

# HOLINESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE

## *Holiness* (Leviticus 11:45)

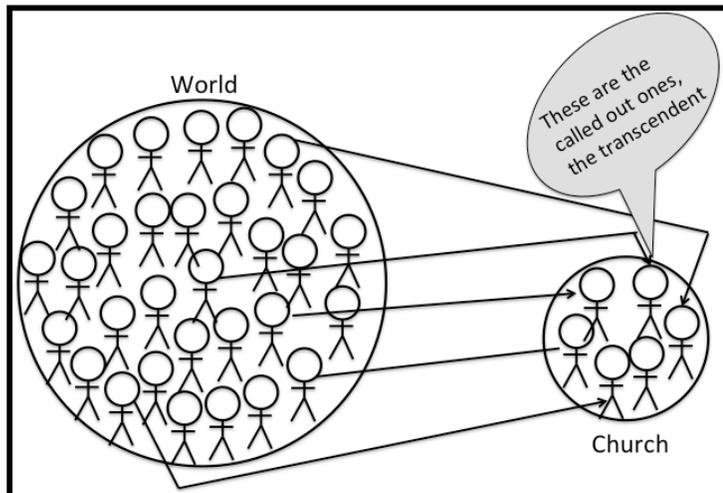
There are two ideas contained within the word holiness.

- a. “Set apart” is one of those ideas. God makes something holy by setting it apart for His own private use. Holiness includes transcendence in its meaning. So being transcendent is part of His holiness characteristic. God Himself is the essence of holiness. He is completely other. He is not part of creation. He transcends creation.
- b. “A morally right behavior” is the other idea. Moral behavior is the second part to holiness, and this is the part we tend to major on, but you shall not major on it because when you do, you will lose the “set apart” or transcendence conceptualization. I want to talk about this imbalance and relate it to us.

When we declare that someone is a “holy” person, we tend to think in terms of the moral side of the equation, but there is the transcendent side of the equation, too. Get hold of this transcendent concept because it is extremely important for you to understand that morally right behavior being established as your only understanding of holiness will lead you in a wrong direction.

To be “set apart” is to be set apart **for God’s use** (see Chart Holiness). If you are a holy person, you have been taken out from among the people of the world and set apart into a new community, which is the people of God for Him to use. When you are to be used by God, that means that you are no longer your own, you cannot use yourself, you do not have your life, you do not have a self-determined destination, you do not achieve your desires. You belong to God, and He can use you how He wants to. He spends His resources just as a king spends his money. God spends you just like He wants to *if* you are holy. You can stop acting holy by saying, “I will do with my life as I see fit.” That means that you are bringing yourself under your own will rather than allowing the Lord to spend His own resources like He wants to. If we change holiness just to moral behavior, then we lose the larger concept which is to be set apart for God’s own private use.

You can be moral and not be holy. It is extremely important that you understand this concept of being set apart for God’s use because once you understand holiness, and you are a holy person, then you are beginning to understand that you do not have any choices in this life anymore. You belong to the Lord, and the Lord has the choices.



**Chart Holiness**

In Christianity, there are only two categories. One is holy, and the other is sin. However, the Church, in general, has developed a third. This third category is neutral. It is the good life. Seeking fame, fortune, and pleasure is this neutral, middle category. Under this concept, there are holy men who makeup the clergy and sinful men who are the murderers, thieves, and criminals. The vast majority of Christians fall then into the neutral category. This thinking is an abomination. There are only two categories: holiness and sinfulness. That supposed third category is actually sinfulness. It is the lukewarm category that Jesus despises. In Revelation 3:15-17 He says that He would rather we be cold or hot. Luke warmness makes Him sick at His stomach.

