

OUR HOLY GOD

It's easy to talk around God's holiness, but it needs to be considered head on. An appreciation of God's holiness will change the sincerity behind our thoughts, prayers, worship and lives offered in honor to Him.

Day of Rest: The first time we encounter the term is in **Genesis 2:3**, "So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all His work that He had done in creation."

- Definition? You'll typically read "*consecrate, set apart*" or something close to it.
 - There's also an understood "goodness, purity, etc" that is connected to the term.
 - The primary focus is that God is holy, so anything in proximity to Him becomes holy (places, days, things and people, etc.)
 - There is an understood "goodness" that becomes associated with the term and become clearer over time. Eventually, when we enter the N.T., there is much discussion about the Christians and their tie and responsibility towards holiness, but we're not going to consider that aspect today.
 - Back to the passage: this day, for example, is holy because it is set apart from the other days. God worked on 6 days, but then He "rested" from all His work.
- The Sabbath, which can refer to the seventh day of the week or a time of rest, becomes relevant for Israel.
 - **Exodus 16:22–23** On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers each. And when all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, he said to them, "This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Tomorrow is a day of solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord; bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over lay aside to be kept till the morning.' "
 - **Exodus 20:8–11** "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."
 - **Exodus 31:13–14** "You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, 'Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people.' "
 - **Exodus 31:17** "It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed."
 - **Leviticus 19:30** "You shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord."
 - **Deuteronomy 5:12–15** "Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your

female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day."

- **Mark 2:27-28** And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."
- I had a brother ask me this week (complete coincidence): "Why would God kill someone for working on the Sabbath?" He knows that God commanded Israel not to work on the Sabbath. He's wondering why the action was worthy of death. Why such a consequence? Did the action merit the punishment? It's a good question. Of course, asking the question may reveal something about us: we don't totally appreciate and/or understand the concept of *holiness*. Our God is Holy.

Burning Bush: This takes us back to the great "I AM" scene. God spoke to Moses, through His angel, in the burning bush in **Exodus 3:5** Then He said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

- God saw something in Moses. He loved Him. He's about to honor him with a great charge to act as a mediator between God and Pharaoh. Moses will be a mediator between God and Israel. Moses was such an important man in Israel's history . . . but he wasn't God. He needed to take his sandals off, because now the ground he was standing on was made holy because of God. His sandals were not worthy to touch the rock and dirt. Moses, was not worthy to come to close to God, which is why he was told to stay back. That was close enough.
- It's a brief mention, but a scene that you never forget. It's a staple in Jewish history. It makes the point in such a simple, yet powerful way. There's a balance that we see in our relationship with God: He calls you, but never forget who He is. He loves you, but you are not Him. Anytime you forget one side of the coin, you make a mess of your service. See His love without His holiness and you downplay His power and authority. Yet, see His power and authority without His love and you'll misunderstand what He does with such power and authority. You'll miss His motivation. After all - God was using Moses to help His people.

Mount Sinai: The Hebrew writer would reference this great mountain and the terrifying scene. We read about it in **Exodus 19:16-20** "On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. The Lord came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up."

- Could everyone come up? No. What if an animal touch the mountain? It was stoned.
- Everyone was terrified. Even Moses, the Hebrew writer claims, said "I tremble with fear."
- **Deuteronomy 5:28-29** "And the Lord heard your words, when you spoke to me. And the Lord said to me, 'I have heard the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear Me and to keep all My commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!"

- God was pleased that they respected Him. They heard His voice and experienced His greatness without dying and that was enough.

The Glory of God: We go from “stay back” to “come here.” Moses asks to see His glory. Take note of what God chooses to declare to Moses: [Exodus 33:17-34:9](#).

- What an act of grace towards Moses. He was allowed to “come a little closer” to God. Yet, God’s glory and holiness would not allow a complete revealing of Himself to Moses.
- Take note of what God proclaimed about Himself. I can’t but help and see the balance again: God is not to be feared, but feared. He is forgiving and just. He is loving and steadfast. He is dependable. The holiness of God should leave us with reverence towards Him. It should leave us with fear if we choose to stand against Him. It should leave us with comfort and peace because we know who He is and how He chooses to reveal Himself. This shows the glory of God and reminds us that no other shares His glory and greatness. He is truly Holy from the rest. He isn’t just good, He defines goodness.

A Shining Face: Moses came down from the mountain for the second time totally unaware of what speaking to God in such a manner would do. [Exodus 34:29-35](#).

- Within the instruction given to Moses we find so many examples of God’s holiness. A temple, holy to the Lord where He would dwell in the midst of His people all those years. This temple was to be built according to a pattern. Priests would attend to the temple and God’s people. They were holy to the Lord. The temple had utensils and furniture that was holy to God. Only a certain people could handle them. Everything down to incense mixtures which were holy to God. Within the temple was the Most Holy, or the Holy of Holies. Only one man could enter, on the right day, after cleansing himself to offer blood on behalf of himself and the people. Such a great site and God’s glory was there. It was all very holy.
- Then you have reminders such as this. God makes people holy. The focus, however, is not on the man, but the Maker. All those years in the wilderness the people were reminded of God’s holiness when they observed Moses. They were reminded when they saw the veil the holiness of God.

These are just a few examples. We could go on and on. My goal is to stress the point. We need to be reminded who we’re taking about. We tend to be focused on ourselves and our own lives. We tend to forget this principle, and when we do, it shows. We forget about God’s house and focus on ours.

- After the exiles returned from Babylon, they began to lay the foundation of the temple. However, they abandoned the work and were rebuked by God. Read [Haggai 1:2-11](#).
- [Haggai 2:10-14](#). Do you get it? You know what happens when God, or something of His touches something else? It makes it holy. However, the further out and more removed it is, it doesn’t not transmit that holiness. However, on the flip side, uncleanness spreads more easily. That’s what you get with mankind. Though they were working on something holy, their uncleanness could taint the whole thing.
- You know what happens when I lay on sheets or wear clothes? You’ve got to wash them. You know what you get with mankind? A little bit of strong poison will poison the whole cup. Trying to add more and more water doesn’t fix the problem. When you let mankind get their hands on something, we ruin it.

Jesus' Touch: **Numbers 5:1-4** "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Command the people of Israel that they put out of the camp everyone who is leprous or has a discharge and everyone who is unclean through contact with the dead. You shall put out both male and female, putting them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camp, in the midst of which I dwell.' And the people of Israel did so, and put them outside the camp; as the Lord said to Moses, so the people of Israel did."

- He healed so many with various diseases by His touch (**Luke 4:40**)
- He healed a woman with a discharge of blood when she touched His garment (**Mark 5:25-34**).
- He took the hand of a deceased little girl and gave her life (**Mark 5:35-43**).
- **Mark 1:40-44** "And a leper came to Him, imploring Him, and kneeling said to Him, 'If You will, You can make me clean.' Moved with pity, He stretched out His hand and touched him and said to him, 'I will; be clean.' And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, and said to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.'"
- For sure, we see the power of the great physician. He came into our world and was making those who were ceremonial unclean, clean. But it was greater than that, was it not?
- **Hebrews 10:19-25** "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."