

Living Like You Belong to God

Lesson Two: We Belong To A Holy God

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be Ye Holy: For I Am Holy.” (1 Peter 1:15-16)

God chose Israel as His own people. He entered into covenant with them and called them to be a holy nation. They were to be His people, sanctified and separated from the other nations.

But what does it mean to be holy? What was to be their standard? What would set them apart? And finally, what difference do the answers to these questions make for us?

- A. **Observe:** Before Moses led the nation of Israel out of Egypt, he worked for years as a shepherd. The following passage describes what happened while Moses was pasturing his father-in-law’s flock and approached Mount Horeb, also known as Mount Sinai (**Exodus 3:2-6**).

Discussion:

- The Angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush. The bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. Moses turned aside to see the marvelous sight, why the bush was not consumed.

Insight: The phrase *angel of the Lord* is usually considered to refer to a physical manifestation of God or of Christ. Fire was often a symbol of God’s presence, such as when He later descended on Mount Sinai (**Exodus 19:18**).

- God called Moses by name. Then He told Moses not to come near and to remove his sandals from his feet, for the place on which he was standing was holy ground.
- Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look at God. He responded out of reverence to God.
- This is the first time the word holy is used in Scripture. The ground was described as holy. God declared it holy, and it was made so by the presence of God.

- B. **Observe:** On the same mountain where He met with Moses in a burning bush, the holy God is about to create a separate people by making a covenant with them (**Exodus 19:1-6**).

Discussion:

- According to verse 1, this event took place in the third month after they left Egypt. By noting the references to God, we learn from this passage that God wanted a personal relationship with the children of Israel. He also wanted to make them a kingdom of priests.

Insight: A *covenant* is a formal, binding agreement made between two parties, with both parties assuming some obligation. In this case it is between God and Israel.

- Under this covenant God's obligation was to make Israel His own possession among all the nations of the earth, to make them a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. Israel's obligation was to obey God's voice and to keep His covenant.

C. **Observe:** Next we will look at six verses of scriptures: **Deut. 7:6, 28:9; Lev. 20:26; Psalm 135:4 and 147:19-20.**

Discussion:

- As we look at these Scriptures and in particular the references to Israel and to the Lord, we learn that in keeping with His oath, God will establish Israel as a holy people unto Himself. The people were to be holy unto God because God is holy. God had set them apart and had chosen Israel to be a people for His own possession.
- In **Psalm 147:19-20**, we see that Israel is unique in that God has declared His words, His statutes, and His ordinances to Israel. God had not dealt with any other nation as He had with Israel. Other nations had not even known these things.

D. **Observe:** In **Exodus 19:10-12, 21, 24**, we can see the things that God required Moses and the people to do in preparing to receive the covenant. Take the time to review that information. Next let's look at the character of the God who called Israel—and later us—to be His own (**Exodus 15:11; 1 Samuel 2:2; Isaiah 6:3; and Revelation 4:8, 15:4**).

Discussion:

- We learn from these passages of Scriptures: There is no one like God; He is majestic in holiness and awesome in praise; no one is holy like the Lord; there is no one besides Him; there is no rock like our God; Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord; the Lord is everlasting, who was and who is and who is to come.

Insight: The root of the Hebrew word for *holiness* means "to separate." The idea is that of separation between what is unclean and what is pure, between what is common and what is sanctified. God is separate from all that is evil and defiled. His holy character is the standard for moral perfection. Therefore, holiness for us is simply conforming to the character of God.

E. **Observe:** Now we've seen that holiness is a vital attribute of God. This same quality is to be a characteristic of His People. Holiness is the standard not only for the Israelites but for all who claim Him as their God.

Discussion:

- **Leviticus 11:45, 19:2; 1 Peter 1:15-16; and 1 Corinthians 3:16-17** all remind us that we are called to be holy."

F. **Observe:** A Holy people in covenant with the holy God must never forget who they are and the separateness they are called to. Let's look at **Numbers 15:37-41** to see what God required the people of Israel to do to remind themselves who they were and how they were to behave.

Discussion:

- God commanded Moses to speak to the sons of Israel and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations and put on the tassels a cord of blue.
- The purpose was to remind them of all the commandments of the Lord. They were to be reminded so they would do the commandments and not follow after their own heart and their own eyes, after which they played the harlot. God wanted them to be holy to Him.
- God also reminded them that He was the one that brought them out of Egypt.
- Although we don't sew tassels on our garments today to help us remember the commandments and to do them, what tangible reminders do we use, or can we use to prompt us to read Scriptures and to do what they say?

Wrap It Up

God is holy. There is none like Him, there is none beside Him. He is righteous, He is pure, He is holiness dwelling in unapproachable light (**1 Timothy 6:16**). The song of heaven is, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was, who is, and who is to come" (**Revelation 4:8**).

If this is our God, how should we as His people live and reflect His glory in a dark and dying world? How do we live as a holy people, as a kingdom of priests, as image bearers of the Almighty?

We represent God by walking in obedience to His commands. The two greatest commands are to love God and to love people. As we seek God through the study of His word, we fall more and more in love with and in awe of the Lord. His command is then to love the people in the world as He loved us.

It is a great privilege to be a child of God. But with privilege comes responsibility. It is our responsibility to conduct ourselves in a manner that reflects God's holiness and to live lives that are easily distinguishable from those of the world around us.

How are we doing? Are we reflecting the holiness of God? Are our lives so separate from and different than the world around us that it is like the difference between light and darkness?

Next Week's Lesson: Our Call to Live Differently From the World

Homework: Read **Leviticus 11:41-47, 20:22-26; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.**

*"Let's be doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving our own selves."
(James 1:22)*