

Get Holy. Worship God!

God is holy. Revelation 4:1-8

Q: What is the greatest statement we can make about God?

Possible answers: God exists. God is love. God is 3 Persons. God is gracious. God is awesome. God is omnipotent.

The greatest statement we can say about God - **He is holy.**

Most important attribute of God is holiness.

Holiness is a synonym for God's deity.

If you don't know *what* holiness is, then you don't really know *who* God is.

Revelation 4 shows us that God's throne is surrounded by bizarre and terrifying creatures who continually chant, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

Holiness:

- It is the only attribute of God elevated to the third degree. The Bible never says that God is love, love, love, or mercy, mercy, mercy, or wrath, wrath, wrath, or justice, justice, justice, or righteous, righteous, righteous. God is holy, holy, holy! Holiness is a quality of all the other attributes of God. God's love is holy love, his justice is holy justice, his mercy is holy mercy, his knowledge is holy knowledge, his spirit is holy spirit. (See R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God*)
- Primary meaning: transcendent separateness. Leviticus 20:26: *You shall be holy to me, for I the Lord am holy and have separated you from the nations, that you should be mine.* (Whatever analogy I make will fall very far short of the meaning. English royalty and commoners falls very short. Who is the world's greatest living violinist? Hilary Hahn. Sarah Chang. How does your violin skill compare to that person? That's transcendent separation.) God exists separate from and is not subject to the limitations of the material universe.
- Secondary meaning: moral purity. God, by virtue of his moral purity, is transcendentally separate from us. Why? Because his character is the absolute standard of moral purity.

Encounters with God's holiness are traumatic without giving a person harmful PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder). Encounters are traumatic because God's moral purity reveals our sinfulness. (Like turning on a light in a dark bathroom reveals my ugly morning face. So let's make PTSD = Post-Traumatic Sin Disorder.)

- Prior to Revelation 4, John saw Christ in his glorified holiness and it was traumatic. Revelation 1:17-18: *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades."*
- Isaiah saw the throne of God and seraphim, 6:5: *And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"*
- Moses and the burning bush - Exodus 3:4-6: *God called to Moses out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.*
- Peter and Christ - Luke 5:1-11. When Simon Peter saw the amazing catch of fish he said to Jesus, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."
- The only treatment for this PTSD is the holy LOVE of God forgiving our sins because Jesus Christ took the punishment we deserve.

God is holy. Therefore, our most important attribute as Christians is holiness: 1 Peter 1:13-19. Our highest calling is to live holy lives.

*Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, **but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all***

your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Peter defines what holiness looks like for you and me:

1. **Obedience:** It is having the heart of an obedient child. (How many of you are obedient children?) Holiness motivates obedience. Holiness in us wants to be obedient to God.
2. **Nonconformity:** Holiness in us is nonconformity to the passions of our former ignorance. If you had a sinful lifestyle before you were saved, then holiness is not going back to it. Do not be conformed to the sinful passions of life without God. Give up whatever doesn’t move you in the direction of holiness. I gave up R-rated movies (exception for war movies), so I will not go back to the passions of my former ignorance.
3. **Fear of God:** Holiness in us is conducting ourselves with fear - of God - throughout the time of our exile (time between new birth and death). Fear because we know the price paid to ransom us. The price paid was not perishable silver or gold or any worldly currency. (*Greatest ransom every paid: last Inca emperor to Francisco Pizarro 1532 a room full of gold and silver valued at 1.5 billion. Ransomware is stealing billions - over 5 billion.*) Our ransom was paid by the precious blood of Christ.

Is it really possible to live holy in this world? It is, or God wouldn’t call us to it. But it must be gained and lived from the inside out.

Holiness is gained from the inside out.

The Holy Spirit lives inside us and gives us the desire to live holy. He works from the inside out. It’s holy displacement.

Holiness must be from the inside out because sin works from the inside out. Jesus taught his disciples about holiness from the inside out. Matthew 15:10-20: ¹⁰ *And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: ¹¹ it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but*

what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person... Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷ Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? ¹⁸ But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰ These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."

Holiness from the outside in is not effective.

Attempting to gain holiness from the outside in makes us like Pharisees or very judgmental religious people. Leads to HYPOCRISY. Religious ritual or avoiding sinful places and people will not make us holy. (It's GOOD to avoid sinful places and people if it is a temptation to you. But that's not how you become holy.) Jesus spoke his harshest words for those who only lived holiness from the outside in. Matthew 23:27-28: ²⁷ *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*

Holiness is gained from the inside out, not the outside in.

Old Testament = holiness from the outside in. OT had a temple and the priests had to be outwardly holy to go in. The priests had a lot of rules and purification rituals to obey. Read Leviticus.

New Testament = holiness from the inside out. A Christian's body is the new temple, the temple of the HS, 1 Corinthians 6:18-20: ¹⁸ *Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

So, however you feel about your body (whether you like it or not), it is the temple of the HS. The HS accepts your body as his dwelling place.

Christ lived holy from the inside out. Jesus Christ lived holiness from the inside out and his life was very different from the religious leaders who lived holiness from the outside in. Jesus hung out with tax collectors and sinners. Hanging out with them didn't make him unholy.

Jesus shows us that we can live holy in this sinful world. Jesus resisted every temptation Satan threw at him. Jesus was born without a sinful nature so that gave him an advantage. This is not true for any of us. We have sinful natures so it's more challenging for us. Jesus was filled with the HS in his human nature. This is true for us. We have the same Helper, the HS. Jesus said (my paraphrase), "I'm leaving you, but don't get upset. I will send the HS and he will do things for you I cannot do - like live inside you and make you holy from the inside out."

John 14:15-17: *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper (Advocate, Counselor) to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."*

How to live holiness from the inside out:

1. New birth. You must be born again to love holiness and live it from the inside out. The new birth is not reciting a confession or attending a worship service. It's not baptism. It's not a part-time, Sunday-only Christianity. New birth is a life transforming encounter with Jesus Christ. Jesus told a religious professional (John 3), "You must be born again, born from above, born of water and the Spirit, or you cannot enter the Kingdom of God." We were all born once in water from our mother's womb. To enter the Kingdom of God we must be reborn by the Holy Spirit. Love for holiness comes with being born of the Spirit. As you grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ you will love holiness more and more - because you love him and you want to please him. Holiness will be beautiful to you. You will desire it like ice water after running a marathon on a hot dry day.

2. Filled with HS. After his resurrection Jesus breathed on his disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (John 20:22) HS works holiness into us from the inside out by displacing sinful desires with holy desires. We make choices, so we must cooperate with the HS by being careful what we put into our mind and heart and what we look at. Would you eat food with mold on it? Would you swim in a lake if it had a sign posted, "This lake is polluted. Do not swim in it."? So why look at and think about polluted things... R-rated movies and unholy *YouTube* videos?
3. Worship: true worship comes from the inside out. Remember love God supremely. Worship is more than singing worship songs. There's only one description of Jesus singing worship songs with his disciples: Matthew 26:30 (Mark 14:26). We place significant value on singing worship songs. This is a worship service. Praising is worship. Listening and responding to the Word is worship. Submission to God's will is worship. Offering ourselves as a living sacrifice is worship (Romans 12:1-2). Worship enables us to transcend the world. Worship is holiness in us/you connecting with God's holiness.

Fall in love with Jesus Christ, let him breath the HS into you, and you will desire holiness.