



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The LORD Almighty--Holy pt. 2 (Select Scriptures)

MARCH 27, 2012

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Weekly Bible Study Schedule

- **Tuesday, March 27, 7 AM in HHR #5**
-Breakfast Provided
- **Tuesday, March 27, 8:30 PM in Room #301**
(Speaker Pro-Tem's office)

"When God would be drawn...He is drawn in this attribute (holiness) as being the most beautiful perfection of God, and most valuable with Him. Power is in His hand and arm; omniscience, His eye; mercy, His bowels; eternity, His duration; His holiness is His beauty."

In C.S. Lewis' book "The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe", Mr. Beaver was explaining to the four children of Adam the greatness of Aslan, the King whom they were all expecting to arrive. Lewis writes,

"But shall we see him?" asked Susan.

"Why, Daughter of Eve, that's what I brought you here for. I'm to lead you where you shall meet him," said Mr. Beaver.

"Is—is he a man?" asked Lucy.

"Aslan, a man!" said Mr. Beaver sternly. "Certainly not! I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-Beyond-the-Sea. Don't you know who is the King of Beasts? Aslan is a lion—the Lion, the great Lion."

"Ooh!" said Susan, "I'd thought he was a man. Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion."

"That you will, dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver, "if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly."

"Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.

"Safe?" said Mr. Beaver. "Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you?"

Who said anything about safe? Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."

This unusual quandary concerning Aslan is similar to the one we find in Scripture concerning the holiness of God. In God's holiness, we find both fear and comfort, dread and reassurance.

INTRODUCTION

Exodus 15:11 Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders?

In our previous study, we began a short series discussing the holiness of God. Two aspects define God's holiness. First of all, there is His "majestic holiness" in which God is completely separate and distinct from anything that has been created. Secondly, there is His "moral holiness." This is seen in His purity and sinlessness. An easy way of remembering and defining this attribute was with the children's prayer, "God is great, God is good."

The Scriptures teach an interesting mixture of thoughts and emotions that those who are children of God are to have toward God. They are called to fear Him and to delight in Him. They are to be humble before Him, as well as be confident in His presence. They are to be silent and they are to shout in praise.

This is no exception. The holiness of God makes one uneasy, while at the same time one can find peace and comfort. In this study, we will examine two approaches that one will have when he or she has a proper understanding of God's holiness. These attitudes are adequately summed up by Mr. Beaver—"Course He isn't safe. But He's good."

I. "COURSE, HE ISN'T SAFE."

As stated in the last study, God's holiness is what makes sin so vile and horrible. Even the slightest of sins (using our definitions) is a rebellious act against the person and nature of God. Thus, Scripture paints a clear picture of how God considers sin—He hates it and punishment must be bestowed.

GOD'S VIEW OF SIN

Proverbs 6:16 says *There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him...* (see verses 17-19 for the sins listed). Zechariah 8:17 says that "devising evil in heart" and loving "perjury" are things of which God says "are what I hate." Evil plans are an abomination to the LORD (Proverbs 15:26), as well as those who are proud in heart (Proverbs 16:5).

These same sins are the ones Jesus denounced in the Pharisees; who showed contempt toward those men who lived such hypocritical lives (Matthew 23). And lists are drawn up throughout the New Testament of the sins which will eternally keep people out of His presence (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Revelation 22:14-15) unless one is washed, sanctified and justified in the name of Jesus (1 Corinthians 6:11).

CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS & STAFF: TUESDAYS @ 7AM, HEARING ROOM #5

LEGISLATORS: TUESDAYS @ 8:30PM, ROOM #301

TRUMAN BUILDING: THURSDAYS @ 7AM, 4THFLOOR CAFETERIA

PROCLAIMING THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF GOD IN THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL

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The Apostle Paul writes that “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...” (Romans 1:18a). The fact that God exhibits wrath upon sin illustrates His hatred for it. And the cross of Jesus Christ shows that sin must be severely dealt with before one can be redeemed from it (Romans 3:10-26). It is no wonder, then, why Isaiah trembled in fear when he saw the Lord whom the angels declared “Holy, Holy, Holy” (Isa. 6:1-4).

GOD’S PUNISHMENT OF SIN

For the most part, preaching on the wrath of God has been relegated to a by-gone, unenlightened era in which Jonathan Edwards’ sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” was the pinnacle of such preaching. Regardless of what the church has done today, God’s disdain for sin and His resultant wrath has not been deleted from Scripture.

