

~The Holiness of God~

If asked the question: "Do you love God?" many, if not most, would answer "YES", of course. However, the question then is: "Who is god?" OR "What god do you love?" To this question, you would get as many answers as there were people. To the Viking, about to plunder other lands and 'pillage the village' and rape and kill, his god, Odin, approves of what he does. He loves god. To the drunken Roman at an orgy, his god is Bacchus, the god of wine. He loves his god. In fact, he is celebrating his god while in a drunken stupor. To the Hindu, he or she loves millions of gods. His, or her, question to you might be: "Which one?" Next, let us take the *liberal* 'Christian' minister. His god wouldn't hurt a fly. His view of god is such, that the very thought of a blood sacrifice is repugnant to him. "Away from me with that bloody God of the Old Testament!" he cries. "My god wants all men to be brothers and believe in whatever makes them get along and feel good". To the average man or woman on the street, their god is an imaginary god who is exactly what they think of themselves! Their god is, usually, an extension of their own personalities. They have created 'god' in their own image.

Do these people love god?? Of course they do. The only problem is, the god(s) they believe in *does not exist!*

Reader, what is YOUR god like? Here is a good test:

If someone were to come from another world and ask YOU to use only *one* word to describe what YOUR God was like, what word, do you suppose, YOU would use?

In most cases, certainly in Western culture, the word would be 'love' and YOU would be wrong! How do I know? Read on!

It is true, that in 2 places in Scripture (both in 1st John) it says that 'God is love', but John is not describing the *essential* nature of God. He is telling Christians that we should love because God is love. He also says that 'God is just and righteous'. There are many attributes of God in the Bible. However, there is only one essential (essence) character of God!

*When the Bible speaks, it says over and over again that God is **HOLY!***

The attributes of God are those qualities that flow out of His essential (essence) nature. Let us look at it, as a lake, out of which several streams flow.

The lake, itself, is **Holy**. The streams are: **Love, Justice, Grace, Mercy, Longsuffering, Wisdom, Power and Wrath.**

You can prefix every one of God's attributes with the word 'Holy'. For example:

His love is a Holy love. His justice is a Holy justice. His Grace is a Holy grace. His mercy is a Holy mercy. His wisdom is a Holy wisdom. His longsuffering is a Holy longsuffering. His Power is a Holy power. His Wrath is a Holy wrath.

You cannot prefix His attributes with Love. How can you have a Loving love? How can you have a Loving wrath?

Exodus 3:5 we find Moses in the presence of God and God tells Moses to take off his sandals because the ground on which he stands is 'holy' ground.

Exodus 19:6 God tells the Jews that they were to be a 'holy' nation

Exodus 26:33 tells us that the place where God dwells in the Tabernacle was the Most 'holy' place or the 'Holy of Holies'. If the essential nature of God was love then why is it not called the Most loving place?

Exodus 28:2 we see that the garments for God's High Priest were 'holy'

Exodus 30:29 tells us that the utensils used in the Tabernacle were 'holy'

Lev. 11:44 God tells us that He is 'holy'

Lev. 22:2 God tells us that His name is 'holy'

Lev. 27:32 says that the tithe paid to God is 'holy'

2nd Kings 19:22 God calls Himself the 'Holy One of Israel'

2 Chron. 35:3 we are told that the Ark of the Covenant is 'holy'

Psalms 2:6 tells us that the hill upon which God dwells is 'holy'

Psalms 5:7 tells us that God's Temple is 'holy'

God is tri-une, that is, 3 persons within the Godhead--Father, Son and Spirit.

1) In 2nd Kings 19:22, the **Father** is called the *holy* one of Israel.

2) In Luke 1:35 the unborn **Son** of God is called the 'holy' one.

3) If the Spirit of God is truly God, then the **Spirit** should be called by the essential nature of God. Therefore, His name is the 'Holy' Spirit.

If the essential nature of God is love, then why is He not called the Loving Spirit?

Whenever a person, place or thing, in the Bible, is set apart for God, it is always called 'holy'!

At this point, I would like to say that I am not downplaying the love of God. The love of God is the reason we are saved: "For God so loved..." I am only trying to put the love of God, wonderful as it is, in its rightful and Biblical place—under the Holiness of God!

Proverbs 9:10 tells us: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding”

Hebrew writers don't rhyme words, they rhyme thoughts. The writer wants to say something and then wants to say the same thing again using different words. When he writes the second line he wants to substitute a word for 'fear' in the first line, so he uses the word 'knowledge' in the second line. When he wants to substitute a word for 'wisdom' in line one, he uses the word 'understanding' in line two. Now, when he wants to substitute a word that describes the Lord, what word does he use? What one word will substitute for the word 'Lord'?? Holy!

