



# HERE IS YOUR GOD

a study of God's attributes

SERMON TITLE: God is Holy

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SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 6:1-8

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What we need most is to know God for who he truly is. How we answer the question, "Who is God?" will change our lives indelibly. The Psalmist sings, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. His greatness is unsearchable!" There's a practical tension to this. If his greatness is unsearchable, then knowing him could be exhausting because there's no end to it. However, if his unending greatness is life-giving, then the journey of knowing him will always be worth it. Also, we should resist thinking about God on our own terms because distorted understandings of God can lead us down a path to ruin. God made us in his image, and we should run from the thought of making him in our image. So, what is God really like, and how do we know it? The story of Scripture reveals the answer to these questions. He's bigger than our categories of him, yet he invites us to know him through Scripture. And this story leads us straight to Jesus. In him, Scripture declares to us, "*Here is your God.*"

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## SERMON SUMMARY

When you hear the word "holy" what comes to your mind? Most of us tend to think of the moral behavior of religious people—doing what's right/avoiding what's wrong. And, there's truth in that, but when we say, "God is holy," what does that mean? Obviously, God's holiness involves much more than moral behavior. When the Bible talks about God's holiness, it's saying that he is separate from us, utterly unique, distinctly different, one-of-a-kind, in a class by himself. Holy is the ground, the essence, of his very being. So that means, God is holy in his love, in his power, in his wisdom, in his judgments and justice, and in what he says is true and right and good. God is holy all the time, in every way. And that means, everything he has created and gifted to us is holy. It means everything he says is holy. The ramifications of God's holiness for our daily lives are huge. Isaiah 6:1-8 will help us see that in a way that can humble us, heal us, and challenge us to holy living.

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## SERMON SCREENSHOTS & KEY POINTS

READ Isaiah 6:1-3 — Isaiah goes into the Temple like he had done many times before, but this time it was different—very different. He sees a vision of God, of God's divine, holy presence, filling the Temple. It's all very strange and bizarre. And he sees these very strange creatures he calls "seraphim" above the throne of God. They are God's royal attendants, guardians of the divine presence. Fiery, terrifying beings. And they are screaming, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." God is not just holy—he's holy, holy, holy. Holy is the only attribute of God that is repeated three times like this in all the Bible (cf Rev 4:8). The difficult thing about the word "holy" is that it's a word that doesn't come up very often in daily conversation. Most of the time, when we hear the word "holy" we think of the moral behavior of religious people—what religious people do or don't do—and if they are really good at doing and not doing—someone might call them holy. So, "holy" is a religious word for us, but at its core, it's not about behavior. At its core, it's talking about someone's status as unique, distinct, totally different, unlike anything or anyone else. You say, "Okay, God is Holy. Makes sense. He's God. Holy God. But why should I care about this?" Because, "holy" is the essence of who God is, and if we are going to think rightly about God, we have to understand that God is so unique, so different from us, so far beyond anything in our ordinary experience, that we have nothing to which to compare him. We have no categories to help us understand him. That's one of the things that makes understanding God's holiness a challenge for us. [Sermon illustration about how the sun in our solar system is "holy" and how the sun is both a terrifying thing and a good thing at the same time. God is like that.]

In the Bible, God's holiness is also his moral purity—his moral perfection—his passion for goodness and justice and justice and beauty and love. In the Bible, God's holiness is rooted in the fact that he is the ground of all that is good and true and right. When we talk about God's holiness as moral purity—we mean that he alone defines what's right and wrong, what's true and false, what's good and evil. I got curious and I looked up "morality" online and pretty much all the definitions of "morality" boiled down to this—"Morality" is the *human* attempt to define what is right and wrong about our actions and thoughts, and what is good and bad about our being who we are. Because we view morality as a "human attempt" to define what's right and wrong, and what's good and bad about us, that's exactly why the world is in the mess it's in today. You see, because God is holy, what He has created is holy. Because God is holy, there is moral

right and wrong because again, whatever a holy God creates, whatever a holy God says is holy. Every single cultural battle we find ourselves in today is the direct result of people making what is “holy” common. When people reject the idea of a Holy God, this is the world you get—injustice, immorality, violence, war—a world with no boundaries.

Read Isaiah 6:4-8 — What happens when Isaiah finds himself in the presence of Holy God? He sees his sin and the sin of his people. That’s not a bad thing. It’s a healthy thing to know you’re not fit to be in the presence of a holy God. Isaiah is completely undone. His sin and guilt are exposed. So, how does a holy God handle that? One of the seraphim takes a hot coal from the altar and touches his lips and God declares, “Your guilt is removed and your sin is atoned for.” Wow! Yes, being in God’s presence is terrifying. It exposes our sin and guilt. But in this passage, the purpose of God’s holiness is to cleanse, heal, save, and transform. The very moment Isaiah confesses his sin, God cleanses him and forgives him. And when God then asks, “I’ve got a mission to cleanse, heal, save, and transform this world, “Who will go for me?” Isaiah doesn’t hesitate, he says, “Here I am, Lord. Sign me up. I’ll go.”

Isaiah 6 foreshadows the Cross. On the Cross, Jesus took the searing heat of God’s judgment on and into himself so that our sins could be atoned for and our guilt removed. When Jesus died on that Cross, in the same moment, God’s holiness was satisfied and his love was poured out. And all who confess their sin and come to God by faith in Jesus are in that moment cleansed, healed, saved, and called to live on holy life on mission with Jesus.

### *COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS*

#### KNOW IT

What does it mean when we say that God is holy? How does God’s holiness help us understand his other attributes like his love, his truth, his grace, his sovereignty, his power, his faithfulness, his justice etc?

#### UNDERSTAND IT

Why is it so hard for us to relate to God’s holiness? How has the rejection of God’s holiness in our culture today impacted things like—our understanding of life—sex—gender—marriage—justice—race— truth—money? True or false—“Every single cultural battle we find ourselves in today is the direct result of people making what is “holy” common.”

#### LIVE IT

God calls us to be holy for he is holy. Given what we’ve looked at today, how does having a big view of God’s holiness motivate us to live holy lives in the power of the Gospel?

#### SHARE IT

How can you explain this attribute of God, that God is holy, to a child? How might you explain the importance of God’s holiness to a Christian who is drifting away from his/her faith? Who is buying into our culture’s definitions of life, gender, sex and thinking of those things as “no big deal”? How would explain to an unbeliever how God’s holiness and his love come together at the Cross?