Now, what is the Church? It is the *ecclesia*, the called out ones. That is the same thing that “holy” means. If we are in the world, and we are called out, then we become transcendent from those in the world. Clean and set apart for God’s use is holiness, and so *ecclesia* is a definition of holiness. It is a picture of what holiness means, the called out ones. That is what all of you are, the Church. *Ecclesia* (the Church) means the called-out ones. What did you get called out of? The world. What did you get called into? The Church. What is the Church? It is the transcendent ones, the holy people, those who have been set apart for God’s use. All of the Church is God’s; the Church is what He is going to use (to spend as He did His Son) to impact the world.

The holy person is a saint, a person who is sanctified, or made holy. Each saint is to be a disciple first. But He called even the disciples one at a time: “Follow me! Follow me! Follow me!” When disciples follow Him, He is going to tell them what to do. He told the twelve, “I want you to go two by two out on a mission.” He told them all kinds of things, but they were His, His possessions. He is going to give the directions. You do not give your own directions to yourself. That means, then, that you do not get to go where you want to go on vacation. That means you do not get to go where you want to go to start a church, you do not get to choose what you want. I see people all the time saying, “Well I want to go pastor in Colorado because we like the mountains, and we like this and we like that.” What do your likes and dislikes have to do with anything? When you start looking at the *kenosis* there is nothing in there about what you like. It has all to do with sacrifice (your being spent).

The Church is a theocracy rather than a democracy. Submitting completely to God points to theocracy (or rule by God). Holiness and democracy will always be in tension because democracy means to be ruled from below.

Joe: Is assenting to God like being borne by the Spirit?

“Called-out ones” have just moved out of a “borne by the flesh” into a “borne by the Spirit.” The “set-apart” idea is in the Word *ecclesia*. Everywhere you see *ecclesia* (church), you have a picture of holiness, the called-out ones for God’s use.

When Isaiah saw the Lord in Isaiah 6:1-6, the angels called Him holy. He was high and lifted up; He was apart; He was away; He was totally other. However, His immanence was portrayed in that passage as well. The fact that the scene occurred in the temple means that God had come down to earth and entered *chronos* to encounter Isaiah.

Notice that when Isaiah said: “Here am I, Lord. Send me,”<sup>1</sup> it was a response of holi-

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 6:8.

<sup>2</sup> Romans 6:23, paraphrase.

ness. Also when God indicated that Isaiah's people would not respond to his preaching, He was warning that holiness knows no bounds. Thus when we are responding to God, He establishes the where, who, to whom, what, and how long. We establish nothing but the willful surrender, the "Here am I, Lord, send me."

The transcendent side of holiness is in Jeremiah 23:23-24 which describes God as "afar off." But like Isaiah, Jeremiah addresses the immanence of God in His ability to see everyone even when they are hiding.

The moral side of holiness can be found in Habakkuk 1:13 and James 1:13 both of which say that morality is set by God. His character is the essence of morality and from it issues the commandments of God, the definition of morality. Thus holiness defines what is moral and immoral.

A Christian is holy in his person because God makes him holy by forgiving him of all of his sin. That is why every truly born-again Christian will go to heaven in spite of his works. The Christian's works are up to his will. If he submits his will to God, then his works are holy. How much the Christian submits his will to God the more holy his works will be. The holy works will earn rewards in heaven, and unholy works will result in losses in heaven. Getting to heaven is a gift from God, but rewards or losses are results of our good and bad works. Every truly saved Christian is a holy person, but his works may or may not be holy.

### ***Righteousness*** (Psalms 19:7-9)

What you need to see in this characteristic is that what the Lord commands is basically out of His ontology. Everything that He says or does coincides identically with Who He is, and so His ontology and His function connect very tightly. There is no hypocrisy in God. When He gives us laws, they are righteous. If He is righteous, His laws are righteous. Psalms 19:7-9 connects His laws with His righteousness over and over again.

You can see that there is nothing differing in His ontology from His Words. Since He gives us the words, then the entire Bible has to do with Who God is because What He says coincides exactly with Who He is. The Law of God, the Mosaic Law, is not the answer to salvation, but it is still the Heart of God. It coincides exactly with Who God is, and He gives a gospel message that perfectly fulfills that perfect law, and gives you righteousness and salvation in place of sin.

