

Title: **“THE INIQUITY OF THE
 HOLY THINGS”**

Text: Exodus 28:36-38

Subject: *Personal Iniquity and Perfect Holiness*

Date: Tuesday Evening — May 19, 2009

Tape: Exodus #97

Readings: *Joe Blakely and David Burge*

Introduction:

How we lament the sin with which we serve our God! Our hearts mourn the fact that evil is mixed with everything we do. Our souls are heavy with the burden of felt iniquity when we read, or pray, or sing, when we hear, or preach, or try to worship! We are compelled to lament, with John Newton...

“Sin is mixed with all I do!”

It is that sad fact that I want to talk to you about in this message. Turn with me to Exodus 28:36-38. The title of my message is **“THE INIQUITY OF THE HOLY THINGS”**.

Proposition: Here the Spirit of God shows us a portion of Aaron’s priestly garments that stood as a constant representation of every covenant worshipper’s condition before the Lord God, as the worshipper stood before the holy Lord God in the person of God’s appointed priest and mediator. — This part of Aaron’s dress displayed both personal iniquity and perfect holiness of all who were represented by Aaron.

(Exodus 28:36-38) “And thou shalt make a plate *of* pure gold, and grave upon it, *like* the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. (37) And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. (38) And it shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.”

Here comes an ancient Israel to worship the Lord God at the Tabernacle. His heart is full of gratitude and praise. He understands the meaning of what was done for him on that great and glorious high day in Israel, the Day of Atonement. He understands, appreciates and rejoices in...

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- The Slain Passover Lamb
- The Scapegoat
- The Aaronic Blessing

He is coming now with a gift of praise, a thank offering, something he wants to give to the Lord God his Savior, just for his glory, just for his praise, just because he wants to. Ceremonially, he pictures a redeemed sinner, forgiven, accepted in the Beloved, justified and sanctified in Christ. Still, he cannot come to God except by God's high priest wearing this royal, priestly mitre, with this plate of pure gold upon his forehead — "*HOLINESS TO THE LORD!*" Thus, the priest of God places the gift of the forgiven sinner upon the altar of God, bearing for the redeemed sinner "*the iniquity of the holy things...that they may be accepted before the LORD.*"

As Aaron was set apart and distinguished from the common priests by his glorious garments, how glorious, how beautiful is the Lord Jesus in the eyes of God! How glorious and beautiful is he in our eyes! **Spurgeon** once said, "The unveiled sight of him will be our heaven. Our present view of him is our salvation, comfort, strength and sanctification!"

Why was Israel's high priest so majestically, so royally adorned? The Holy Spirit tells us, — "*Such an high priest became us*" (Hebrews 7:26). It was becoming for us to have the Lord Jesus, this gloriously arrayed High Priest. It is becoming, God himself declares, it is becoming that we should have a High Priest decked out in "*gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen.*" And he has covered us with the robe of his righteousness and made us comely with his comeliness which he has put upon us.

"Jesus, in Thee our eyes behold
 A thousand glories more
 Than the rich gems, and polish'd gold,
 The sons of Aaron wore."

As Israel of old had need of one to bear the iniquity of their holy things, so you and I, as we come to our God with our gifts and sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, as we bring to him the calves of our lips and the services of our lives, must have one who is able to bear the iniquity of our holy things. We need of one who is "*able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*" Blessed be his name, Christ Jesus our Lord is such an High Priest over the house of

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God! By the merit and efficacy of his perpetual intercession, by the perpetual merit and efficacy of his blood and righteousness, our Lord Jesus Christ makes both us and our worship and service, us and our sacrifices of thanksgiving and praise “*accepted before the LORD.*”

How I thank God that he who is the unceasing, everlasting Representative of this sinful wretch, he by whom alone I come to God, by whom alone I offer myself and my sacrifices to the holy Lord God, is the One who wears upon his head the mitre of God’s priest and upon his forehead the pure plate of golden “*HOLINESS TO THE LORD!*”

I have just two things to talk about in this message. First, I must remind you and remind myself of the iniquity of our holy things. Then, second, I want, by the grace and power of God the Holy Spirit to show you the holiness in and by which we are accepted before the Lord, accepted with everything we bring him.

INIQUITY

First, I have to point out the iniquity of our holy things. This is a subject we all prefer not to think about, let alone discuss. Oh, none of us minds a little, pretentious self-deprecation. We take great pride in out-doing one another in that. But none of us wants to think about, let alone discuss — “*The iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their gifts.*”

All that we do for God, and for Christ, and for our fellows, is deformed and tainted by our polluted hearts and dirty hands, both by human infirmity and sin. Even a casual scrutiny of our most saintly deeds discovers the leprosy of iniquity popping out in this body of flesh! Our apparent loveliness is horribly unlovely! Our greatest sanctity is evil. We have need....

- to pray over our prayers,
- to weep over our tears,
- to repent of our repentances,
- and to confess our confessions!

When our most fervent prayer has been groaned, and our most self-denying act has been performed, and our most liberal offering has been given, and our most powerful sermon has been preached, and our sweetest anthem has

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poured forth its music, all must be bathed in the precious blood of Christ, the blood that “*cleanseth us from all sin!*”

HOLY STILL

Now, be sure you do not miss this. — Our “*holy things*” are still “*holy things*” in God’s sight, though they are holy things accompanied with our iniquity!

Our prayers, our praises, our service of God, these are holy things, albeit that iniquity attaches to them. They are holy because they are **God’s ordinance**, things he has ordained for his own glory. He tells us to serve him. He calls for us to come to him in prayer. He has said, “*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.*” And when we do what God tells us to do, the act is holy, because it is done in obedience to the him, as the ordinance of God.

