

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Bible Study/Prayer meeting

Date 14th June 2022

**Preacher Pastor Philip Knowles Hymns Read Isaiah
6:1-8 Text Isaiah 6:3**

**Series – The Doctrine of God series (20) Title The Holiness
Of God**

Isaiah 6:1 states in the year that King Uzziah died the prophet Isaiah, “***...saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up and His train filled the temple.***”

As Isaiah looks upon this vision, he is brought to the majestic view of the holiness of God.

Isaiah saw and heard the Seraphim who in **verse 3** “***cried unto another and said Holy Holy Holy is the LORD....*** The Seraphim’s were angelic beings, they defended the holiness of God.

The name **Seraphim**, means **burning or fiery ones**. They burned in honour for God’s holiness. Also, remember in the Hebrew the **im** at end of the word is **plural**

According to **verse 2** they were positioned above the throne, meaning they flew around or over the throne of God with their faces covered repeating the words to one another, ***Holy Holy Holy is the LORD.***

The word **Holy, or holiness** means **to separate, or to be set apart**, The idea is to separate from and unto.

Therefore, God is separated from all that is evil and defiling, but also God is set apart, set above all of His creation in relation to His holy nature and character.

God's holiness is in active opposition against evil, and on the basis of His holiness, He hates sin.

Today people do not want a God who is holy, they want a loving, good, and compassionate God.

The reason being, just as light exposes darkness for what is an empty void, so Holiness exposes unholiness, unrighteousness, uncleanness and impurity.

God's holiness shows up sin for what it really is, a transgression of the law of God, the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

Therefore, Sinners do not want their unholiness confronted or challenged.

Men want a God who will not judge sin, but will do away with sin. However, man needs as **Heb 12:14** states "**holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:**

Charles Spurgeon said *if your religion does make you holy it will dam you.*

The very sight of the holiness of God, condemns sin. **Joshua 24:19** "**for He is an holy God;**

Let us consider the teaching of the Holiness of God as revealed throughout Scripture.

I FIRST, THE EMPHASIS OF GOD'S HOLINESS.

As Isaiah heard the Seraphim's words, they were crying Holy Holy Holy is the LORD... they emphasised that God is holy. God alone is the source of all holiness.

Scripture places a chief emphasis on God's holiness. Bible scholars agree that holiness is God's central attribute.

God is described by the word **Holy** more than any other word.

Also, God's holiness is a trinitarian holiness, God the Father is Holy **John 17:11**, God the Son is Holy **Acts 3:14**, and God the Holy Spirit is Holy by His very name, **Eph 4:30**

When He made reference to His covenant with David with all His believing people in view, He said in **Ps 89:35** "**Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.**" His promise was based upon His own holy nature, because He cannot lie, He cannot do that which is against His nature.

He could have sworn by any of His perfections, but He swore by His holiness because it is this attribute which gives the greatest meaning to all the rest.

God's Holiness is the only attribute of God repeated three times in a row.

While God is love yet we do not read, love, love, love, justice, justice, justice is the LORD.

There are two times that scripture tells us that God is **holy, holy, holy**, here in **Isaiah 6:3**, but also in **Revelation 4:8** ***And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.***

If God says something about his character once, that is clear, however, when He states it three times, that means it's of supreme importance. There is an emphasis we must take note of and that is God is absolutely holy.

Our preaching, prayers, praise and living out the gospel, must emphasises the holiness of God.

Just as the Seraphim burst in praise singing of the Holiness of God, so believers as burning and shining lights are directed by **Ps 30:4** "***sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of His, and give***

thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. Ps 99:5 “Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for He is holy.

II SECOND, THE ESSENCE OF GOD’S HOLINESS

As Isaiah heard the Seraphim’s words, they were stating how God has declared Himself, *Holy Holy Holy is the LORD...*

God Holiness is God’s declaration of Himself. It is how He has revealed Himself. The **Shorter Catechism Q.4**, *What is God? Answer: “God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.”*

1 God’s holiness is a personal Holiness.

Notice the words in **verse 3** “*Holy Holy Holy...is the LORD.*” The words teach us the Lord’s own Character or nature is holy.

His Holiness is who God is. He said of Himself in **Lev 11:45** “*I am holy.*”

The declaration of God’s holiness flows from who He is. He is holy in His nature. He is eternally, infinity and unchangeably, holy. His holiness is not affected by the unholiness of men. All God does is Holy in His works and ways.

