

King's Online Bible School
Doctrine 101: Learning about God

Study Guide 8 Answers

1. Why is God's holiness considered one of the most important attributes?

It is because of the way this attribute is emphasized:

- in what we are told about visions of heaven (Isa 6:1-5; Rev 4:8; 15:4);
- in God's instructions for His dwelling among His people (Exod 25:8; 28:2, 36; 29:29-37; 30:25-38; Deut 23:14);
- in His appearances to men (Exod 3:5; Josh 5:15);
- in His references to Himself (Lev 22:32; Ps 103:1; Prov 9:10, Isa 57:15; Luke 1:35; John 17:11);
- in His requirement for His people (Lev 11:44-45; Num 16:3; Deut 7:6, 26:19; Eph 1:4; Col 1:22; 1 Pet 1:15).

2. The angels cry, "Holy, holy, holy!" rather than, "Love, love, love!"

What does this make you conclude about God's love and His holiness?

- The focus on God's holiness worships Him for Him alone. The focus on His love could do the same, if it contemplates the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit. But usually we think about God's love with reference to ourselves.
- The wonder of God's love is greater and the value of His love to us is more precious because He is Separate and Set-apart.
- Because God is set apart, His love is also set apart. This does not mean that it does not reach out to others, but that the love with which He reaches out to others is exclusive. When the host of heaven praise God with the cry "Holy! Holy! Holy!" they are exalting His love.
- God's love is exclusive because it is a unique love, set apart from all other motives and expressions of love. It is eternal and the only love that will endure. It is the love necessary for all personal life.
- God always intended this love of His for His creatures. Because He desires their highest good, He did not assign or confine them to loving that is less genuine.
- But He could not, therefore, create creatures with this love built into them, because then it would not be the very thing it is. Love is a decision a person makes about others. Love describes relating. Each individual must make decisions in this regard.
- Those who would like to relate to God and to others with God's love, which is high above all other loves and set apart from them, may receive it as a gift from Him. But they must receive it in the Person and life of His Son and in His love for the Father and for men, because they themselves are incapable of such pure delight in each other person and such longing to do them good.

3. What is the primary meaning of holiness? separate, set apart

4. To what two realities about God does "holiness" refer in the Bible?

- 1) His distinctive and set-apart nature as the infinite Creator
- 2) His absolute goodness: His righteousness that maintains the sharpest distinction and separation from all that is contrary to it, that punishes its presence in His universe, and that will someday destroy it or consign it to eternal separation.

5a. In what regards is it obvious that God must be holy?

- He is the infinite Creator, unlike all other existence and all other beings.
- He must be set apart from evil spirits and from sinful men because He is absolutely good.

5b. How does God's holiness lead directly on to the realization that God must be the righteous Judge? God's absolute goodness can only be perfect as it expresses itself in resisting every wrong and evil in His creation and freeing the universe from everyone who is wicked.

6. Please look again at the definition of holiness at the beginning of the lecture notes. Considering what the lecture goes on to say about holiness, what exactly is the definition identifying? It is identifying the way God *expresses* His holiness.

7. In what way could the people of Israel be holy? They were able to be set apart from the nations by observing distinctions between the clean and the unclean.

8. What does God intend when He asks us to be holy?

We are set apart from sin and self as Christ lives His life in us and we surrender to His will.

9. How are Christians inclined to misunderstand the call to be holy?

We confuse it with the idea that God requires us to live a life that no longer sins or fails.

10. What attitude provides the best posture for responding to God's call to us to be holy?

It is trusting love for Him with all my heart, soul, and might.

11a. Please consider the final statement in the lecture notes: "God is set apart to pursue the highest imaginable goal and purpose: His own honor and glory." Is this a new idea for you?

11b. Why is it right and good for God to do this?

Because God is perfect and absolute in His goodness and wisdom, He cannot choose less than the best for His creatures nor can there be any good higher than He Himself. He must call His creatures to realize His Own honor and glory. Nothing else is worthy. Nothing else could possibly compete with encountering, experiencing, and knowing absolute, infinite goodness.

11c. What are the implications for us? When we realize the good God is extending to us in requiring that we obey Him, love Him, worship Him, and serve Him, we see how foolish it is to resist and how deceptive every alternative is.

12. Look at Revelation 4:1-11. How do verses 9-11 relate to verses 1-8? What John sees in this vision is God's holiness and the way it is being experienced. The first eight verses describe His separate glory and the way the creatures near the throne are constantly responding to it. By giving life and existence to persons other than Himself and by enabling them to draw near, God's set-apart nature is not diminished or obscured, but receives distinguished emphasis. The worship and words of the living creatures are the fitting response. He does not have any need for creatures to acknowledge Him. But His creatures need to respond in this way. It is the response that awareness of His holiness demands and the behavior in which every heart around the throne delights. As creatures they are incapable of adding anything to the Creator. Their worship and exaltation is as much His blessing as their presence and participation is His matchless gift to them.

John sees the twenty-four elders' response as they look on and witness this worship. Their praise draws in the full perspective as they exalt God for His decision and wisdom in creating a universe where persons other than Himself can experience life and come to recognize His immeasurable worth as the infinite and singular Source of all their well-being, and reflect the glory and honor that belongs to Him in their worship, adoration, and thanksgiving.

13. Read Psalm 99. Briefly identify the aspect of holiness that is being presented in each of the verses (or clusters of verses) listed below:

99:1-3 God's separateness as the awesome One, High above all peoples

99:4 God's insistence on justice, not allowing any injustice in His presence or rule

99:5 God's separate existence, so that man's expression of worship takes place at nothing higher than His footstool - our world!

99:6-7a God's priests and prophets stood in-between, bridging the distance that must be maintained between God in His holiness and His people in their sinfulness. The pillar of cloud draws attention to His transcendent otherness. It makes His presence unmistakable while reminding them of the separateness between His infinite being and their physical existence.

99:7b-c Keeping God's statutes is a necessity for His servants. Those who are disobedient are not able to approach Him in an acceptable way because of their sin.

99:8 God's faithfulness to answer His people depends on:

- His dealing with their sin by taking the necessary action to forgive and remove it, and
- His answering every injustice.

99:9 The idea here is predominantly spatial separateness.

14. Do the same with the following sections from Isaiah 6:

6:1-4 God Most High and immense, filling the entire earth with His glory

6:5 Sinfulness and uncleanness is not allowed in God's presence and must be destroyed before He can draw near and speak.

6:6-7 Isaiah is safe only because God has undertaken to remove his sin as the starting point of addressing him.

15. How does Isaiah's visual description of the Seraphim emphasize God's holiness?

The seraphim covered their faces and their feet in His presence. Glorious and sinless as they are, still they do not let the expression of their persons dominate in His presence.

16a. What is being said about trembling and shaking in Psalm 99:1?

Let the peoples tremble; let the earth shake.

16b. What is being said about trembling and shaking in Isaiah 6:4?

The foundations of the thresholds of the temple trembled at the sound of the seraph's voice.

16c. Why is there trembling and shaking? The emphasis is on His exalted, all-powerful Being, so much higher and greater than any creature. In Isaiah 6 it is the sound and words of the seraphs and the reality they are proclaiming that shakes the temple foundations.

17. How do the words in Habakkuk 2:14 fit with what the Seraphim cry out about the earth in Isaiah 6:3? It will help to read Habakkuk 2:12-19. The glory is present throughout the earth, but men are too estranged, too self-absorbed, and too dull to recognize it.

18. What is Habakkuk 2:20 expressing? It is expressing the reality of God's glory throughout all the earth, even though the knowledge of that glory is still not grasped by men.