Such deeds are holy because they are **designed to show forth for God’s glory**. Those sacrifices the Israelites brought were meant to set forth Christ and his glorious work. That made them holy. They were “*hallowed*” (sanctified) by the children to the Lord. So our sacrifices (whatever they may be) are meant to be tokens of our gratitude, love, dedication and homage. Their design makes them “*hallowed*,” sanctified, holy things.

Our heavenly Father teaches us much precious truth by every institution of the tabernacle, and the temple, and the gospel church, and that makes obedience to his ordinance is holy.

These things called “*holy things*” in our text, were deeds that were **holy in the intent of the worshipper**. When he brought his turtle doves, or his lamb, or his bullock, he intended to exercise real reverence, true allegiance and sincere gratitude to God; and this intent was holy. Our God is so gracious that he calls our love, and faith, and labor, and patience, “*holy things*,” because he sees that we truly desire to honor him by these things. He knows what is holy, and what is not holy; and though there be a defilement about our “*holy things*,” yet holy things they are. I know they are “*holy things*” because God himself here calls them “*holy things!*”

INIQUITY ON THEM

They are “*holy things*,” yet there is iniquity upon our “*holy things*.” I have

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“Our souls, how heavily they go
To reach eternal joys!”

You need no proof of the fact that there is much that must be called “*iniquity*” in regard to our “*holy things*.” The slightest honesty of examination into our own hearts and lives will silence every objection.

- Our Wandering Thoughts in Worship
- Our Deadness in Prayer
- Our Bible Reading
- Our Love of Self
- Our Love of The World
- Our Love for Christ
- Our Love for One Another
- The Hypocrisy that Defiles Us
- Our Faith
- Our Pride
- Our Judgment of Others
- Our Contempt of Others

I am talking now about our “*holy things*.” How horribly evil our other things must be! There is a terrible, terrible, indescribably horrible iniquity about all our “*holy things*,” a personal iniquity that makes all our righteousnesses filthy rags!

HOLINESS

Thank God, our text says something else. In the very same sentence in which the Lord God speaks of “*the iniquity*” that is ours, the iniquity by which we pollute everything, he speaks of “*holiness*,” perfect holiness, “*HOLINESS TO THE LORD!*” — How instructive and impressive the type!

(Exodus 28:36-38) “And thou shalt make a plate *of* pure gold, and grave upon it, *like* the engravings of a signet, **HOLINESS TO THE LORD.** (37) And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. (38) And it shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.”

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Thus has Christ, our true Aaron, made a full Atonement for the “*iniquity of our holy things*;” and the mitre is always upon his head, making both us and our offerings accepted before the triune Jehovah!

(1 John 2:1-2) “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*.”

Let me show you how this is declared in the Book of God.

JEREMIAH 2:3

In Jeremiah 2:3 the Lord God declares that Israel was “*holiness unto the Lord*.”

(Jeremiah 2:1-3) “Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, (2) Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land *that was not sown*. (3) *Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD*.”

The word “*holiness*” means “sanctified” or “consecrated.” That is what the Lord God declares us to be in and by Christ — “*HOLINESS TO THE LORD!*” Being “*HOLINESS TO THE LORD*,” we have free access to him always!

(Jude 1:1) “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and called*.”

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11) “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are

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sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

(Hebrews 10:10-14) “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. (11) And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: (12) But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; (13) From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. (14) For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

Christ is our Holiness (Hebrews 12:14). He perpetually makes us accepted before the Lord.

- Imputed Righteousness in Justification
- Imparted Holiness in Sanctification

(2 Corinthians 5:17-21) “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (18) And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

ZECHARIAH 14:20

In Zechariah 14:20 the prophet of God declares that in this gospel day, even the horses shall bells on their bridles that proclaim — “*HOLINESS TO THE LORD!*”

(Zechariah 14:20) “In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, **HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD**; and the pots in the **LORD’S** house shall be like the bowls before the altar.”

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Horses are animals used for work, for labor, to pull a plow or a carriage. Zechariah is telling us that in Christ all our works, all our gifts, all our labors for the glory of God are accepted of God, just as we are, just as Christ is, as — “*HOLINESS TO THE LORD!*”

(1 Peter 2:5) “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

ZECHARIAH 14:21

But there is more, still. In Zechariah 14:21 we are told that every pot in Jerusalem, that is every utensil used by God’s people in this world, every part of your life and mine, the totality of our lives, are like the pots and bowls at God’s altar in the temple, — “*HOLINESS TO THE LORD!*”

(Zechariah 14:20-21) “In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, *HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD*; and the pots in the *LORD’S* house shall be like the bowls before the altar. (21) Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the *LORD* of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the *LORD* of hosts.”

(Romans 12:1-2) “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. (2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

(Ecclesiastes 9:7-8) “Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. (8) Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.”

(Exodus 28:36-38) “And thou shalt make a plate *of* pure gold, and grave upon it, *like* the engravings of a signet, *HOLINESS TO THE LORD*. (37) And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. (38) And it shall

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be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD."

Imagine, that my brother! Imagine that, my sister! In Christ...

- You are "*HOLINESS TO THE LORD!*"
- Your gifts are "*HOLINESS TO THE LORD!*"
- Your entire life is "*HOLINESS TO THE LORD!*"

Imagine that! You and I are a people God calls holy, a people whose gifts he calls holy, a people whose lives he calls holy, because Christ bears the iniquity of our holy things always before the Lord. — He bears the blood of our atonement always before the Lord, wearing the golden insignia of perfect holiness in his forehead as our High Priest, our Mediator and our Surety!

Amen.