W A PINK said *Holiness is the very excellency of the Divine nature:*

He is Holy in **His word Romans 1:2**, in **His promise Psalm 105:42**,

In **His Sabbath Isa 58:13**, In **His People Isa 62:12**, In **His Angels Rev 14:10**.

His nature is holy because His name is holy, and His name is Holy because His nature is Holy, **Ps 111:9** ***“holy and reverend is His name.”*** **Isaiah 57:15** ***“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy.”***

2 God's holiness is a pre-eminent holiness

When Isaiah had a vision and view of the holiness of God, he said in **verse 1** ***I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up and His train filled the temple.***

In other words, Isaiah had the highest view of God because He had a high view of the holiness of God.

He seen the Saviour high and lifted up. He saw Christ upon His throne, exalted and glorious.

John also speaks of this occasion in **John 12:41** ***“these things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him.*** God holiness is His glory.

The Glory of God that Isaiah saw was the glory of His holiness. **Or as Moses put it in Exodus 15:11 - *Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?***

God holiness is pre-eminent, He is far above all, He is high over all. Hannah prayed in **1 Samuel 2:2**, ***“There is none holy as the LORD.”*** His holiness is distinct, superior and set apart from all others. His holiness is His own majesty, and beauty.

The Puritan **Thomas Watson** described the holiness of God as ***“the most sparkling jewel of God's crown.”***

3 God's holiness is a perfect holiness

“...Holy, holy, holy is the LORD” God's holiness is a perfect holiness. That which is perfect can never be improved upon. His

perfect holiness means His perfect freedom from all evil and all darkness.

Habakkuk 1:13 states “***Thou art of purer eyes, than to behold evil and canst not look on iniquity***”

1 John 1:5 “***God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.***”
There is no sin in Him, nor is He the author of sin, **James 1:13**
“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

Therefore, the perfection of God’s holiness does not grow or develop. God’s holiness is not an addition to His being or received into His being.

Holiness is not an attribute that He has mastered through time, or picked up.

Rather Holiness belongs to His being. If God is not Holy then He is not God.

He can never become more or less holier than He is. Since God is eternal and self existent then He did not become Holy.

Rather He has always been and will always be perfectly Holy. He is Himself **Holy**.

His Holiness is infinite and unchanging extending to all His attributes. God’s holiness is perfect.

III THIRD, THE EVIDENCE OF GOD’S HOLINESS

1 God’s holiness is evidenced in Creation

When God created the world in six days, He then said in **Genesis 1:31** “***And God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good***”. His creation was perfectly holy, “***it was very good.***”

in His creation was mankind, which **Ecclesiastes 7:29** testifies "**God made man upright**";

God's creation of man was perfect. God made humanity male and female perfectly holy, entirely good, without sin, totally inclined to holiness.

God's holiness is manifested in all His works, as **Ps 145:7** confirms "**The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and Holy in all his works.**"

2 God's holiness is evidenced in His Commandments

By God's commandments we refer to His Moral law which is summarised in His Ten commandments. He is the law giver. God's law is a reflection of God's holiness.

Paul said in **Romans 7:12** "**Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.**"

Why is it holy, because the one who gave it is holy.

The Saviour Himself when speaking of God's law, summarised the two sections of the law in **Matthew 22** as commandments 1-4 dealing with Love to God and then commandments 5-10 dealing with love to our neighbour.

God never gave His law to save. Notice Paul said in **Romans 3:20** "**Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.**"

He said in **Gal 2:21** "**if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.** If I can be saved by the law then Christ died in vain.

Rather God's law is His standard of judgment. The reason being **God's moral law reveals clearly God's unchanging standard of right and wrong.**

It teaches men and woman are accountable to God. Today, men maintain, their own standards, what they deem to be right and wrong.

The law sets forth God's demand for perfect obedience perfect holiness in every command.

However, due to sin, **Romans 3:23** states "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

the glory of God, is His holiness. God holiness is His demand of perfect obedience as revealed by His law, therefore sinners have fallen short, of God's standard, His holiness.

Paul said in **Romans 3:20** "***for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*** God's law as reflecting the holiness of God, teaches we are unholy and unrighteous sinners, thereby condemning sinners for their sin.

