



**BEHOLD YOUR GOD - WEEK 6**  
**Beholding the Holiness of God**

**14. TESTING GOD IN THE TITHE**  
**(MAL. 3:10–12)**

**In his mercy, God desperately wants to use the carrot rather than the stick. God invites us to put His Word to the test. Will He do what He says? Will He fulfill His promises? God says to us here, the only way to find out is to engage in the promise. In other words, do it and see if He doesn't fulfill His Word.**

**In verse 10, the Lord reiterates the problem; the storehouses are empty. If they would only be compliant, there would not only be a full cupboard, but they would experience an**

overabundance of provision and freedom from want. Their abundance would also be proof that God was in Israel, making them the envy of nations.

**Mistake Number Five: Not knowing what everyone gives.** For some reasons pastors think they can be a better pastor to everyone if they don't know what people give. But all this does is allow bullies and freeloaders to wiggle their way into leadership positions and stifle the church. There was a reason Jesus said more about money than any other

subject, including the Kingdom – he knew money was the hardest thing for a disciple to master.

**Harvest Fair**

**Bouslogs**

**Opening prayer**

**Prayer for the persecuted church:**

**Prayer for a local church:**

This morning we pray for our brother Aldo who is planting a church in Los Angeles.

## **Closing prayer**

**INTRO:** This study reveals the tragedy.

### **WHAT IS THE TRAGEDY?**

The more we dive into this subject, the more we behold God as He's revealed in the Bible, the realization of how tragic our views of God have been become apparent, how low and

unworthy our views of God have been. That has been the tragedy.

Yet, at the same time, I believe this is an answer to prayer. I can say that because of how much I'm learning myself.

I have mentioned this before, but I normally begin my personal prayers with this request: "God, I pray to You as You are and not as I perceive You to be. Praying that you replace my misconceptions with clearer understanding of Who You are."

**This is a prayer I have seen God answer continually in my life. I don't remember when I started praying this, but it's been many years now. The point is, God will honor His self-revelation by opening our eyes to Himself, because as He opens our eyes to Himself we can't help but love Him.**

**Today, we're going to be looking at God's holiness. And I'm convinced that a deeper understanding of God's holiness will clear up a lot of misconceptions we have about God in**

both the believing and unbelieving community. In both communities there are statements and questions that are bound up in misconceptions and ignorance of the biblically revealed God.

**BIG IDEA: God is nothing like us, but He is everything to us.**

And we will see that Jesus is the foundation of our holiness, otherwise we would have no true hope.

# **WHAT IS HOLINESS?**

The simplest definition of holiness is separation. When the Bible speaks of God being holy, it means that He is separate from everything else in both the physical realm and the spiritual realm. So, holiness is separation.

## **1 Samuel 2:2-9**

**2 “There is none holy like the Lord:  
for there is none besides you;  
there is no rock like our God.**

And God is separated from us and everything else in existence in a specific way that is very important for us to remember and that is...

## **1. God is Uncreated.**

**THERE ARE ONLY TWO CATEGORIES OF THINGS THAT EXIST - CREATED AND UNCREATED.**

So, there is God in one category and everything else in the other. God is separate

from everything else in existence. In other words, He is holy and He alone is holy.

He is uncreated, having no beginning and no end. That thought in itself should produce some sense of awe. That should give us some sense of Who we're dealing with, but I fear it does not.

Everything else is created — angels, stars, planets, plants, animals, worms, maggots, humanity, etc. Everything that exists is

created, except God alone. He stands alone. He is holy and Creator.

## **Job 15:15-16 (ESV)**

**<sup>15</sup> Behold, God puts no trust in his holy ones,  
and the heavens are not pure in his  
sight;**

Even heaven isn't pure to Him. Why isn't heaven pure? What silly reasons can be given (and there are silly reasons given for heaven

not being pure), but the only valid reason that heaven isn't pure is that it is created.

There is God, holy, separate from everything else, unlike anything else, even heaven, because only He is uncreated. As glorious as heaven will be, it still cannot compare to God Himself. It is God who will make heaven heavenly.

**<sup>16</sup> how much less one who is abominable  
and corrupt,  
a man who drinks injustice like water!**

He's talking about us here. If God doesn't put His trust in angels, you need to reevaluate your own self-confidence.

I saw a commercial recently where a young woman said, "I want a college that believes in me as much as I do." And therein lies the problem with how humanity views itself. (Even the questions we ask about God reveal our glaring misconceptions about Him.) It's going to be disconcerting to most people, even to Christians, to hear this:

## **Job 25:5-6 (ESV)**

**5 Behold, even the moon is not bright,  
and the stars are not pure in his eyes;  
6 how much less man, who is a maggot,  
and the son of man, who is a worm!”**

Now, why does the author of Job compare us to maggots? That is not going to bolster our self-esteem. He does so for one simple reason — we are in the same category as maggots as created beings... just as worms and maggots

are created things, so are we. Remember there are only two categories — God and everything else.

Now, can we qualify this at all? Absolutely. Don't misunderstand what's being emphasized here. What's being pointed out is that we are in the same category as every other created thing. There is a great distinction between the creature and the Creator.

**This doesn't mean we have less value than a maggot or a worm. (There are some who would argue that we have no more value than a maggot or worm, but the Christian worldview would argue the opposite.)**

**It doesn't mean our purpose is the same. Biblically, humanity has a higher purpose than both maggots and worms. Maggots are not created in the image of God, only humanity has that distinction, that stamp upon us. And it makes all the difference in the world regarding how you value people.**

- **“We are irrelevant.”**

**And I would agree that if there is no God, then not only are we irrelevant, but everything is irrelevant. But if the God revealed in the Bible exists, then God taking on human flesh in order to bring us back into a living relationship with Him shows us that we are not irrelevant. “He loved me and gave Himself for me,” the Apostle Paul said. And we can say that’s true of everyone that Christ died for.**

I can live like my life has true meaning, because it does. Someone once said, “If God has work for me to do, I cannot die.” Now that is living life with security and purpose. And you know what? I can live my life like that and it works.

