

# GOD'S NAME IS HOLY

**TEXT: ISAIAH 57:1—20**

## **Introduction:**

1. My message tonight is entitled, "GOD'S NAME IS HOLY" (cf. 57:15).
2. He is the Holy Spirit.
3. In Isaiah 57:15 God says, "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."
4. The first time we see the word "holy" in the Bible is in Exodus 3:5 where God says to Moses, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."
5. First John 2:20 says, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One."
6. God is "the Holy One."

## **I. BECAUSE GOD IS HOLY, WE MUST HATE SIN (57:1-14).**

1. Whether Isaiah is speaking of the sinful condition of those in his day or whether he is looking into the future ("the evil to come") when men will bow down and worship the antichrist, one thing is constant – men love sin and they hate God.
2. Their callous disregard for the righteous is seen in Isaiah 57:1, "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart..." They do not care about others, especially "the righteous."
3. The righteous man "shall enter into peace" (57:2). This is our great consolation and our blessed hope. The wicked live only for the

pleasures of this world, but those of us who are saved understand that this life is fleeting.

4. God is eternal (Isa. 57:15). Man struts and staggers over the stage of life for about three score and ten years and then he slips off into eternity.
5. But where will man spend eternity? If he rejects the Gospel he will spend eternity in hell. Recently we were reminded that most churches (even the so-called “conservative evangelical” ones) despise hellfire preaching. But let us never forget that:
  - Hell is real (Isa. 57:9b). Psalm 9:17 says, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”
  - People will spend eternity there unless we win them to Christ.
  - Jesus preached more about hell than anyone in the Bible.
  - If we love sinners, we will warn them.
  - If we love the saints we will teach them to be good soulwinners.
6. Revelation 21:8 says, “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”
7. “...and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone...” (Cf. Isa. 57:3-5).
8. In strong language, God’s Word denounces the sins of Israel:
  - “But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress...” (57:3). Sorcery is witchcraft. There is a big rise in sorcery and witchcraft today. It is promoted by Oprah Winfrey. It is even promoted in many churches.
  - Some churches celebrate Halloween. Many churches use rock music (the devil’s music) in their services.

- Some churches promote Harry Potter. Or the weak, wishy-washy pastors will not preach against it.
- Isaiah also refers to “the seed of the adulterer and the whore” (57:3). Adultery and whoredom have two meanings in Scripture: literal adultery and spiritual adultery. Israel was guilty of both, and so is America.
- “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4; cf. Isa. 57:7, 8).
- By denouncing them as the offspring of sorceresses, adulterers and whores (57:3), Isaiah was employing the strongest language possible. It was insulting in Bible times just as it would be today.
- They were “children of transgression, a seed of falsehood” (57:4b). The apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:3 that we “were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”
- Isaiah says in 57:4, “Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood.” They were mockers and blasphemers – “sporting themselves.”
- Proverbs 10:23 says, “It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom.”
- They were “enflaming” themselves with idols under every green tree (57:5). Not only were they guilty of idolatry, but murder also (57:5b). They sacrificed little children to the heathen gods Moloch and Baal.
- Merrill Unger writes, “The hollow bronze statue of Moloch was heated by fire, and the infant was placed in its heated arms, while

drums were beaten to drown out the victim's pitiful cries" (*Unger's Commentary on the OT*).

- Here in so-called "Christian America" we would never do that. We just slaughter our babies in hospitals and abortion clinics. Instead of the pounding drums the hospital employees put on the radio to the rock station.
- These demon-inspired idolaters offered up offerings "among the smooth stones of the stream" (57:6). Like the environmental lunatics today, they even worshiped rocks.
- This environmental paganism is making big inroads into the churches. Listen to this recent article by David Cloud.

"SOUTHERN SEMINARY PROFESSOR SAYS ABUSING ENVIRONMENT LIKE TEARING PAGES FROM BIBLE" (Friday Church News Notes, March 28, 2008).

Jonathan Merritt, a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, told the press recently that one of his professors made the statement "that when we destroy creation, which is God's revelation, it is no different than tearing a page out of the Bible" ("Baptists: No Change on Climate Change," *WorldNetDaily*, March 13, 2008). Merritt said that this statement inspired him to launch a campaign to produce a stronger action within the Southern Baptist Convention against climate change. What I found interesting is not this misguided seminarian's actions but the fact that he was inspired by a heretical statement by one of his professors (who he did not name). Scripture does say that God speaks through creation, that it is a light to mankind (Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1-6). But it nowhere likens creation to the Bible or even hints that to destroy creation would be like ripping pages from the Bible. That is truly preposterous. Further, to say that if we don't buy

into the mythical global warming frenzy that we are destroying creation and/or sinning against God is even more preposterous. What Merritt needs to do is get busy doing what Jesus Christ told us to do, which is “preach the gospel to every creature,” and that does not mean the trees! And what Southern Seminary needs to do is find out that teacher’s name and fire him.