Fear becomes Knowledge—Wisdom becomes Understanding—Lord becomes Holy.

Rev. 4:8 tells us that the angels in Heaven who continually behold God and circle His throne day and night cry out: “**HOLY HOLY HOLY**, Lord God Almighty”

Eph. 1:4 tells us that, as Christians, we are to be 'holy'

2Tim. 3:15 tells us that the written word of God is called 'holy'

The name for Christians in the Bible is the word 'saint'. Paul addresses his letters to the “**saints that are at...**”. The Greek word for 'saint' is the word '**hagios**'. Do you know how this word is translated elsewhere in the Bible??? It is the same word that is translated as 'holy'!! We, as Christians, are literally called '**holies**'!

In the Book of Acts, the primary preaching sermons, of the Apostles, are recorded. This gives us the method and **content** of their sermons. Did you know that the love of God was NOT the message of the Apostles? The message was the **holiness** and righteousness of God in providing a Savior for sinners like us. ***In fact, the word 'love' does not appear anywhere in the entire 28 chapters of the Book of Acts!! Check it out for yourselves!***

What does this tell you about their message? Just a question!

Did you also know that nowhere, in all of Scripture, is God addressed by anyone as '**Our Loving Heavenly Father**'? He **is** addressed as '**holy** Father, righteous Father'.

Why am I going into such lengths to portray the '**holiness**' of God? For the simple reason that the Bible and its writers and characters do!

We have so **overplayed** the love of God, to the degree, that we have **lost** the **holiness** of God. If we preached and thought of God in terms of holiness more than we do, would we not reap a greater harvest and honor God more?

Many, if not most, people's view of God is very much like their view of Santa Claus.

- 1) He lives in relative obscurity most of the time--somewhere 'up there'
- 2) He seems distant and unreachable
- 3) He promises to discipline 'those who are naughty' but never does
- 4) His threats are meaningless. He, in fact, wouldn't hurt a fly

5) He forgives everybody and forgets what naughty things they did during the year

6) He is, in reality, a cream puff

We, in the West, have created and maintained a god who does not exist! We have foisted upon the people a god who is so loving that he would never send anyone to hell—never!

People don't talk much about hell, as it would go against what they have been taught about their god. They could not imagine THEIR god damning anyone to hell. THAT is why they don't preach it! By the way, when was the last time you heard anything about hell and damnation from your pulpit or Sunday School class?

Can you imagine what it would have looked like if, on the back of Noah's Ark, there was a sign saying: "**Smile, God loves you**" as the rains came down and the people were screaming and drowning all about?? What about walking in downtown Sodom or Gomorrah during the fiery holocaust and wearing a sign that read: "**God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your Life**"? Hmmm???

Pastors, preachers, teachers!! Is this your view of God? When was the last time *you* preached or taught or were taught on the 'holiness' of God—damnation, hell, the punishment of the sinner, the awfulness of sin, the horror of the cross, the wrath of God?

In my estimation, if Paul or Peter or Matthew walked into most of our churches and started to preach, it would not be long before they were asked to 'vacate the pulpit'.

The God of the Bible is a God to be feared! Yes, I said 'feared'! No, I don't just mean 'respected'. It is much more than that!

1) Deut 10:20

Thou shalt *fear* the LORD thy God; him shall thou serve, and to him shall thou cleave, and swear by his name.

Old Testament fear #3372 yare' (yaw-ray'); a primitive root; to fear; morally, to revere; cause. to frighten: KJV-- affright, be (make) afraid, dread (-ful), (put in) fear (-ful, -fully, -ing), (be had in) reverence (-end), X see, terrible (act, -ness, thing). to fear, to revere, to be afraid

a) (Qal) 1) to fear, to be afraid 2) to stand in awe of, to be awed 3) to fear, to show reverence, to honor, to respect

b) (Niphal) 1) to be fearful, to be dreadful, to be feared 2) to cause astonishment and awe, to be held in awe 3) to inspire reverence or godly fear or awe

c) (Piel) to make afraid, to terrify

Rev 19:5 "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that *fear* him, both small and great."

New Testament fear #5399 phobeo (fob-eh'-o); from 5401; to frighten, i.e. (passively) to be alarmed; by analogy, to be in awe of, i.e. revere: KJV-- be (+sore) afraid, fear (exceedingly), reverence.

If we ask Christians what they think of God, and they do not respond with the fear of the Lord, then they have not learned the first lesson from our Lord on what it means to worship Him!

Proverbs 9:10 ***“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom***

And the knowledge of the Holy is understanding”

I don't care what the gods of the people think of me. My only concern is what the God of the Bible thinks of me. How about you?