

The Attributes of God  
A HOLY God - Isaiah 6

**What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.**

How many of you have 'holy dishes' at home?  
How many of you have a dog or a cat?  
Did you raise your hand on the first question? I hope so.

Set apart:  
"Ex: holy dish for your dog"

An attribute of God that is most commonly ascribed to other people or things:  
"Mackerel, smoke, Holy grounds" coffee bar at a church etc. We speak of certain places or rituals as "holy" or hallowed – FYI – Halloween is a term that came from All Hallows Eve, i.e. All Saints Day- a day of remembrance of faithful believers (saints- Holy Ones) who had passed away.

A well-known text regarding the holiness of God is in Isaiah 6

Isaiah 6

1 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. 2 Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

3 And one called out to another and said,  
"Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts,  
The whole earth is full of His glory."

4 And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.

5 Then I said,  
"Woe is me, for I am ruined!  
Because I am a man of unclean lips,  
And I live among a people of unclean lips;  
For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. 7 He touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven."

Holy is the sole Attribute raised around the throne day and night; raised to superlative – 3 repeats. The cry of the angels is "holy, holy, holy"

Uzziah ruled 60 years – a good king for the nation, then drunk with power and blinded by pride, struck with leprosy. His death was a jolt and Isaiah sought God and had this vision

He sees the true king – HOLY IN MAJESTY presiding as the Lord of history; above all things.  
The train filling the temple  
Seraphim = burning ones; on fire in the presence of God.  
THERE IS No casual worship in heaven

Covering feet and faces – unworthy to be in God's presence, but ready to serve him, calling to one another  
"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY" – "THE WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS GLORY"

**GLORY IS the revelation of his Holiness.** The foundations trembled. Just Imagine the scene. Even Hollywood got a glimpse of this in the original Indiana Jones movie when they opened the Lost Ark- those who did not hide their face were consumed by the fiery glory of the Holy Majesty of God.

Isaiah's response...

WOE IS ME – “undone” the correct response of one who has a sense of God.

If the holiness of God were to be revealed in this room, we would all be undone right now. We have lost that sense of Awe at the Beauty of His Holiness-

**The church is weak when it loses this vertical reality of the Holiness of God. - Sproul**

**What does Holy mean as it relates to God =**

**1) God is separated above His creation = to be set apart**

**2 – Secondary meaning is moral purity, flawless, without blemish in His ways, decrees, judgments,**

**1) God is separated above His creation = to be set apart**

i.e. your ‘holy dog dish’ – it is set apart for special use.

Primary meaning is separate, “other” **theological apartheid**

That which is holy is that which is different:

All peoples have a sense of holy time and space – a special place to go to get away.

We celebrate holidays – different from ordinary days. – sacred space, time, place

One of the earliest uses of the word in scripture is Ex 3:5 holy ground

3 So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up." 4

When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said,

"Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6 He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

John on Patmos –Rev 1:17 seeing Jesus he fell at his feet as a dead man.

14 His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shines in its strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

**2 – Secondary meaning is moral purity, flawless, without blemish in His ways, decrees, judgments,**

He cannot tolerate the presence of sin Ps 11:4-5

Ps 5:5-6 **He is not neutral toward sin, but loves righteousness.**

4 For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness;

No evil dwells with You.

5 The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes;

You hate all who do iniquity.

**Here's THE GOOD NEWS – The Holy God still shows grace to the sinner.** The Holy God sent His son to live the life we should have lived and die the death we should have died. The Gospel teaches us that we ARE BIGGER SINNERS than we dare admit, but more loved and forgiven than we dare imagine.

While we tend to think of the second definition, scripture introduces the idea by the first one – God is Holy and set apart, “other”.

Remember the term from week #2 in the series - Xenophobia = fear of stranger

We are xenophobic when it comes to God because He is so totally “other”.

He is not xenophobic when it comes to us. He welcomes the stranger, the sinner, the rebel, the lost, the hurting.

Tozer I suppose the hardest thing about God to comprehend intellectually is His infinitude. But you can talk about the infinitude of God and not feel yourself a worm. **But when you talk about the holiness of God, you have not only the problem of an intellectual grasp, but also a sense of personal vileness, which is almost too much to bear. The reason for this is that we are fallen beings**—spiritually, morally, mentally and physically. We are fallen in all the ways that man can fall. Each one of us is born into a tainted world, and we learn impurity from our cradles.

Rudolf Otto – The Idea of the Holy- different cultures had an idea of holy/sacred. He observed the normal reactions to “the holy”. He concluded that the holy is the **Mysterium Tremendum et Fascinans** (mystery that repels and attracts)

An experience of something strange and hard to fathom, but also powerful. It provokes a sense of fear

How many of you like roller coasters? WHY? The combination of fear and exhilaration

How many like horror films? WHY???

