

GOD IS HOLY.*

God is entirely set apart from us His creation in His nature and character. Sin separates us from Him.

SCRIPTURE†	MUSIC‡
Exodus 3:1-14 Exodus 15:1-13 Psalm 8 Psalm 97 Psalm 99 Isaiah 6:1-5 Isaiah 57:15 Habakkuk 1:12-13 1 Timothy 1:11-17 Hebrews 10:14 James 4:6-8 1 Peter 1:14-16 Revelation 4:8-11	Almighty Father Bow the Knee Come, Thou Almighty King Holy, Holy, Holy I Love You, Lord Immortal, Invisible Lord, Most Holy (arr. Hayes) SATB O Worship the King Refine My Heart (arr. Beaver) Solo Speak, O Lord Worthy of Worship



NORTHWEST VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

nwvbc.org | 623-581-3115 | 4030 W Yorkshire Drive, Glendale, AZ 85308

* Fits as Part 1 of 4 in series, “**God of the Gospel.**”

† Daily preparatory readings shown in **bold.**

‡ Published choral and vocal music shown in **bold.**

INTRODUCING & PROMOTING THIS THEME

EXCHANGE WORDING

God is holy and cannot tolerate our sin. *However, each person has chosen sin. We have all broken the Ten Commandments, along with many of God's other laws. If we had a contest to see who could jump to the top of a 30-foot flagpole, no one would make it, and it wouldn't matter if one person jumped higher than the others. All would miss the mark. We all miss the mark of God's holiness. (used 4 themes of Exchange Bible Study over a month's period.)*

ISAIAH 6

Isaiah 6:1-7 | Look at Isaiah 6 to answer these questions: 1.) What does "holy" mean? 2.) How holy is God? 3.) What does God's holiness mean to me? Isaiah 6 begins with the death of Uzziah, the greatest human authority Isaiah would have known. Yet God's holiness is contrasted with even Uzziah's high earthly position. God is not like Uzziah was, and He is not like we are. The phrase "holy, holy, holy" is a Hebrew intensifier that we would use to say something like "holy, very holy, most holy." The idea is that there is no one else like Him in holiness. Our response, as Isaiah's was, must be to recognize our uncleanness. God's holiness makes even the best person look dirty. We must respond in humility to His holy nature.

God is holy. What is holiness? Instead of reading a definition from the dictionary, we are going to see what God Himself tells us about His holiness in His Word. The 6th chapter of Isaiah paints a picture for us of what God's holiness looks like.

Isaiah had a vision of God "in the year that king Uzziah died." Earlier in his life, King Uzziah had been struck with leprosy after attempting to unlawfully burn incense in the temple. In contrast to a sinful and sick king who died, Isaiah saw an undying, perfect King, "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple."

The passage continues to describe God as different, unique, set apart, holy.

"Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke."

These created beings, who themselves have never sinned, humble themselves by covering their faces and feet. How holy is God? The phrase they cry out answers that question. In Hebrew, the repeating of an adjective intensifies it. God is not only holy, or even very holy, He is most holy. There is no one like Him in holiness.

Isaiah's response tells us what God's holiness should mean to us.

“Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”

Isaiah saw the holiness of God and immediately saw the contrast of his own unworthiness. As we try to understand God's holiness, we must recognize our uncleanness, like Isaiah did. Even our goodness is like filthy rags compared to Him. Isaiah humbled himself before God and his sin was removed. His encounter with God's holiness changed him completely. To be changed like Isaiah was, we must respond to God's holy nature with humility. (Jillian Waycaster)

MOUNT SINAI

Mount Sinai provides us with a presentation of God's holiness. He manifests Himself in different ways that show how holy He is. Present some of these sensory details from the extended Mount Sinai account in Exodus.

Two full days the Hebrews had prepared themselves. Thousands upon thousands had washed the desert sand from their bodies, scrubbed their clothing clean, and kept themselves from any kind of physical impurity. But not even Moses' instructions could have prepared them for the third day, when Jehovah came down to Sinai.

Exodus records the scene. Thunder claps and rumbles from dark clouds and black smoke that swirl about Sinai's peak. Lightning bolts flash, lighting up the desert landscape, but ever smoldering within the cloud is a deep red glow: Yahweh has descended with fire. Then ring out the long blast of a great horn, growing louder and louder till it shakes the earth.

The people draw as near as they dare to the foot of the mountain. Any mortal who touches the mountain will die instantly; such is the holiness of God. Then the horn blast stops. God Himself speaks to the people with a voice of thunder His first Ten Commands. But after the tenth, the people can bear no more the terrible voice of Yahweh. They cower away and beg Moses to go alone and hear the rest in their place.

* * * * *

There is a certain thrill and awe at seeing the holiness of God on display. But as we read this account we realize that we, like the Israelites, are not worthy to approach this holy God. How can we—we who are human, who are sinful and unclean at our core!?

But a few chapters later, we see a graphic but beautiful answer to this need. When Israel enters their covenant with Jehovah, Moses flings the blood of a sacrifice on them. Then he and the elders of Israel scale Sinai itself and eat quietly a fellowship meal in the presence of God. And the ground where His form seems to stand glows sapphire-blue.

Though we are impure before this holy God, when covered with the innocent blood of a perfect Sacrifice, we too can approach His presence in reverent fellowship. We worship in awe at God's holiness today. And we celebrate the New Covenant in Christ's blood, through which we can come near to Him. (Caleb French)