

Holiness

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“Holiness: Thoughts in Preparation for 1 & 2 Peter”

By Rev. Ted Wood

“As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’” 1 Peter 1:15-16

1. Tabu/Taboo

- a. Derived meaning: something forbidden, prohibited
- b. Base meaning: consecrated, sacred, inviolable, set apart.

2. Attributes of God #22: Holiness.

- a. *“All the attributes of God come together and blend into holiness. Holiness, for that reason, has been called ‘an attribute of attributes’, that which brings unity to all the attributes of God. To conceive of God’s being and character as merely a synthesis of abstract perfections is to deprive God of all reality. In the God of the Bible these perfections live and function in holiness.”* R.A. Finlayson, The New Bible Dictionary.
- b. Expressions such as “Do you know Jesus?” and “I have a personal relationship with Jesus” can trivialize the Holiness of God and assume a deeper level intimacy than actually exists.

3. Holiness: *qadosh*, OT Hebrew; *hagios*, NT Greek.

- a. Derived meaning: moral perfection, piety.
- b. Basic meaning “Being set apart”. Root: “separation, cut off.”
- c. **He is set apart from His creation.**
 - ✓ Hubble telescope pictures of the universe.
 - ✓ The Milky Way galaxy has between 200-400 stars.
 - ✓ A ‘giant’ galaxy has 100 trillion stars.
 - ✓ In the visible universe there are 100 billion galaxies.
 - ✓ In the visible universe there are between 1-70 sextillion (10^{21}) stars.
 - ✓ The visible universe is 93 billion light years across.
- d. **He is set apart from all other “gods”.** *“Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”* Exodus 15:18
- e. **He is set apart for the redeemed.** *“The LORD, Who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, Who has chosen you.”* Isaiah 49:7. *“You only have I known of all the families of the earth ...”* Amos 3:2.
- f. **The redeemed are set apart for Him.**
 - ✓ *“I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.”* Leviticus 11:44
 - ✓ The gold plate on Aaron’s turban was inscribed *“Holy to the Lord ... it shall be on the front of the turban.”* Exodus 28:36
- g. **Holiness begins not with behavior, but being one with the Holy One.**

“... that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one ...” John 17:21-23.

4. The Holy by Rudolph Otto, publish 1917

- a. Otto found **the common denominator** in all the religions of the world: the idea of “the Holy.”
- b. **C.S. Lewis expressed** his debt to Otto in his book, *The Problem of Pain*; Otto’s idea of “The Holy” also appears in *The Great Divorce*, *Surprised by Joy* and many other Lewis works.
- c. **“Mysterium tremendum et fascinans”**: Otto used a Latin expression for the experience of the Holy.
 - ✓ Our responses to the Holy are not ordinary ones intensified. For example, fear does not become dread in response to the Holy, but we cease to have ordinary fear and move into an entirely different feeling.
- d. **Mysterium**: wholly Other, wholly Holy; experienced as blank wonder, stupor. “An astonishment that strikes us dumb.”
- e. **Tremendum**: awe, dread, unapproachable-ness, majesty, overpowering might, sense of nothingness in the Holy’s presence, dependence, profane (not by actions, but by being); the necessity for a cover, grace.
 - ✓ “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” ... “Woe is me! For I am lost ...” Isaiah 6:3-4.
 - ✓ “Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength! Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name ... Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth ...” 1 Chr 16:30
 - ✓ “Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.” Psalm 2:11
 - ✓ “Jacob ... said, ‘Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.’¹⁷ And he was afraid and said, ‘How awesome is this place!’” Genesis 28:16.
 - ✓ “‘Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground’... And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.” Exodus 3:5-6
 - ✓ “I turned to see ... one like a Son of Man ... When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.” Revelation 1:12-17
 - ✓ “‘I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.’ (God) said, ‘Who told you that you were naked?’” Genesis 3:10-11.
- f. **Fascinans**: attractiveness in spite of fear, mercy, grace, an irresistible drawing to the Holy. The drawing cannot be taught, but must be evoked.
 - ✓ “One thing I desire ... to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD ...” Psalm 27:4
 - ✓ “Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.” 1 Corinthians 13:12.