

God is holy

How is God so different from us?

A God of holiness

We have already seen that God is different to us. We are small and insignificant creatures compared to God. Our efforts to understand who God is will never tell us everything there is to be known about Him. One of God's attributes which expresses this well is 'holiness'.

We have seen that the Third Person of the Trinity is the Holy Spirit. But equally, the Father and the Son are holy. What does this mean?

Holiness means that God is pure, righteous, good and morally upright. Applying what we have already learnt about Him, we can say that He is eternally holy, infinitely holy, unchangeably holy, and that His whole being is holy.

It is His character to be this, and if He were not so He would not be God.

Read and write down what the seraphim cried to one another in Isaiah 6 v.3:

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Find His instruction to believers in 1 Peter 1 vv.15-16 and then enter it in the space:

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What God is saying about Himself is that He cannot, and will not, tolerate evil and sin of any kind, whether of thought, word or action.

Instead, He positively loves righteousness, purity and every good and praiseworthy virtue. He commands these things, not only in our external actions but in our hearts and minds as well. He wants to see it in



individuals and in nations. He wants to see marriages, families, businesses and all relationships exhibit this quality of holiness.

Write down again the first part of Habakkuk 1 v.13:

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Look up Philippians 4 v.8 and write down the list of virtues that Paul tells us we should desire:

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The place where God has made this very clear is in the Ten Commandments which He gave to Moses in the Old Testament. These tell us how we are to think about God, how we are to arrange our week, how we are to live, and how God wants us to treat our neighbours. Look up and read the whole passage Exodus 20 vv.3-17.

A God who loves truth

The subject of truth is worth singling out for special mention. In fact, we could have had a whole study on this topic alone. God is a God of truth.

*Look up again John 14 v.6 from a previous study.
Write it down again once more:*

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God does not, and cannot, lie. When He speaks, He tells us the truth. The Bible is the Word of truth because it is given to us by God – the God of truth. Jesus Christ, because He is God, spoke to us the very embodiment of truth. Every word He spoke on earth was true. He did not exaggerate, He did not flatter, He did not give false hopes, nor did He give false assurance.

Look up His words in John 14 vv.1-3 and note down verse 2 in the space:

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He would not be holy if He did not tell the truth, but because He is holy He always tells the truth. We ourselves often find that the truth is not very comfortable to hear. But God always tells us what we need to know. Much of the truth He tells us is about ourselves and the state of our own hearts. It is not pleasant to hear because it reveals to us that we are evildoers in His sight and sinful creatures.

Find Jeremiah 17 v.9 and put in the space what you find:

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The greatest truths are told us in the Bible so that we are not left in any doubt. God has sent His own Son to this world to reveal the most important things of all through His words and deeds. We may not know everything, but God has given us all we need to know in order to know God and to know His will for our lives.

Holiness and judgement

We saw in Study Three that God is the Judge of the earth. We can now see more clearly how serious this is for us, because God is going to judge the world according to the standard of His absolute holiness. The Bible is clear on this matter. Every one of us is destined to meet with God to be judged after we have died.

Find John 5 vv.28-29 and enter it in the space:

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Look up again and write down Hebrews 9 v.27:

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Not one person will be missing in the judgement, and the implications are massive. According to the perfect standards of God as seen in the life of Jesus Christ, not a single person has lived as God wanted them to, apart from Him. Not one of us has kept the Ten Commandments perfectly.

We have not loved God – or our neighbour – habitually, constantly, willingly, and from the heart.

See how Romans 3 v.23 describes our position:

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The Bible tells us that there is misery, destruction, agony and unending suffering for the sinner in hell.

So serious is the breaking of God’s law – and the utter disregard for His holiness that this implies – that hell is a place of everlasting punishment.

Look up and write down the first part of Romans 6 v.23:

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Holiness expels everything that does not conform to its perfection. This means that we would all be condemned if it depended upon our own righteousness and holiness.

Christ – a sacrifice for sin

The next study looks at the love of God in more detail, but God's love becomes very clear as we go on to consider that God (although holy and the One who punishes wickedness and sin) made His own Son to be a sacrifice for sin. His Son paid the penalty of sin – death – by offering Himself to be punished in the place of many.

This is remarkable because it was an action prompted by no other consideration than pure love. God's holiness could have left our doom sealed for all eternity. Consider again Romans 6 v.23 – "The wages of sin is death".

When Jesus died on the cross He experienced these wages of sin in place of multitudes of sinners, so that sinners might be forgiven and granted a pardon for their iniquities.

See what 1 Peter 2 v.24 says about Jesus, and write it down:

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Then look up 1 Peter 3 v.18 to understand this further:

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What qualified Jesus Christ to do this? It was that He had no sin of His own that required Him to die for His own sins.

See Hebrews 4 v.15 and write it down:

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Being sinless, Jesus Christ could voluntarily place Himself in the position of dying, so that His death could count for others, and its benefits be applied to them.

When we repent of our sins by turning from them and put our faith in Him, then we receive the gift of salvation and the assurance that we are forgiven.

Write down the second part of Romans 6 v.23:

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We have said that God always speaks the truth. So God the Father raised His Son from the dead, just as the Lord Jesus said would happen (see Matthew 17 vv.22-23).

In part this was to show that His Son spoke the truth. It also shows that God the Father's holiness and justice were fully satisfied by this sacrifice Jesus made for sinners.

You can read about the resurrection in Matthew 28 vv.1-10.

Find out what Peter said when he preached on the Day of Pentecost in Act 2 v.32. and write it down:

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There are a number of things that we need not doubt now because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We need not doubt that Christ has paid for sin. We need not doubt that there is life after the grave. Nor do we doubt that Jesus Christ is going to be the Judge of all.

Look up and write down Acts 17 v.31:

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Some Questions to ask

How realistic am I when looking at my life?

Do I really understand that God regards me as a sinner?

Would I feel able to stand before God as my Judge?

What do I think I need to do in order to be saved?

Something to read and consider

Read the following passages in the Bible.

Exodus 20 vv.3-17

Matthew 5