

**King's Online Bible School****Doctrine 101: Learning about God** — Spotlight Studies

(adapted from Wayne Grudem's *Bible Doctrines* and R. C. Sproul's *Essential Truths*)

**God is Holy** (Lesson 8)**1. Pristine Inviolable Purity**

"In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood before Him, each having six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is Yahweh of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory." And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke (Isa 6:1-4).

Isaiah sees the Lord, Who reveals Himself as robed and seated on a high and exalted throne attended by Seraphim.

The prophet's attention is directed to the seraphim. Uncompromised in their own derived goodness, the seraphim respond to God's absolute purity with rejoicing wonder and exalting antiphonal worship that shakes the foundations of the temple.

In the presence of Yahweh's intrinsic purity, they do not look directly, but cover their faces and the reflected light of their own innocence in awe and worship. With two wings they cover their feet in reverence.

With two wings they fly, crying out to one another of the overwhelming power and beauty of Person they are witnessing. The feature they extol and declare and over which they exclaim is purity — the blinding glory of God's absolute righteousness.

As His robe fills the entire expanse in Isaiah's view, the Seraphim shout to one another of the glory of this Holy Person filling the whole earth.

Isaiah's immediate reaction to the vision is acute awareness of his own uncleanness.

"Then I said, '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'" (Isa 6:5).

The man shrinks back, desperately aware of his need for cleansing from his words, his ways, and his heart. His confession releases heaven's will and power to forgive and welcome. A seraph flies to touch his mouth with a burning coal and to announce the removal of all his iniquity.

The unspeakable preciousness our souls realize in considering such sure and enduring Personal wholesomeness and receiving His welcoming provision of cleansing that draws us near moves us, as it did Isaiah, to worship and to glad and total surrender.

"Extol Yahweh our God,  
And worship at His holy hill;  
For Yahweh our God is holy" (Ps 99:9).

**Responding to the Holy One:** As you consider the seraphim's response to God's being, please reflect on your own regard for Him.

## 2. Protected Pure Presence

The Holy One created in order to be known and, much more than that, to be one with those He created in His image.

When Adam separated himself and his descendants from God, the Lord drove the man and the woman away from the Tree of Life, so that they would not live forever, apart from Him (Gen 3:22-24). He did this only after promising the Savior Who would come from the seed of the woman and would crush the Serpent's head (Gen 3:15).

God's revelation of Himself as holy *qāddôš* is drawn from the Akkadian *qadistu* (an adjective, describing something or someone who is "pure" or "devoted") as well as the Arabic *al-qaddus*, (a noun, expressing the existence of pure holiness). The meaning "separate" or "set apart" is necessarily a derived meaning of *qāddôš* because sin may not exist in God's presence (*Vine's Expository Dictionary*).

As Infinite Spirit, God is present everywhere. At the same time, because He is holy, He holds and maintains Himself *separate* or *set apart* from sin and evil and from all who oppose His holy will.

"Your eyes are too pure to behold evil" (Hab 2:13).

"No evil dwells with You" (Ps 5:6).

God's holy *separateness* is not the same as God's *self-existence* — His uniqueness as *Creator*, existing before all things as the *Eternal* and as the only Person in the universe who is not created and dependent. God's *separateness* refers to the expression of His *Holiness* in relating to His creation.

### 3. God's dwelling among His people

"Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, . . . 'Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them'" (Exod 25:1, 8).

"Then you shall . . . anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and shall consecrate it and all its furnishings; and it shall be holy" (Exod 40:9).

God's care to be separate from sin is especially evident in the arrangements He required for the tabernacle (and later, the temple) — His dwelling place in the midst of Israel:

- 1) The Lord was enthroned over the cherubim on the Mercy Seat that covered the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark was positioned within the Holy of Holies — the enclosed area at the far end of the tabernacle interior, separated from the main part of the room by a heavy curtain (Exod 26:33). There was no entrance or opening to the outside. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter through the veil once a year, stepping inside into the darkness to apply blood to the mercy seat (Lev 16:1, 32-34).
- 2) The larger part of the room, the Holy Place, was restricted to all of God's people except the consecrated priests (Exod 28:40-43).
- 3) Surrounding the tabernacle structure was the courtyard. Only those who were ceremonially clean were allowed to enter through the one gate. No ordinary Israelite was ever permitted within the tabernacle itself.
- 4) The courtyard was enclosed by a fence. The altar of burnt offering stood within the entrance. Here the blood sacrifices were offered that dealt with the people's sins and made it possible for them to enter the court of the Lord to worship and pray to Him.
- 5) The priests and Levites encamped around the entire perimeter of the Tabernacle area, providing an additional buffer between the holy and the common, so that there would be "no wrath on the congregation of the sons of Israel" (Numbers 1:53).

In this way the Lord remained set apart in the midst of His people — separated, not only from all that was sinful, but also from what was common.

#### 4. God's dwelling within His children

When Jesus died, the veil in the temple that separated and guarded God's enthroned presence among His people was torn in two from top to bottom (Matt 27:50-51). It would no longer be necessary.

Jesus' dying removed sin and did away with every legal requirement that stood in the way of the Holy One's eternal desire and amazing plan to actually dwell in His holiness within the lives of sinful men and women.

" . . . having forgiven us all our transgressions, having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col 2:13-14).

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (2 Cor 5:19).

"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him Who died and rose again on their behalf" (2 Cor 5:15).

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor 5:17).

"Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:38).

"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (1 Cor 6:19)

"Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come and make our abode with Him" (John 14:23).

The apostle John presents the conclusion and the reason why God's holiness is safe and unviolated in a Christian's life.

"Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1 John 4:15).

"No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him" (1 John 3:6).

Every Christian has been recreated in a new life that is without sin. Our sinful natures were put to death at the cross.

" . . . Lay aside the old self, . . . and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Eph 4:22-24).