“SAFE?” SAID MR. BEAVER. “DON’T YOU HEAR WHAT MRS. BEAVER TELLS YOU? WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT SAFE? ‘COURSE HE ISN’T SAFE. BUT HE’S GOOD. HE’S THE KING, I TELL YOU.”

It is found throughout the Old Testament. His wrath is seen in the flood (Genesis 6); in the judgment on rebellious Israelites in the desert (Numbers 16:46; 25:1-11); upon Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19; Deuteronomy 29:23); on Israel for not following the words of the book (2 Kings 22:13) and turning from God to idols (2 Chronicles 24:18)--to name a few.

But lest someone think that the God of wrath is only an Old Testament thing, the New Testament is just as clear in its declarations. Ephesians 5:5-6 lists the different types of people upon whom the wrath of God comes for they are sons of disobedience (cf. Colossians 3:5-6). Revelation 14 describes the “wine of the wrath of God” (vss9-10, 19) and Revelation 16 tells of “the seven bowls of the wrath of God” (16:1b).

God’s wrath is most vividly seen in the cross of Jesus Christ. The One who had no sin was punished by death so that undeserved rebels could be made holy (2 Corinthians 5:21). This is the good news. It is the holiness of God that demands justice upon those who have rebelled, sinned, slighted, and offended the Creator and Sovereign of the Universe. Holiness cannot ignore offenders or worse yet, look over their sin and allow them into its

presence. But, in His love, God sends His Son to be the sacrifice needed to remove sins so that people may be redeemed and made holy.

Romans 5:8-9 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

II. “BUT HE’S GOOD.”

While the holiness of God is a source of “discomfort” to people, it is a great source of comfort for those who are followers of His Son.

BECAUSE GOD IS HOLY, HE CANNOT CHANGE

One consequence of the holiness of God is the fact that He is perfect. In all His actions, words and being, there is no fault to be found and no mistakes made. Therefore, since God is perfect, there is nothing in which He can improve and there is no area in which He can digress (for perfection does not allow it). God cannot become anything greater than He is and it is impossible for Him to become anything less. People are always in need of improvement but for God, “improvement” is neither necessary nor possible.

Therefore, the promises of God will always be fulfilled and His warnings will always be executed. So, when God draws men and women to Himself, He will not push them away. When He promised to send His Son back to bring His children home (John 14:1-3), He will not renege. And even though it was almost 2000 years ago, Jesus’ promise “to be with us until the end of the world or age” (Matthew 28:18-20) is still valid and true.

Psalms 89:34-35 My covenant I will not violate, Nor will I alter the utterance of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David.

Psalms 111:7-10 The works of His hands are truth and justice; All His precepts are sure. They are upheld forever and ever; They are performed in truth and uprightness. He has sent redemption to His people; He has ordained His covenant forever; Holy and awesome is His name. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.

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BECAUSE GOD IS HOLY, HE IS FIT FOR DEPENDANCE

Stephen Charnock draws out two (out of a number) reasons why the holiness of God is such a comfort and source of confidence for the believer. First of all, because God is holy, He is “fit to be confided in for the answer of our prayers.”²² In His “Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus contrasted a holy God with evil men:

Matthew 7:7-11 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. “Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? “Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”

If evil men can give good gifts to his children, how much greater is God’s gifts to His children who pray and ask Him? God is holy; He is also all-knowing, wise and all-powerful. Nothing can prohibit Him from giving what He knows is truly good to His children. He will never give anything that is detrimental to them. He will never withhold the best answer (and He always knows what is best). He will never promise and then not deliver.

There will be many times in a believer’s life when it does not seem that the best answers are given or the best plans laid out. But two things must be remembered: #1--God is preparing His people for His kingdom. That may mean going through tough and disciplinary times here on earth to be ready to spend eternity in His presence. #2--His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). We cannot see the whole picture, so we must trust the One who can and trust Him to be a dependable guide. His holy character confirms that He is faithful and worthy of dependence and trust.

The second reason Charnock gives for God’s holiness being a comfort for the believer is this: His holiness makes Him “fit to be confided in for the comfort of our soul in a broken condition.”²³

Isaiah 57:15-16 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, “I dwell on a high and holy place, AND also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite. “For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always

be angry; For the spirit would grow faint before Me, And the breath of those whom I have made.

Being revealed as “the high and lofty One” may cause the low in spirit to be overly fearful and not willing to draw close. But also revealing that He is holy reminds the reader that God is good, merciful and will keep His promises. He is a powerful God who gets angry at sin, but He is also kind to those who are humble and contrite (Isaiah 66:2; Psalm 51:17).