EX: People pay money to be frightened - Thriller/ horror movies or Roller Coasters

1940’s radio “Inner Sanctum” – creaking door then voice – “within the holy”

Elementary school after school drama – “Dark Shadows”

Twilight Zone, The Outer Limits, X-Files, Black Mirror, Lost, etc

These are shows that are mysterious and implausible, yet they attract us.

Listen to how Otto describes this mysterium tremendum...

“The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship . . . It may pass over into a more set and lasting attitude of the soul, continuing, as it were, thrillingly vibrant and resonant, until at last it dies away and the soul resumes its "profane," non-religious mood of everyday experience.

[http://www.bodysoulandspirit.net/mystical\\_experiences/learn/experts\\_define/otto.shtml](http://www.bodysoulandspirit.net/mystical_experiences/learn/experts_define/otto.shtml)

In his, The Idea of the Holy, Rudolf Otto coins the word "numinous" to define the mystical experience (p.6-7).

**Numinous** comes from a Latin word numen (not to be confused with Jerry’ nemesis on Seinfeld)

Numen is Latin **for the spirit or divine power presiding over a thing or place.**

Otto gives this description, and I think he hits on some Biblical truths – Isaiah 6; Eph 1 and 3

The numinous experience tends to have these attributes:

- ❖ The element of "awe"fullness (p.13)
- ❖ The element of overpoweringness (p. 19)
- ❖ The element of energy or urgency (p.23)
- ❖ The element of the "Wholly Other" (p.25)
- ❖ The element of fascination (p.31)

Source: Otto, Rudolf. The Idea of the Holy, (London: Oxford University Press, 1977).

EX: I’ve had such an experience at different times, but a couple were the most pronounced. I don’t lead with them in my testimony or life story, but they were as Otto described “The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship “

-One time was on an early morning walk in France, listening to a Steve Green tape – Call to Worship/The Majesty and Glory of Your Name

Otto showed that the response to the holy is conflicted – it repels and attracts us. It terrifies and fascinates  
Ex: ROLLER COASTER or scary movies

We want to keep a safe distance from the character of God. He both terrifies us and attracts us.  
We see that with Jesus.

Peter after the catch of fish – Luke 5:8 “depart from me for I am a sinful man”

Mark 4:35-41 After calming the storm on the sea

40 And He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" 41 They became very much afraid and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

The Lord's prayer – The FIRST PETITION is “Hallowed be Thy Name” – (sermon series)  
The first petition is that the name of God would be treated as Holy, sacred.

Ten Commandments – God's top ten includes not taking His Name in vain.

A cavalier attitude about the Name of God reveals our deep-seated attitude toward the God of the Name – Sproul

We live most of our lives in what could be described in one sense as being taken up by the “profane” i.e. not pertaining to religious activity. That is how the world would see things. As believers we know that we live all of life before the face of God and all things can be done for the glory of God – if not illegal or immoral.

If we're honest, we know that most of life is lived in what we would call the routine, or even mundane, activities of everyday life. Yet, at times we have those moments of a profound sense of the presence of God and we can practice His presence even in the routine things of life.

Though we don't live there every moment, there are times in the life of the believer where the holy spirit bears witness with our spirit and we have a moment of this mystery. They don't happen often, and we can't plan them or create them, but God can meet us in ways that we can't fully comprehend.  
God is totally “other”, yet He makes himself known.

\*HOW DO WE APPLY this attribute:

Live with a sense of Awe and godly “fear/reverence” for a Holy God. Don't reduce Him to someone like us.

–God's people are called to mirror and reflect the character of God to a dying world.

We are a Holy nation, holy and beloved

- Make Him known

What makes something holy is the touch of God upon it - \*\* the Christian who is born again – Saint, holy

Ex 19:6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

- 1 Peter 2:9

9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

The holiness of God is for our own transformation...Be holy as I am holy –  
Lev 11:44-45

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." 1 Peter 1

We are not alone and powerless as Christians. God has given us His HOLY SPIRIT. He searches our hearts to show us where we are not walking in the holiness that pleases God.

As we come to the table, this is a time for asking God to search us and show us if there be any hurtful way – attitudes, actions, or thoughts that we need to bring before him. That is a key aspect of what it means to REMEMBER HIM.

As we come to the table, we are called to Commune with the One who is HOLY.

God is so holy and just that for us to be forgiven someone HAD TO DIE.

He is so loving and gracious that Jesus was GLAD TO DIE.

We are to come to the table with a holy respect for the person and character of God.

Sermon The Attributes of God Holy God

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ISAIAH 6

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1 PETER 2:9-10

1 Peter 1:13-16

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