

THE DANGER OF DEFINING GOD BY MODERN PERCEPTIONS OF LOVE

IDENTIFYING GOD'S BOUNDARIES OF PURITY

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“The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” (9) Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, (10) the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: (11) “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created”” (Rev. 4:8-11).

In the Old Testament, the word “holy” is used over six hundred times and can often be translated “moral purity.” Through it, God established within the hearts and minds of fallen mankind the one most important characteristic about Himself: that He is holy. Anyone who approaches Him must give God’s holiness its due honor first and continually. His holiness is first on the checklist of His protocols and must also be ours. Under the same conditions, we too would cry out the same things as the seraphim and elders. Notice that the creatures (seraphim; see Isa. 6) do not cry out “good, good, good, or love, love, love, or grace, grace, grace, or tolerant, tolerant, tolerant is the Lord God Almighty.”

Holy Scripture is clear:

The morally unclean (dogs) will never be allowed into that Presence (Rev. 22:14-15).

“PURSUE PEACE WITH ALL PEOPLE, AND HOLINESS, WITHOUT WHICH *NO ONE* WILL SEE THE LORD” (Heb. 12:14).

“BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD” (Mt. 5:8).

In Matthew 25, Jesus reveals three types of *His people* who are not allowed into His presence on His day of judgment: foolish virgins (the unprepared), unfaithful stewards (of His grace), and goats (those who live self-centered lives). None of the above kept themselves pure. God’s holy presence was not the top priority and focus of their lives. This indicates that if we are holy as God is, we will love like He does. One cannot be separated from the other.

“Love” has been twisted into being superior to anything else in the minds of ungodly, naïve, and ignorant people. There are those who have a form of godliness but deny its power. They tolerate what they should be condemning and condemn what they should be embracing by often using this truth in their own defense: “God is love” (from 1 Jn. 4:8). The problem is not with this actual truth but is found in how love is defined by them. *How they define “love” determines how they define God.* God defines love but love does not define Him. The one and only holy God is reduced to a god (only within their minds) who can set aside his moral law and make exceptions in certain cases, calling good evil and evil good. The one true God and His love are holy. His love is not defined through the filters of human bias, moral depravation, sentiments, experience, and religious tradition. No, God’s holiness and goodness define His love and they are constant—never changing.

To be holy means to be pure and separate, having no mixture.

Another question often tossed around out there in Christendom is: Why would a loving God send people eternally into hell (a place of eternal incarceration originally created by God for the fallen angels—Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10)? The common answer I have heard coming from Christian’s mouths only partially answers the question with a half-truth: “God does not send anyone into hell, they do it to themselves.” In an attempt to protect our wrong notions of a “nice” God, some of God’s people have sidestepped Biblical truth. Tell me, who created hell and the lake of fire? Does a criminal court judge sentence and send criminals to prison and/or capital punishment or do they send themselves? Would a shepherd be considered good if he did not protect the sheep? What if he had to kill the predators to do so? Is he still good? He may not be “nice” but is definitely good.

Most certainly, the criminal who is subject to a court’s justice is there because of his or her crimes, however, the court alone wields the power to incarcerate them and sentence them to punishment. Apart from committing the crimes, they would not be subject to the court’s wrath.

Similarly, God’s moral law has condemned every human being as a sinner (Rom. 3). Because of this, His (judicial) wrath abides on all people. Instead of leaving us without hope, to pay for our own sins, He sent Christ who took our deserved punishment upon Himself to the cross (Jn. 3:36). By putting away our guilt and, therefore, punishment from before God, Christ has also destroyed our (spiritual) enemies. Those who believe will live eternally with Christ.

Speaking frankly, some people are asking the wrong question. Instead, we should ask: “How could a holy God-Judge not send people to eternal incarceration?” How could a good shepherd not protect his sheep even if it means killing the predator? Those who reject Christ are treated as predators by God.

