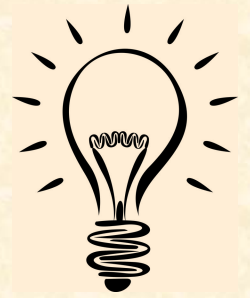


# The Christian Light

Editor - Mitch Sparks



“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

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## Holy, Holy, Holy

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Holiness is a defining characteristic of God. It is emphasized perhaps above all other divine traits in the Old Testament. In the year that king Uzziah died, Isaiah saw “the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up” (Isaiah 6:1). The seraphim around God’s throne cry a single sentence one to another. Over and over, century after century, they chant, “Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isaiah 6:3; cf. Revelation 4:8-11).

**God’s holiness is beautiful.** The gods of the heathen are often ugly and even monstrosities. The true God of heaven is beautiful.

How you ever considered how beautiful our God is? David said, “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple” (Psalm 27:4). He is the “perfection of beauty.” “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined” (Psalm 50:2). The closing sentence of Moses’ only contribution to the Hebrew songbook extols God’s beauty: “And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us” (Psalm 90:17).

What makes God beautiful? Holiness. Jehoshaphat once appointed singers “unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever” (2 Chronicles 20:20-21; cf. 1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 29:2; 96:9).

Moses’ song of praise to God celebrating Israel’s redemption from four hundred years of Egyptian bondage highlighted Jehovah’s beautiful holiness: “Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” (Exodus 15:11). To ask the question “Who is like unto thee?” is to answer it. Jeremiah said, “There is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might” (Jeremiah 10:6).

The New Testament makes the tantalizing suggestion that we may inherit this beauty one day. John wrote, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

When we come to know God, we naturally praise Him for who He is. It is as normal to be in awe of God as it is to be in awe of a breathtaking mountain view or a powerful summer storm<sup>1</sup>—only less sensory and more cerebral.

Those who have learned of Jehovah agree: “For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods” (1 Chronicles 16:25). A favorite verse of many young people goes: “I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies” (2 Samuel 22:4).

During a visit to Grandma and Grandpa’s, two young daughters watched from the breakfast table as a man came to the back door. When the visitor left, Grandpa explained he was an appraiser. “What’s an appraiser?” the younger child asked. Before Grandpa could speak, the older sister quickly cleared up the matter: “He’s a *praiser*. He goes to church every Sunday.” People who see God in the beauty of His holiness cannot help but be “praisers” (Psalm 9:11; 33:2; 67:3; Hebrews 13:15).

**God’s holiness is unique.**<sup>2</sup> Hannah praised God in prayer, saying, “There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God” (1 Samuel 2:2).

<sup>1</sup> Actually, these are additional reasons to be in awe of Him, since they are His handiwork (Psalm 19:1).

<sup>2</sup> These ideas adapted from Bob Bauer, Orange Street Church of Christ, Auburndale, Florida.

“There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun,<sup>3</sup> who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky” (Deuteronomy 33:26; cf. Psalm 86:8; Isaiah 40:18, 25; 43:11-13). God alone is intrinsically holy. The Bible never speaks of God as becoming sanctified. Holiness is not something God attained at some point in the past. It is not something he can lose. It is what He is. He cannot even be tempted with evil (James 1:13). In fact, He cannot tempt or be tempted. He alone is morally perfect.

## THE BIBLE – THE GOSPEL HE TAUGHT

(Marshall Keeble)

**God's holiness is absolute.** John said of God, He "is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). God is perfect and completely unpolluted with evil. He is separated from the shadow of evil, the smell of evil, the hint of evil, any imaginable infection of evil. There can be no contradiction in divine nature; God cannot know what is right and do what is wrong. God works can only be righteous; His words can only be true (Titus 1:1-2). Man can have the quality of holiness, but only God is absolutely holy. He is infinitely holy; we are finitely holy at best. He is holy from within, and we derive our holiness only from Him. Our holiness wanes and fades and can cease altogether, but God's cannot be diminished or overshadowed (James 1:17).

**God's holiness is intense.** Because God is absolutely holy, He can never approve of any evil. David said, "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee" (Psalm 5:4). The prophet said, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13). God can no more approve of sin than He can commit it (Numbers 23:19). If God approved of evil, He would be a partaker with it (1 Timothy 5:22).

Since God is intensely holy, His hatred of sin is intense (Amos 5:21-23; Isaiah 1:14). Since God's holiness is universal and perpetual, His hatred of sin is universal and without end. God hates all sin in all people all the time (Psalm 5:5; 7:11). David was a man after his own heart (Acts 13:22), but God could not condone his sin (2 Samuel 11-12). Moses led God's people out of bondage, yet one act of unbelief denied him entrance into Canaan (Numbers 20:8-12). God cannot deny himself (2 Timothy 2:13).

God can only be approached by those who are holy. Since all have sinned (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8-10), and are therefore unholy, how can man ever approach God? Man must be declared holy (forgiven) before He can approach God in worship. The Corinthians had been unholy, but they were made holy through the name of the Lord Jesus and the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). God can be reconciled to sinners, but never to sin (2 Corinthians 5:18).

<sup>3</sup> The upright. Possibly an affectionate term for Israel.

Marshall Keeble gave his life to training preachers. He knew the value of trained men and everywhere he went, he encouraged men to prepare themselves to preach the Gospel. Often, he would speak to them:

"Lift up Christ, and he will do the drawing – too many of us preachers lift ourselves up and as a result, we don't draw anything."

"Give the honor to the Word. The power is in the Word, and still some people will stand up and say he did it – give the Word the credit. The Gospel is what does it, not man."

"Preachers need to preach the Truth – bear down on it. We don't need to make friends, we need to save souls."

"Preach the Word as it is written without fear of favor, without compromise. Any congregation that has a preacher like that, well, you ought to love him to death. God will bless him and make that congregation strong."

"The Lord called people straight out hypocrites and blind guides. Some of my own members criticize me for talking straight."

"Too many preachers have let the Church make cowards out of them."

"The Gospel has power, great power. All it needs is someone to preach it – someone with courage to tell it just like it is."

"What does it mean to preach the Gospel in season and out of season? Well, in season – when they like, out of season – when they don't like it. With many folks, the Gospel is almost out of season today."

"You can't set a hen on a brown leghorn's eggs and expect white leghorn chickens. Neither can you plant man-made doctrine in the hearts of men and women and expect Christians. The Word of God – the Gospel – is the seed of the Kingdom, and it will produce Christians every time – but that's all it will produce!"

**From the Editor:** If you or the congregation where you attend would like to receive this publication, please send us an email to [thechristianlight1@gmail.com](mailto:thechristianlight1@gmail.com) and in the subject line "**Sign Up for The Christian Light.**" Thanks, Mitch Sparks

By: Wille Cato