" "*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!*"

The Hebrew word for holiness is *quodesh* and has two meanings associated with it. The first is *brightness* or *clarity*, reminding us of an association with light and the concept of purity. When Isaiah noted God's holiness (see paragraph above), he also noted His glory. The second meaning for holiness comes from its root word *quod*, which means *to divide* or *separate*. The idea of this is that God is separate from all else. In and of Himself, He is self-existent and self-sufficient, altogether separate from any imperfection of character or action, altogether different from anything created. The English word *holy* is derived

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from the Anglo-Saxon *halig*, *hal*, meaning, *well*, *whole*. We might add the synonym *complete*.

metaphorical - all language that involves figures of speech or symbolism and does not literally represent real things

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God is so unique in His holiness that whenever He is described in Scripture, only comparative or **metaphorical** terms are used. In God's explanation of the making of man, He said, "*Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness*" (Genesis 1:26, emphasis added). People and explanations can be in *likeness* of God, but nothing is the same as He is. In explaining Himself to us, God has the writers of the Bible describe Him as a shepherd, a high tower, a consuming fire, et cetera, always comparing Himself to something we already understand, but never limiting Himself to a human example.

The prophet Ezekiel was overwhelmed with finding ways to translate what he saw in His vision of the mobile throne of God. Notice the recurrence of "likeness," "appearance," and "like" in his report, as well as Ezekiel's final collapse at the overwhelming experience of it:

And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.

*So when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.
(Ezekiel 1:26-28, emphasis added)*

While God alone is holy, He imparts or gives holiness to persons and even objects and places.

Words failed the biblical writers, and we too must be careful in our descriptions: "*To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?*" (Isaiah 40:18).

He, alive in us, gives us the ability to be holy; He lives His life in and through us.

While God alone is holy, He imparts or gives holiness to persons and even objects and places. The adjective *holy* is used many times in describing what was associated with the worship of God. Old and New Testament saints were called to be holy, to come out from among those of the world and to be separated to Him. He, alive in us, gives us the ability to be holy; He lives His life in and through us. Our prayer, like that of the psalmist, should be for His help in this: "*Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name*" (Psalm 86:11).

**God's
Holiness
Calls Us to
Humility**

The examples you read from the experiences of Job, Isaiah, and Saul, who each came face-to-face with the presence of God, should have revealed the proper response for any who becomes aware, even in the normal act of daily prayer, of the presence of the Most Holy. We should be in awe of His glorious majesty and sensitive to anything that offends Him in our lives. Jesus *has* brought us near as dear family members to His throne, but the holiness that **permeates** His every word and act should still be at the forefront of our thinking, moving us quickly to recognize and to repent of anything that displeases Him, anything that blocks His power and love in our lives. Even the "Lord's Prayer" begins with a recognition that God is above us and deserves all reverence: "*Our Father in heaven, hallowed [holy] be Your Name*" (Matthew 6:9). Hannah, so grateful for God's gracious response to her plea for a son, showed an inspired awareness of His true nature and the appropriateness of humility in response to such revelation:

*"No one is holy like the LORD,
For there is none besides You,
Nor is there any rock like our God.*

*"Talk no more so very proudly;
Let no arrogance come from your mouth,
For the LORD is the God of knowledge
And by Him actions are weighed."
(1 Samuel 2:2,3)*

**God's Holiness
Requires
Punishment
for Sin**

In A.W. Tozer's enlightening book *The Knowledge of the Holy*, he explains why a holy God must judge sin:

Since God's first concern for His universe is its moral health, that is, its holiness, whatever is contrary to this is necessarily under His eternal displeasure. To preserve His creation God must destroy whatever would destroy it. When He arises to put down iniquity and save the world from irreparable moral collapse, He is said to be angry. Every wrathful judgment in the history of the world has been a holy act of preservation. The wrath of God and the health of creation are inseparably united. God's wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys. He hates iniquity as a mother hates the polio that takes the life of her child (p. 106).

permeates - spreads or diffuses through

Jesus has brought us near as dear family members to His throne, but the holiness that permeates His every word and act should still be at the forefront of our thinking, moving us quickly to recognize and to repent of anything that displeases Him, anything that blocks His power and love in our lives.

thwarted - prevented from being successful

How Can a Holy God Forgive Sin?

We see how a holy God could not permit His authority to be **thwarted**. What He promised He had to deliver. He told Adam that the day he ate of the forbidden fruit, he would die. We understand that God had to follow through with the punishment promised, but was there a way for His holiness to be satisfied without His love being denied? That is the question of the ages: How can a righteous or holy God forgive sin?

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succinct - expressed with brevity and clarity, with no wasted words

The fullest yet most **succinct** answer is found in Romans 1:16 and 17 in Paul's defense of the gospel message:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." (emphasis added)

The gospel of Jesus Christ explains how a holy God can forgive sin.

herbivores - animals that feed only or mainly on grass and other plants

The gospel of Jesus Christ explains how a holy God can forgive sin. God kept His word to Adam and Eve; they did eventually die a physical death because of sin. Before their sin, there was no death in Eden. Even all the animals were **herbivores!** The death sentence was pronounced after the first couple disobeyed, and a curse was put on all creation. However, the gospel was prophetically previewed through the announcement of One who would one day come, the "Seed" of woman, who would face Satan again and, though bruised in the battle, would win everything back as a second, sinless Adam. In addition, the blood sacrifice of that animal under God's own hand, slain to cover the nakedness of the sinning couple, also foreshadowed the high cost of forgiving sin against a holy God.

How Can We Revive Our View of a Holy God?

Chris Tiegreen, in his devotional, *Walk with God*, made this application which provides a thoughtful summation of our study of God's holiness with an appropriate application:

There is a false attitude in many segments of the contemporary church. It is the belief that sin, being universal to human nature, is not all that serious. That belief leads one to a god who is lenient, as opposed to a God who forgives. The first god is nonexistent; only the latter can save.

Do you hate sin? Is it detestable to you? Then you are in line with God's wisdom. You know the difference between a lenient deity and a forgiving One, and you know which one to bow to. (p. 125)