

God's Character: Holy

1. Using a concordance, you will discover that the word "holy" is first introduced when Moses discovers a bush on fire, but the bush did not burn (Ex 3:1-5). Appearing on Mount Sinai, a similar non-consuming fire was witnessed by the nation of Israel (Ex 24:17). What are your first observations of "holy?" Consider using a lexicon.

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

So 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."

Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is **holy** ground." (Ex 3:1-5, NKJV)

The sight of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. (Ex 24:17, NKJV)

2. Before the Mosaic Covenant is made, God asks through Moses, if they wanted to be God's own possession and devoted to Him (Ex 19:3-4).

And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a **holy** nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." (Ex 19:3-6, NKJV)

In making the conditional Mosaic Covenant, the nation of Israel learned what sin was and the concept of being holy. How did the Old Testament person be holy as God was holy?

For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. For I am the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. (Lev 11:44-45, NKJV)

3. Carefully examine the reason why God made the New Covenant after the nation of Israel irrevocably breaks the Mosaic Covenant. What is God saying about His holy character?

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My **holy** name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord,” says the Lord God, “when I am **hallowed** in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.”’” (Ezek 36:22-28, NKJV)

God's Character: Holy Teacher Notes

1. Using a concordance, you will discover that the word "holy" is first introduced when Moses discovers a bush on fire, but the bush did not burn (Ex 3:1-5). Appearing on Mount Sinai, a similar non-consuming fire was witnessed by the nation of Israel (Ex 24:17). What are your first observations of "holy?" Consider using a lexicon.

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Guide the student in the use of a lexicon:

1. Go to www.Blueletterbible.org and search "Ex 3"
2. Locate Exo 3:5 and click "TOOLS"
3. Locate "holy" and click Strong's Number "H6944"
4. Ask the student: what definition do you come away with?

One definition may be: set apart from the usual and common (profane / unclean).

For the observant student who inquires: who is the angel of the Lord, "the angel of the Lord / God is understood to be the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. For the moment, elaboration of this view is another subject for another class.

Help the student make the connection between the divine fire and the designation of holy / sacred ground of the burning bush.

God's glory, all of His goodness, is what sets something apart (consecrates, sanctifies). "Holy" is a term that places an emphasis on God, because it calls to attention the condition something must be in when encountering the realm of God. To be holy, something must be set apart or separated from the profane or unclean.

2. Before the Mosaic Covenant is made, God asks through Moses, if they wanted to be God's own possession and devoted to Him (Ex 19:3-4).

And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a **holy** nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." (Ex 19:3-6, NKJV)

In making the conditional Mosaic Covenant, the nation of Israel learned what sin was and the concept of being holy. How did the Old Testament person be holy as God was holy?

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Ask the student: in the Old Testament, how did one become holy?

Ask the student: what did it mean to be holy as God is holy? Give time for discussion and probe the class's answers to challenge contradictions and inconsistencies. Help them clarify their thoughts and understanding.

In making the conditional Mosaic Covenant, the nation of Israel learned what sin was and the concept of being holy. A human being was holy when one did "what is right and good in the sight of the Lord" – obedience to the Law. God's command to be holy as He was holy included **both** thought and behavior. It was more than simply following the rules of the Mosaic Covenant!

3. Carefully examine the reason why God made the New Covenant after the nation of Israel irrevocably breaks the Mosaic Covenant. What is God saying about His holy character?

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My **holy** name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord," says the Lord God, "when I am **hallowed** in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.'" (Ezek 36:22-28, NKJV)

Help the student understand what God meant: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My **holy** name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went." Ask the student: did the nation of Israel represent God well? Why or why not?

In failing to keep their covenant commitment and worshiping idols, the nation of Israel was indistinguishable from any other pagan nation. They were not set apart from the unclean world and misrepresented God. Being set apart from the profane is a basis of belonging to God.

Help the student understand what God meant: "And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord," says the Lord God, "when I am **hallowed** in you before their eyes." Ask the student: who did God choose to mediate His New Covenant?

To further his understanding, have the student consider Matthew 5:17-18: Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

When Jesus Christ arrives to inaugurate the New Covenant, it is through Jesus Christ that the Holy Spirit is bestowed that enables a Believer to be sanctified and made holy; it is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that guarantees one's entrance into the kingdom of God and inheritance as God's adopted (Eph 1:13-14; 2 Cor 1:21-22; 5:5).

To help the student understand how today's Believers can be set apart and represent God well, consider Jesus' command in John 13:34-35:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this **all will know that you are My disciples**, if you have love for one another. The act of being good like God's goodness sets you apart from the world - being faithfully good in thought and behavior.

Recognize the challenge set before the student amid peer pressure, social media, and one's public image to various peer groups. Allow for discussion of the challenges when you want to be part of today's culture and world and yet set apart being holy as God is holy.