

# God Is Holy

Joe Slater

Of all God's attributes, His holiness may be among the least understood. His moral excellence, along with all other aspects of His being, surpass ours so far that we can scarcely comprehend it. Perhaps a look at Psalm 99 will help somewhat.

The psalm naturally falls into three paragraphs, each ending with an affirmation of God's holiness. "*He is holy*" (vv. 3, 5); "*For the Lord our God is holy*" (v. 9). God's holiness is described in v. 2: "*The Lord is great in Zion. And He is high above all the peoples.*"

Being holy, God does and approves that which is consistent with His holiness. He reigns (v. 1), which makes perfect sense for one who is infinitely above us. He *'loves justice; You have established equity'* *You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob*" (v. 4). He has revealed His will, as He did for Moses and Aaron via the cloudy pillar guiding Israel in the wilderness (v. 7a). He answers prayer, as He did for His people under the Old Covenant. This included being to them "El Nasa" (God Who Forgives, v. 8a). But He also exercises vengeance, which is every bit as holy and good as His forgiveness (v. 8b).

Since God is holy, we should show reverence and godly fear to Him ("*Let the peoples tremble . . . Let the earth be moved!*" v. 1). We should praise Him (v. 3). We should exalt Him (vv. 5, 9). We should worship and call upon His name (vv. 5, 6, 9; these verses emphasize public worship). We should pray to Him and obey His word, as Moses, Aaron, and Samuel did (vv. 6-7).

Indeed, God is holy! He is infinitely worthy of our loving obedience and reverence. And He commands us to strive to imitate His holiness. "*Be holy, for I am holy*" (1 Peter 1:16).

# Too Many Hypocrites

If you are a sports fan (or even if you aren't), you are doubtlessly aware of the steroids scandal that has plagued Major League Baseball in recent years. One of the biggest offenders was the now-retired New York Yankees third baseman, Alex Rodriguez, known as "A-Rod" to many fans. He was once suspended for 211 games for failing a drug test and attempting to cover it up.

Back in 2009, Rodriguez admitted that in three seasons, 2001-2003, he used performance-enhancing drugs to give him an edge in the competition. Thus, he has also confessed not only to being a serial cheater, but a hypocrite because he denied using steroids in a 2001 interview with Katie Couric.

As disappointing as all that is, I haven't heard anyone swear off baseball because there are too many hypocrites in the game. I think we all realize what an irrational over-reaction that would be, because we know that most professional baseball players are clean.

But how often do people use the excuse of "too many hypocrites" for not obeying the gospel, or for quitting the Lord's church? No one quits their job or hobby because of hypocrites, and no one should use this excuse to turn their back on the body of Christ.

I am not minimizing the sin of hypocrisy. There is no sin Jesus Christ denounced more severely than hypocrisy. If you doubt that, read Matthew 23. But the reason hypocrisy is such a stumbling block to many is that they are putting too much faith in man and not enough in God and in His son Jesus Christ. Even the best of Christians will fail us at times; but God never will! "For He Himself has said, *I will never leave you nor forsake you*" (Hebrews 13:5).

I once heard a preacher say, "You can't make me mad enough to quit the Lord and go to Hell!" Won't it be sad (and ironic) to abandon fellowship with God and His

church on earth because of hypocrites, only to dwell with them eternally in Hell?

--Travis Quetermous (Thayer, MO)

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# "Judge Not"

*"Judge not that you be not judged. For with the judgement you pronounce you will be judged"* (Matthew 7:1). This scripture is the most known and quoted by people who do not know any other Bible. However, it is a serious command that all Bible students should heed. It condemns a judgmental attitude that is quick to judge others for faults far less than our own. Clearly, if we judge harshly, we will be judged harshly.

There are "right judgments" we ought to make (John 7:24). When anything is taught contrary to Scripture, we are to judge it as false teaching. When things are done that Scripture shows to be sin, it is "right judgment" to condemn it.

There are two kinds of judgment we are not qualified to make: judging motives, and pronouncing final judgment.

**Judging Motives:** God the Father and Jesus can do that. They know people's motives and can condemn them. "*They do all their righteousness to be seen of others*" (Matthew 23:5). Jesus knows it is correct to label them "hypocrites."

**Pronouncing Final Judgment:** There are heart issues involved in that determination also and, as noted, we cannot read hearts. There will likely be people in Heaven we did not expect. Some may be surprised to see us there!

*"For judgment is without mercy to those who have shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment"* (James 2:13).

--Cecil May, Jr. (via Preacher Talk)