Much to the chagrin of the modern advocates of “tolerance,” the angels who surround God’s throne do not cry out day and night: “Love, love, love, is the Lord God Almighty.” No, they cry out: “Holy, holy, holy.” This indicates, in order for fallen mankind to approach God, personally benefitting from His great fatherly love, they must *first* come to terms with His holiness. Listen to what God says to His own:

“I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (17) Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. (18) I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and

daughters, says the LORD Almighty. (1) Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 6:16-7:1).

Holiness (aka moral, personal purity and separation) is first required from God's people in order for them to know the depths of His acceptance and fathering love. This was most evident in the Kingdom truths foreshadowed in the Old Covenant temple. God-ordained rituals, washings, along with items of protocol had to be incorporated and observed before approaching the Most Holy Place where the (intimate) presence of God rested. Now that we have become the temple of the living God, we are required to be most holy (1 Cor. 3:16-17). "...As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, (16) because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Pt. 1:15-16). We are and become holy because of the indwelling *Holy Spirit*. As we daily give ourselves in absolute surrender to the Holy One of Israel, we become as He is. This is not a hard thing unless we have allowed ourselves to become isolated from the purifying fellowship of the saints. Together with others of like conviction, we do this by going boldly and consistently to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:14-16). We are always in need to surrender more and more to and encounter God to become pure as He is pure.

Thank you Jesus for making a way for us to be the Father's Most Holy Place. May our soul and flesh be used for His glory alone.

The writer of the book of Hebrews associated the appearance of God's presence on Mt. Sinai with burning fire, gloom, darkness, and a great storm. Even Moses was terrified at the sight (Heb. 12:16-29). To fallen man, God's holiness is and always will be terrifying. However, that fear will melt away in the light of Christ's glory and grace. Our experience with the holy God no longer has to be terrifying. Now, we can be incomparably blessed by His holy presence. This is true only if we take serious the writer's conclusion. He ends the discourse:

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace (the Divine favor we receive because of our honoring Christ's blood as it is honored in heaven), by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. (29) For our God is a consuming fire."

We can be cleansed from every (unholy) thing that hides God from our spiritual eyes and understanding—that keeps us from making the necessary connection with Him and His anointings.

"Blessed are the pure (holy) in heart for they shall see God" (Mt. 5:8). The Apostle John was able to see God differently. "Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. (3) And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. (4) Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. (5) And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. (6) Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back" (Rev. 4:2:6).

The twenty-four elders sat on thrones, having golden crowns on their heads, were wearing what kind of robes? Yes, they were wearing white robes, indicating their moral purity. They sat on thrones of authority and power and wore golden crowns because of their white robes.

"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see...(20) Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. (21) To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Rev. 3:18-21).

Only the pure in heart will be able to see through the terrifying veil of His holiness and actually see God in His entire throne room splendor (Mt. 5:8). How incredibly wonderful is He. He will be their God and father and they will richly benefit from the river that makes glad the city of our God (Ps. 103; 46:4).

It is time for God's people to come out from among them. By being holy as God is holy, we can then love as He loves, without partiality, fear, or distortion. We can then correctly and powerfully represent His love to the masses of people in this generation that cannot morally discern their right from their left hand.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

One should never seek holiness as an end in itself. We should desire to become and maintain purity for the sake of our fellowship with Christ. Doing so is never difficult if we value the prize. If someone offered us twenty five thousand dollars to jog five miles without stopping, that would be strong incentive to begin preparations to do so. We would actually welcome and be enthusiastic about the necessary preparation and discipline. Our prize is the praise, honor, and glory (without shame or reproach) received at Christ's return.

There is no life to compare to one of walking with our Father in Heaven, allowing Him access to and including Him in every aspect of our lives. As the old song says, "It gets sweeter and sweeter as the days go by, oh what a love between my Lord and I." Then add to that, the prize we will receive after our life here is done. Human words do not do it justice. I can only imagine.

Written with love aflame.

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotes are from the New King James Version of the Holy Bible.

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