- That’s why it’s so important to discuss what we believe and why we believe it, because we find that when we begin to ask questions about what we believe some of the implications are hard to live out.

I can feel like what I do has great relevance, not because of who I am, but because of Who He is and What He has done for me and because He is the One who has given me work to do that work has meaning.

God taking on human flesh, becoming a man, the incarnation, not only speaks volumes about Him, but it says something about how He regards us.

The point is God is unlike us. He is holy because He is uncreated. And there is no

other religion with a God so unlike us, but Who took such drastic measures to display His love to us.

## **2. God is morally perfect.**

**This is probably where our minds go first when we think of holiness – moral perfection. GOD CANNOT BE DEFILED BY SIN.**

**1 John 1:5 (ESV)**

**5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.**

Zero moral imperfection in God. Again, He is in His own category. In the other category — every created being.

- “What does God base His judgments on?”

This question assumes that God is like us. As human beings we have to look to some authoritative source to validate our moral judgments. How can moral judgments without an outside authoritative moral source be taken seriously? Well, when I entered college as an unbeliever I said, "They can't be." So don't point me to a group of people or what's best for society, because those arguments lack depth. They go no further than mere humanity. I had no confidence in the moral greatness of humanity then and I certainly don't now.

The point, God needs to look no further than Himself. He is moral perfection. He is infinite in every aspect of His nature. If you're perfect, guess what? Every decision you make will be perfect. He doesn't have to look anywhere to decide what's right. He only has to look to Himself. His knowledge is perfect. It can't be added to. And His love is perfect. He can't love you more than He does right now. His justice is perfect. And they all entail His moral perfection. Now, we can go on and on and on

with this, but do you see why He has to look to no one but Himself to make moral judgments.

Besides, if God had to look to another source for moral judgments, He would not be God. The source He looked to would be God. To be God means you define reality, all aspects of reality. When you create all things, you get to make the rules.

The biblical God is always bigger than our idea of Him.

## **Psalm 50:21**

**21 These things you have done, and I have been silent;**

**you thought that I was one like yourself.**

**But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.**

God is nothing like us. He is other than we are. He is holy.

### **3. | What does God's holiness mean for sinful humanity?**

#### **BAD NEWS FOR MODERN MAN**

#### **Psalm 5:5-6 (ESV)**

**5 The boastful shall not stand before your eyes;**

**you hate all evildoers.**

**6 You destroy those who speak lies;**

**the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.**

Words that sound too strong, too frightening to finite ears. And that is why they sound so strong and frightening. We have finite ears. We have little human ears. We do not see the outcome of the evil done and all its rippling effects throughout generations. We do not see how one simple act of mere human arrogance that says — I will define what is true and good — how one simple act of disobedience can destroy the lives of many.

But let's make it a little more personal. I don't care who you are, you have boasted about something this last week. I'll give you a second to remember. And if you're going, "I did not," you just did. Come on. The easiest doctrine to prove is the doctrine of sin.

## **Psalm 7:11-12 (ESV)**

**11 God is a righteous judge,  
and a God who feels indignation every  
day.**

**It's easy to see how He might feel indignation for some of the questions we ask about Him. It's easy to see how He might feel indignation over some of the misconceptions we've had of Him throughout our Christian lives.**

- Lose your salvation**

**You don't think God feels indignation over a theology that says the blood of Christ isn't enough — you have to keep your salvation otherwise you will lose it? You don't think**

God feels indignation over the prosperity gospel that distorts His giving nature?

**12 If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword;  
he has bent and readied his bow;**

You don't have to worry. God is a righteous judge. He's going to set things right. But the bad news is that He's going to judge your sin, too.

I'm still amazed when I speak to people and I've found that many people have this idea that God threatens us to get our obedience. That is not the gospel. Are there threats in Scripture? You bet. But they're to get our attention and make us consider our lives and the One who gave us life. They're there so we perk up our ears to listen to the gospel.

Thank God for the grace in the gospel.

## 4. What does God's holiness mean for our salvation?

**HE CAN BOTH UPHOLD HIS HOLY NATURE AND SAVE A SINFUL HUMANITY**

That's why we see the wisdom of God and the power of God in the cross of Jesus Christ. In the cross, He says to the entire universe, "I will uphold my holy name. I will not let sin go unpunished. But I will punish it in Christ."

A religion that offers salvation based upon your own good moral behavior is a religion that offers you both frustration and condemnation, because you know as well as I do none of us live up to our moral expectations. How will you ever know if your good works are enough to get you accepted by God? That's not how Christianity works. That's not the gospel.

Christianity is the only religion that says not only are you not saved by your goodness, but

you can't be saved by your goodness. But you can be saved by another's goodness, because His goodness is perfect, holy, other than yours. Christ took your sin and gave you His good life.

## **2 Peter 1:3 (ESV)**

**<sup>3</sup> His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,**

**Do we know everything we want to know? Absolutely not. But we know everything we need to know to live a consistently meaningful life. That means that what we believe not only makes sense, but it makes life better.**

- Imputed righteousness reduces our motives down to love alone.**

Trust in your position, not in your condition. We only know in part. God knows all and He knows it fully. We only know in part, but the part we do know is all we need.

## **Hebrews 12:14 (NIV)**

**14 Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.**

**Jesus is the foundation of our holiness,  
otherwise we have no true hope.**