A debate has been going on since the early part of the 1900s about whether or not God, if He truly is transcendent, majestic and holy, can really be “in touch” and “sympathetic” to lowly people here on earth. Some say ‘no’ and create this God called a “process” God who in reality, is more like man than God.

But this is neither biblical nor necessary. While God is truly a transcendent being, far and above anything in His creation, He is constantly seen in Scripture as One who comes alongside His people to be their refuge, strength and comfort. He condescends “to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite” (or repentant). And concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, it is written, “a battered reed He will not break off and a smoldering wick He will not put out” (Matthew 12:20).

BECAUSE GOD IS HOLY, HE WILL EXERCISE JUSTICE

Nahum 1:2-3 describe God as a “jealous and avenging God” who “will by no means leave the guilty unpunished” (cf. Romans 12:19; Psalm 73:18-20; Micah 5:15). The writer of Hebrews states:

Hebrews 10:29-31 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.” And again, “THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.” It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

One may be asking “How does this bring comfort?” Comfort and peace comes to the children of God when they know that evildoers will not get away with their sin. Injustice is seen all around. Crimes go unsolved. Guilty people are exonerated due to “technicalities” or their punishment does not really fit their crime. And all these things can be a source of consternation to

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all people, as it was to the writer of Psalm 73. People desire justice to be found in their communities.

Believers, though, can have peace knowing that God's holiness will bring about proper justice. The murderer who never gets caught has been seen by the eternal Judge of the universe and He will not allow it to go unpunished. The gossips that go about in their 'trade', thinking they are doing no real harm, are also seen by this Judge and He will seek His vengeance.

While this brings peace to the believer, it should also be a source of motivation to proclaim God's gift of grace. The cross of the sinless Son of God, Jesus Christ, satisfied the justice of a holy God for those whose faith is in that act of love. God's divine vengeance will be delivered: either upon people for their own sins or upon His Son, who gave Himself to receive His Father's holy vengeance on behalf of sinful rebels.

III. THEREFORE, WHAT SHALL WE DO?

STAY FAR AWAY FROM SIN

Psalm 97:10 (NKJV) "You who love the LORD, hate evil!"

3 John 11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.

Paul tells his son in the faith to "Flee youthful lusts" (2 Timothy 2:22). In other words, "run away," "escape" or "get out of there." Friend, if we understand God to be holy and intolerable of sin, we should not dabble with it, but get as far away from it as we can and do it as fast as we can. We have the promise from God that there is always a way of escape from temptation (1 Corinthians 13:10); therefore, take it and flee.

WORSHIP HIM ONLY

Deuteronomy 4 is a reminder from Moses about the greatness and holiness of God as God delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt. Verses 15-24 are a commentary on the first and second commandments: *You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol...* (Exodus 20:3-4a). He concludes the section by reminding the people that "the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God" (Deuteronomy 4:24b).

Worshipping anything else besides God is an affront to His holy majesty. He has created and redeemed for this purpose. Only He is worthy. When people consider other things more worthy of their worship, they are not only

foolish (for all else pales in comparison to the glory of God) but are also quite sinful. It is the holiness of God that makes Him praiseworthy; thus, worship only Him. Charles Spurgeon noted "In him is no flaw or fault, excess or deficiency, error or iniquity. He is wholly excellent, and is therefore called holy. In his words, thoughts, acts, and revelations as well as in himself, he is perfection itself. O come let us worship and bow down before him."

CONFESS AND REPENT OF OUR SINS

This was Isaiah's only response as he stood before a majestic and morally holy God: *Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts* (Isaiah 6:5). And it was Job's reaction after God revealed His greatness to him: *I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes* (Job 42:5-6).

The call to repent is found all throughout Scripture, including the preaching of John the Baptist (Mark 1:4). Jesus also came preaching, *The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel* (1:15).

Why repent? Because the kingdom of God is a holy kingdom for its King is holy.

CONCLUSION

"Safe?" said Mr. Beaver. "Don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."

Friend, our God is a holy God. You will either find Him as a terrible foe or an ever faithful friend. If you will humble your heart before Him and repent of your sins to follow after His Son (all of which is seen in saving faith), you will see Him as a beautiful majestic being in whom much peace, mercy and love can be found. If you continue to follow after your own gods which you have created, you will find His holy wrath more than you can bear for "it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31).

Take Him as your holy portion. Worship no other but God. Trust none but God. Delight in nothing else but God and you will find the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4). This holy God can forgive your sins; are you interested?

¹ Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1996), vol. 2, 112-113.

² Charnock, 188.

³ Charnock, 189.