- It is not clear whom the “king” refers to in 57:9. It is probably a reference to a heathen monarch who prefigures the coming antichrist.
- Merrill Unger says, “The full fruition of that wicked bent to idolatry will reach its climactic pitch of iniquity in Israel’s latter-day alliance with the Antichrist, which Isaiah calls a covenant with death, and with hell (Isa. 28:15, 18).”
- These verses describe the horrible rebelliousness and unbelief of Israel (57:10, 11). They were liars as well as adulterers, murderers and idolaters (57:11).
- They did not fear God. “Have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?” (57:11b).
- Romans 3:18 says, “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”
- Their self-righteousness, their apostate religion, their good works would not “profit” them (Isa. 57:12).
- The LORD suggests that in Israel’s time of trouble they cry out to their “companies” (i.e., their collection of idols – 57:13). “But the wind shall carry them all away...”
- Today the Lord Jesus Christ is a “stumblingblock” to the Jews (57:14). The apostle Paul says in I Corinthians 1:23, “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness.”

- The Jews' stubborn unbelief is their stumblingblock. But when Christ returns, the stumblingblock will be removed and Israel will be repentant, redeemed, regenerated, revived, and restored.
- "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Cor. 1:24).

## II. BECAUSE GOD IS HOLY, WE MUST HUMBLE OURSELVES

1. Pride is a terrible sin. If sinners humble themselves and repent, God will graciously save them.
2. And if believers will humble themselves, God will graciously revive them (57:15).
3. It is amazing to consider that the high and lofty One that "inhabiteth eternity" also dwells within our hearts.
4. Ephesians 3:17 says, "That Christ may dwelt in your hearts by faith." And then in verse 19, "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."
5. First John 4:13 says, "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit."
6. When the Bible says God is holy, it means God is separate from sinful mankind. Hebrews 7:26 says Jesus "is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."
7. Isaiah 57:15 says God dwells "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Do you have a "contrite and humble spirit"?
8. Or are you proud? Haughty? Arrogant? Cocky? Self-centered?
9. There is a danger in too much education. I'm all for education but certain people get very proud and then God cannot use them.
10. First Corinthians 8:1 says, "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."

11. "Puffed up" Christians are rather obnoxious. And carnal. Paul told the carnal church in Corinth, "And ye are puffed up" (I Cor. 5:2). Are you puffed up?
12. Our Lord said, "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:12).
13. James 4:6 says, "But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."
14. James 4:10 says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up."
15. First Peter 5:5 says, "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."
16. One preacher said, "He who runs this universe, who guides the great planets in their orbits, who takes care of the starry galaxies of infinitude, is the One who bows down to hear our prayers, to see our tears, and to look through our little bundles of trials and troubles" (WA Criswell, *Isaiah*).
17. God wants to heal us, and lead us, and restore us, but there must be genuine repentance (57:16-19). God chastens us for our own good.
18. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Hebrews 12:6).
19. The "healing" (57:18) refers to spiritual healing. God says in Hosea 14:4, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him."

### **III. BECAUSE GOD IS HOLY, HE WILL JUDGE THE WICKED (57:20, 21).**

1. The history of mankind is the history of one war after another – "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (57:21). There are wars and conflicts raging all over the world.

2. The 2008 Summer Olympic games are scheduled to begin this August in Beijing. Many protesters are upset over Communist China's involvement in the bloody crisis in Darfur, in the Sudan. Then there is the ongoing protest over the Chinese occupation of Tibet.
3. And every day we are reminded of the danger of Islamic terrorism. "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isa. 57:20).
4. This is one of the great themes of the Bible. Isaiah 48:22 says, "There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked."
5. Isaiah 59:8 says, "The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace."

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. In his commentary on Isaiah 57, HA Ironside tells an interesting story about the German emperor Kaiser Wilhelm, and a preacher named Professor Stroeter.
2. The Kaiser invited Professor Stroeter over to his palace to discuss Bible prophecy. The professor taught the emperor all about the events leading up to the Second Coming of Christ.
3. After a lengthy conversation the Kaiser said, "Do I understand you aright? Do you mean to say that Jesus Christ is coming back literally, and that when He returns all the kingdoms of the world are going to be destroyed and He will set up His kingdom on the ruins of them all?"
4. Professor Stroeter replied, "Exactly, your Majesty, exactly."
5. "Oh, no," said the Kaiser, "I can't have that! Why that would interfere with all my plans!"
6. Dr. Ironside wrote, "The Kaiser's plans were interfered with. And there are many who, if honest, would have to say, 'The Coming of the Lord would interfere with all my plans.' But if we are walking with God as we should be, if we are of a contrite heart and we tremble at the Word, then we shall be in that attitude of soul where we can welcome the return of the blessed Lord."