



# attributes of *God*

WEEK 13 — GOD IS HOLY



## PSALM 99

<sup>1</sup> The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

<sup>2</sup> The LORD is great in Zion; he is exalted over all the peoples.

<sup>3</sup> Let them praise your great and awesome name! Holy is he!

<sup>4</sup> The King in his might loves justice.

You have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

<sup>5</sup> Exalt the LORD our God; worship at his footstool! Holy is he!

<sup>6</sup> Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel also was among those who called upon his name.

They called to the LORD, and he answered them.

<sup>7</sup> In the pillar of the cloud he spoke to them; they kept his testimonies and the statute that he gave them.

<sup>8</sup> O LORD our God, you answered them; you were a forgiving God to them,  
but an avenger of their wrongdoings.

<sup>9</sup> Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy mountain; for the LORD our God is holy!

## A. W. TOZER

*“Let’s think a little about the Holy One and His creatures. We see that this Holy One allows only holy beings into His presence. Yet in our humanistic day – our day of a watered-down, sentimental Christianity that blows its nose loudly and makes God into a poor, weak, weeping old man – in this awful day, that sense of the holy isn’t upon the Church.”*

## IS HOLINESS AN ATTRIBUTE?

**Some consider holiness to be the most important of all attributes.**

*"The moral quality that best points to God's incomparably good character, as one incomparable in power, is holiness. For holiness implies that every excellence fitting to the Supreme Being is found in God without blemish or limit. It also implies that all other divine excellences (goodness, justice, mercy, truth, and grace) are unified and made mutually harmonious in infinite degree in God." (Thomas Oden)*

**Others consider holiness to be a summary, and not its own attribute.**

*"Holiness is, however, not a distinctive attribute, but rather the combination of all these attributes." (James P. Boyce)*

*"Holiness so defines the character of God that it can be said to include all of the other divine moral perfections as well." (Timothy George)*

## WHAT IS GOD'S HOLINESS?

**Generally, to be holy means to be separate or set apart.**

**ATTEMPTS TO DEFINE GOD'S HOLINESS:**

**A. W. Tozer** – *"Holiness means purity, but 'purity' doesn't describe it well enough."*

**Herman Bavinck** – *"Purity, free from every stain, wholly perfect and immaculate in every detail.... God's holiness is revealed in his entire relation to His people, in election, in the covenant, in his special revelation, in his dwelling among them."*

**Wayne Grudem** – *"God's holiness means that he is separated from sin and devoted to seeking his own honor."*

**A. W. Pink** – *"The sum of all moral excellency is found in him. He is absolute Purity, unsullied even by the shadow of sin"*

# God's Holiness Is Seen Throughout Scripture

## THE NAMES OF GOD

**Psalms 71:22** --- "I will also praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praises to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel."

**Proverbs 9:10** --- "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight."

**Isaiah 57:15** --- "For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.'"

**Luke 1:49** --- "For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name."

## DESCRIPTIONS OF GOD

**Exodus 15:11** --- "Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?"

**Psalms 77:13** --- "Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God?"

**Isaiah 5:16** --- "But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness."

**James 1:13** --- "God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one."

**1 John 1:5** --- "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

## DECLARATIONS OF SPIRITUAL BEINGS

**Isaiah 6:1-4** --- "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!' <sup>4</sup> And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke."

**Revelation 4:8-11** --- "And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!' <sup>9</sup> And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, <sup>10</sup> the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, <sup>11</sup> 'Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.'"

**Mark 1:24** --- "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are -- the Holy One of God."

## DECLARATIONS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

**Psalms 22:3** --- "Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel."

**Psalms 103:1** --- "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!"

## ASPECTS OF GOD'S HOLINESS

### 1. ONLY GOD IS FULLY HOLY

**Only God is untouched by evil. Nothing else is.**

*"He only is independently, infinitely, immutably holy." (A. W. Pink)*

**1 Samuel 2:2** --- "There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God."

**Revelation 15:4** --- "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

### 2. ALL THREE PERSONS OF THE TRINITY ARE DECLARED HOLY

**John 17:11** --- "Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me."

**Hebrews 7:26** --- "For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens."

**Romans 1:4** --- "...was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord"

### 3. ALL THAT GOD DOES, SAYS, AND REQUIRES IS HOLY

*"Holiness is the rule of all his action." (A. W. Pink)*

**Psalms 145:17** --- "The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works."

**Psalms 19:8-10** --- "The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb."

**Romans 7:12** --- "So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good."

## HOW DOES A HOLY GOD VIEW SIN?

### 1. GOD HATES ALL SIN

**Psalms 5:5** --- “The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers.”

**Proverbs 3:32** --- “The devious person is an abomination to the LORD.”

**Proverbs 15:26** --- “The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, but gracious words are pure.”

**The whole law shows how much God hates sin.**

**The cross ultimately shows how much God hates sin.**

*“Wondrously and yet most solemnly does the Atonement display God’s infinite holiness and abhorrence of sin. How hateful must sin be to God for him to punish it to its utmost deserts when it was imputed to his Son!” (A. W. Pink)*

### 2. GOD’S HOLINESS MEANS HE MUST PUNISH SIN

**Romans 2:5-6** --- “But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.”

**Revelation 16:5** --- “And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, ‘Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments.’”

### 3. EITHER CHRIST TAKES THAT PUNISHMENT FOR US OR WE MUST BEAR IT

**Hebrews 9:27-28** --- “And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”

*“God has often forgiven sinners, but he never forgives sin; and the sinner is only forgiven on the ground of Another having borne his punishment; for ‘without shedding of blood is no remission’ (Heb. 9:22)” (A. W. Pink)*



## HOW SHOULD GOD'S HOLINESS CHANGE US?

### 1. It should lead us to recognize our own sinfulness and unworthiness.

**We cannot recognize God's holiness without recognizing our own sinfulness and unworthiness.**

*"In all genuine spiritual experience, these two are inseparably linked: a high sense of God's majesty and holiness, and the apprehension of radical depravity and human sin." (Timothy George)*

*"When you talk about the holiness of God, you have not only the problem of an intellectual grasp, but also a sense of personal vileness, which is almost too much to bear." (A. W. Tozer)*

**Isaiah 6:3-5** --- "And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!' And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: 'Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!'"

### 2. It should lead us to strive for holiness (*holiness is a communicable attribute*)

**Leviticus 19:2** --- "Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy."

**1 Peter 1:14-16** --- "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"

**Hebrews 12:10 & 14** --- "For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. .... Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord."

**Remember, any growth in holiness (sanctification) comes from God.**

**1 Thessalonians 5:23-24** --- "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it."

### 3. It should lead us to worship.

**Psalms 30:4** --- "Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name."

**Psalms 99:5** --- "Exalt the LORD our God; worship at his footstool! Holy is he!"

**Revelation 15:4** --- "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you define God's holiness?  
How would you define holiness in the lives of believers?
2. Read the quote from A. W. Tozer on page 1.  
Do you agree that a sense of God's holiness is lacking today?  
What evidences lead you to think that?
3. Do we tend to approach God with reverence and seriousness, knowing that He is holy?  
Why or why not?
4. How would a greater understanding of God's holiness change how we approach God?
5. How would a greater understanding of God's holiness change how we fight sin and strive for holiness in our own lives?
6. What songs do you know that describe God's holiness?

### **For personal reflection this week....**

*"Are there activities or relationships in your present pattern of life that are hindering your growth in holiness because they make it difficult for you to be separated from sin and devoted to seeking God's honor?" (Wayne Grudem)*