### ***Justice*** (Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23; James 2:9; and Amos 5:15 and 24)

God's justice demands repercussions to sin. When He says, "If you violate my law, you will not escape my punishment,"<sup>2</sup> He fulfills His Word because He is just. Our Doctrine of Salvation has to do with making us "just" as well. Even though we have sinned there is a process by which God can make us just by meeting the demands of sin.

Galatians 6:7 says, "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. "The Law of the Harvest" means that there is going to be retribution for sin.

Many Christians feel like God's mercy will always outweigh His justice in their lives. I

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<sup>2</sup> Romans 6:23, paraphrase.

preached once that “we need to expect loss for the sins that we have committed against God,” and I got a rebuttal on that: “Oh, He is faithful and just to forgive.” Sin always results in loss even though God forgives.

The Law of the Harvest indicates that with sin there is going to be loss. If you choose to sin, you are going to have loss. Retribution, however, may be eschatological loss of reward, and we are warned about that in Matthew 25. It may not be punishment right here and now. We may get to enjoy our sin, but that enjoyment will be only for a season. The Law of the Harvest is that you are not going to get away with mocking God. If you sow to the flesh you will reap corruption.<sup>3</sup>

There are two kinds of judgment. If you are saved, then you have already faced one of them. Your **person** has been judged and made righteous, but you still face a **works** judgment.

Let me tell you what happens when you sin (if you have not taken Hebrews you need to take it because it deals specifically with the salvation pilgrimage). Your Christian pilgrimage is from your new birth to your death. During your pilgrimage, you are being sanctified to God’s use in accomplishing ministry. The further you get the more you have accomplished. However sin from self-will impedes your progress. Let’s say you have ten years of life for this pilgrimage. You start out, and, after one year you have one year of growth and accomplishments. After two years you have two years of growth and accomplishments, and then sin stops your growth. You use up eight years in self-indulgent sin, and then you die. Did you get ten years of growth and accomplishment? No. Even if you repent before dying, “Lord, forgive me.” He does! But did you achieve the ten years of growth and accomplishments? No, you only achieved two years. Can you see what you lose now? There is a harvest. God will not be mocked.

Now if you can avert the Law of the Harvest by wasting your life and still have the praise of God, then God’s forgiveness is a substitute for our good works of obedient service. God does not turn your two years of obedience into ten years of obedience because you repent right at your death. If God should make you the equal of the Apostle Paul who actually ran his race, then God could be mocked.

God is just. In the book of Hebrews we deal extensively with the Christian’s pilgrimage. Hebrews talks about the river of God’s will flowing by, and you are supposed to be in the river and flowing with it in God’s will. When you get in the river and flow with God, then you are going where the river goes. But you can get out of the river. You get out and the river flows on by. If you had not gotten out, you would be further down the river. But you came out, and you play around on the bank or in the shallows while the river of God’s will flows on by. Then you repent, “Oh, I am out of the river, I need to go back into the river.” You re-enter, but you are not as far down the river as you would have been had you remained in the river. We reap the consequence of not being as far down the river as we should have been.

Forgiveness does not eliminate all the consequences. If you should cut off your arm, you will have sinned by mutilating your body. You say, “Oh, Lord, forgive me.” The arm does not jump back on your shoulder.

When we get to the end, God is going to judge us according to our works. A saint might say, “Well, Lord, I dug a hole, and I put my gifts and opportunities in there, covered them up,

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<sup>3</sup> Galatians 6:8.

and kept them safe.” He will say, “Possessing them is not the metric. I want to know how did you use them for me?” If the saint does not use them profitably for God, God will say, “Give Me those gifts. I am going to give your gifts to this obedient saint who used his gifts. He was a good steward who believed Me.”

According to Matthew 25 the guy who did not use his gifts ends up in heaven with less than he had on earth. Can you hear that? God will not be mocked!