Since God's law is holy and teaches we are sinful, then it causes us to understand we need life, forgiveness, and since the law cannot give life then it must come from another.

Gal 3:13 the law leads to Christ who alone can save sinners. He is the only one who did not fall short of God's holiness, His glory. God required perfect holiness, and only Christ could give it.

This leads:

3 God's holiness is evidenced at the Cross

Upon the cross, God's holy hatred of sin burned out upon Christ. Since God is holy He cannot look at sin, or turn a blind eye to sin.

Sin must be punished either upon the sinner in hell or the sinners substitute on the cross.

A sinner can only be forgiven on the ground of another having taken their punishment.

The only way that God's hatred for sin could be turned away was through the sinless, sacrificial and substitutionary death of Jesus Christ.

You want to see the holiness of God, how much God hated sin, look to the cross. **2 Cor 5:21** "***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.***

Christ suffered the full force of eternal infinite and unchanging punishment for sin.

All that was contrary to God perfect nature, was laid upon Christ on the cross, like the sea waves crashing upon the rocks, so God wrath crashed upon Christ. He suffered the sins of all who would believe on Him.

Stephen Charnock said, "***Never did Divine holiness appear more beautiful and lovely than at the time our Saviours countenance was marred in the midst of his dying groans.***"

The Lord Jesus prayed in **Matthew 27:46** ***My God my God why hast thou forsaken me*** yet He says in **Psalm 22:3** "***thou art holy...***"

4 God's holiness is evidenced in Christ

The fullest and clearest evidence of the holiness of God is seen in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God. God's Son

as **Hebrews 1:3** states is the “**brightness of his glory and the express image of his person**” because Christ is God.

He is described in **Acts 4:27** as God’s “**holy child Jesus**” His holiness is detailed in **Heb 7:26** “**holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners...**”. He said in **John 8:29** **I do always the thing that please Him.** **Matthew 3:17** “**a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**”

It is because of holiness, the Lord Jesus Christ through His perfect life, His substitutional death, His glorious resurrection, His exaltation and intercession He could provide a perfect holiness and righteousness for His people. He did all that was required for the saving of His people.

The full and complete demands of God’s holiness were met alone in Christ: He meet every requirement; He answered every demand perfectly.

IV FOURTH, THE EFFECT OF GOD’S HOLINESS

When Isaiah seen the Holiness of God he was humbled in the presence of the holiness of God.

Charles H. Spurgeon “***The most spiritual and sanctified minds, when they fully perceive the majesty and holiness of God, are so greatly conscious of the great disproportion between themselves and the Lord, that they are humbled and filled with holy awe, and even with dread and alarm.***”

Isaiah considered himself to be but dust and ashes before a holy God. He saw the sin of his own heart as corrupt and in need of cleansing.

Notice his words, in **verse 5** “***Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in***

the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

The word **undone** means **to be cut off**. A sight of the holiness of God caused Isaiah to recognise he was underserving of the least of God mercies, he saw himself as unholy, deserving to be cut off from God.

Isaiah was God's prophet, a messenger of God, yet he recognised himself to be a terrible sinner by the holiness of God. He felt his weakness, and as Paul said falling short of God's glory.

Isaiah understood the Psalmist words in **Ps 130:3** "***If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?***

Isaiah's vision of the Lord was dominated by a consciousness of the Lord's holiness.

Any believer as Isaiah who has truly seen God's holiness will have also seen his own defilement, will confess as Isaiah did – "***Woe is me!***" and then be cleansed from sin as Isaiah was by the word in **verse 7** "***thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.***

It was only after being in the presence of the holiness of God and cleansing by faith in the blood could Isaiah be used for the gospel ministry, **Isa 52:11** "***be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.*** **Isaiah 6:8-9** "***Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. 9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed...***"

God desires His people to be as Himself Holy. Holiness is a **communicable attribute**, or what is communicated to us in finite limited degree.

That means while we will not be eternally, infinity and unchangeably holy on earth yet God by the power of Christ and the help of the Spirit communicates and leads His people to

become more holy in our living as it is possible for a saved sinner to be to please and glorify God.

As partakers of the divine nature we will reflect the holiness of God. **1 Peter 1:16** quoting from **Lev 11:45** “***ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.***”