

## THE WHITE LIGHT OF HOLINESS

HEART OF THE MATTER - A WORD FROM KEN  
 REVIEW ISAIAH 6:1-7; HEBREWS 12:10, 14

Here's how (A.W.) Tozer puts it: "Neither the writer nor the reader is qualified to appreciate the holiness of God."

He's quite right. Maybe if we could return to the Garden of Eden and with Adam and Eve get some sense of a universe as it was meant to be experienced – pre-Fall, maybe then we might grasp something of the enormity of it all.

But that break with perfection – that moment of disobedience, believing the lie – well, it introduced a monumental gap in our capacity to know God as he is. It was a cosmic paradigm shift. The Fall clouds our vision of him. It mixes our prejudices and our ambitions and our self-serving declarations and our aspirations into a bubbling brew of truth and error. Our feeble attempts poorly capture the majesty, the holiness that is God.

The sun is an incomplete but apt metaphor. It is always there. It delivers the packets of energy that produce life. Even in the dark of night, we know the earth's occupants half a world away are basking in its light. Even from behind the cover of gray clouds, we know the illumination that brightens our pathway has its source in that glowing sphere above; hidden and yet clearly evident. We dare not look at into the brilliant light of the sun directly. It will quickly and irreversibly short-circuit the sensitive optic nerve endings in the retina. We would go blind. Space travelers would certainly avoid too close a fly-by. The heat generated by the surface of the sun would incinerate just about everything. Knowing these simple facts, we approach this familiar object, our closest star, with caution.

So the holiness of God. It is there. It is real. It warms our spiritual journey. It illumines our path. But it is a white-hot purity. It is moral authority absent any sort of contamination. He is the God who is "wholly other" – entirely righteous. In the days of Moses, one direct look into the blazing holiness of God could not be survived. Step too close, it's all over.

Isaiah caught a vision of this holy God. It was a stunning sight. God seated high upon a throne. Exalted. "The train of his robe filled the temple with glory." (Isaiah's words inspired a powerfully moving worship song). Angels in flight cried out. I expect tears of joy flowed down as they sang, "Holy. Holy! Holy is the LORD!"

If you understand anything about the holiness of God, you'll understand our deep need. You'll also be knocked off balance by Peter's call to holiness. How can we live up to that lofty standard?

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

AUTHENTIC INTERACTION · COMPELLING CONNECTION · IRRESISTIBLE EXPERIENCE  
 LOVING ACCEPTANCE · EVANGELISTIC INFLUENCE

We can't.

Apart from the provision of the holy God himself.

So therein lies our hope. Holiness can not be attained by simply adhering to some spiritual discipline. It is God's sole domain. But in his Son, in the profound sacrifice that satisfied the demands of justice, God made us holy. It is almost too much to absorb.

In Christ, we are welcomed into the dazzling presence of the holy God. Wow. (Or as David would say, "Selah.")

**BACKGROUND** – Holiness is misunderstood. Some consider it an insult. Others, an obsession. On one extreme, holiness is a smug pietism – aloof and intolerant. On the other end of the spectrum, holiness is a self-defeating perfectionism. Either way, our view colors our thoughts about God. We may well miss the point. God is holy. What does that mean? We need to turn to the source.

*Review Isaiah 6:1-7; Hebrews 12:10, 14*

Think it over...

1. Isaiah relates his vision of God. Describe it in your own words.
2. What was the impact on Isaiah of this vision of a holy God? What was God's message for Isaiah delivered by the seraph (angel)?
3. For the writer to the Hebrews, how is discipline connected to holiness?
4. How is holiness a pre-requisite to "seeing the Lord"? Where does it come from?
5. Talk about the "pre-justification" and the "post-justification" aspects of holiness (from Drew's message).

Bring it home...

1. What would happen to you if you got a glimpse of God in all his holiness? How would you feel? What would you say?
2. How does the holiness of God cause us to think about our own unworthiness?
3. What makes us worthy? Holy?
4. In Christ we are sanctified and through him made holy. What is your response to that truth? *1 Thessalonians 4:23*
5. We are committed to spiritual transformation. God is in the process of making us holy. Share something of your personal journey.

**SHARE. SUPPORT. AFFIRM. PRAY.**